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" Nationalism and Nationalist ideology in Yugoslavia; Nationalism as a legacy of self-management socialism?"

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Konstantinos-Angelos Tasopoulos

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Introduction

i) General structure

Research for this thesis sought to discover the relationship between Nationalism and the nationalist phenomenon in Yugoslavia as part of the self-management socialism's legacy. In this thesis the roots of nationalism will be theoretically analyzed comparing them with ideological concepts that have tried to unify the nations of Yugoslavia - both in the interwar period¹ and the post-war era- so that the antithetical patterns between the two ideologies can be easily depicted. In the first two chapters (parts) this comparison will be associated with scarce historical events in Yugoslav history in order to confirm the theoretical concept in the Yugoslav case. Nationalism, socialism and Yugoslavism (both in its pre- and post-war version) are the three main baselines, from which our theoretical approach shall begin. These concepts form two distinct groups:

- a) the ideologies that unify different nations, claiming that their separation is unnecessary and non-existent (Yugoslavism and socialism)
- b) the ideology that raises the sentiment of distinction and differentiation from the national "Other" (nationalism, ethnocentrism).

After comparing the two groups, that have dominated Yugoslav politics from the 19th century until today, we will move onwards describing historical facts in an effort to interlink theory with political reality. The origins of the main national myths of the Yugoslav nations will be introduced, and analyzed once more by using this antithetical pattern of self-management socialism, the ideological conflict between socialism and nationalist tensions and the reasons why self-management socialism (and Yugoslavism to a lesser extent) could not provide an answer for the National Question in the Yugoslav case. The origins of the national notion in each of the Yugoslav ethnicities (*narodi*/peoples) will help us to underline the importance of the national idea in each of the warring parties, during the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars. Nationalist ideology appeared eventually in the 70's (with a culminating point the 80's and 90's) to be stronger than socialism, surpassing the unifying ideas upon

¹ The founding of the Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes took place in 1918 and lasted until the Axis invasion.

which the SFRY and its territorial predecessor -the Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes- were based.

It is for this purpose that the description and the political analysis of the first phase of the conflict is included in this thesis. Nationalism, the tensions it created and its collision with the socialist perception, reached its culminating point leading to an open war between competing nationalisms in the early 90s, denoting the pre-existence of inter-ethnic rivalries during the SFRY period. An effort will be made to look into the origins of these rivalries: were they created or even re – emerge, due to the policies followed by self-management socialism or were a historical "burden" inherited to the SFRY from preceding events, resulting to the violent collapse of the unified Yugoslav state and the secession of its constituent Socialist Republics.

ii) Method

For the structuring and completion of this thesis, we will analyze the nationalist phenomenon and its connection to self-management socialism in Yugoslavia through the extensive research in bibliographical resources, that are able to provide us with an objective viewpoint , concerning both the historical events and the theoretical concept. Multiple references to historical resources will be utilized, in order for the theoretical context to be abated and the results of the theoretical juxtaposition, linked -through history- to political praxis and reality.

To that end the structure the structure is divided up to three parts: a) Theoretical-Ideological b) Historical-Empirical c) Conclusion. The final part establishes the findings which answer the original question, in an effort to convey a plausible and well structured explanation about the nationalist phenomenon, as this was experienced in the Yugoslav case. Therefore part a) and b) can be considered as two complementary parts, leading eventually to part c).

iii) Cognitive Interest

The reason for choosing the case of Yugoslavia as a paradigm for nationalist tensions lies in the violent outbreak during the SFRY's final years. The idiosyncrasy of Yugoslavia consists mainly of three parts:

a) State socialism was established in post-war Yugoslavia, having a "special" version namely self-management socialism creating particularities both in the economic and the state-administrative sector

b) Almost each of the Yugoslav nations had a strong national myth, a historical past that could empower -and had empowered- in various times through history a nationalist movement. Despite that, these nations co-existed in two separate historical eras under the flag of one state (the unified Yugoslavia) without any major - i.e. armed- interethnic conflict occurring. Yet, the Yugoslav Wars were one of the most violent conflicts Europe has ever experienced

c) The repercussions of competing nationalisms and irredentist ideologies in a multicultural region, where irredentism and nationalism were -and are - the cause of tension, interethnic belligerence and conflict in the Yugoslav state, are exemplary.

Nationalism in Yugoslavia and its analysis can paradigmatically show us the re-appearance of the nationalist notion in the post-socialist political context. The war in Yugoslavia was by far the most extreme case of the re-definition of the state's legitimization in the Eastern European space, occurring through a war. Its political objectives were not expansion, but the creation of a nation state in a multiethnic territory and for the achievement of this objective means such as ethnic cleansing were used.

Based on the above, our specific research questions shall be formulated as follows; Was nationalism in Yugoslavia a legacy of self-management socialism? Did nationalist ideology and all of its results come as a direct repercussion of the failure of the SFRY's state ideology? How did nationalism emerge in the 80's taking the position of a dominant ideology in the SFRY? The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not the only multinational state in the region, however its dissolution was the only one that inflicted such a vast conflict. For what reason did this "particularity" exist? How, in what way and to what extent did the national myth survived in the society during the interwar and post-war period in the Marxist-socialist environment of the SFRY?

Therefore, for all of the aforementioned particularities and due to the fact that aftereffects of the conflict are evidently obvious until the present day, affecting inter-state relations in the regional (Balkan) and peripheral (European) level, the origins of Nationalism in Yugoslavia remain interesting. In sum, the Yugoslav case can help us understand and explain a great deal, concerning nationalism, its relation with socialism and the reciprocal interaction of them both in the Balkan and Eastern European regional context.

Part I-Theoretical Context

a)Introduction

Once there was a country that based its state's structure and form on socialism wishing to incorporate the Slavs of the South and foremost those that have lived and are still living in the Western Balkans in a great Federal State that could surpass all the ethnical differences and eventually build a new state. Slovenia , Croatia , Bosnia and Herzegovina , Montenegro , Macedonia and Serbia along with two other autonomous regions -Vojvodina , Kosovo & Metohija- used to be the six Socialist Republics that made up the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia .

The federal state reflected the multiethnic character of the region and was established in Yugoslavia deriving from a practical application of many Marxist-Leninist theoretical approaches. Combined with the Yugoslavism movement, unified Yugoslavia gave the world a mixture of a new state. This state, although it was in general -geographical- terms the successor of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was based ,on a whole new concept of ethnical co-existence within the borders of a common state in the Balkan area. The same Marxist-Leninist theories that were more or less encountered as the basis upon which the rest of the eastern European socialist states were built, influenced the very essence of the second Yugoslav state. However history has shown us that the state apparatus of socialist Yugoslavia did not manage to endure and its collapse was unfortunately accompanied with a ghastly outbreak of violence, ethnical cleansing and the complete dissolution of the Yugoslav Federal Republic . The nationalist tendencies that lingered on in the ethnicities which shaped the Yugoslav state were apparently the main reason for the collapse and all the things that followed.

Thus in order for us to comprehend the origins of the socialist multiethnic state in the case of Yugoslavia as well as its decay we need firstly to analyze the theoretical aspects of both socialist ideology -explaining the need for multiethnic coexistence and the need of a socialist federal state- and the roots of nationalism in the Yugoslav area that triggered the great conflict, as well as its theoretical background.

b) Ideas that unify- Socialism & Yugoslavism

By taking a closer look at Marx's approach to the national question we might see that although Marxism promoted the brotherhood of the proletariat on the bases of universal common goals, nationalism - in the meaning of national self determination- and the socialist revolutionary practice were sometimes entwined.² The revolutionary act came also through the defiance of the imperial powers of Europe by the people's revolution and the struggle for national independence , for "independence is the basis of any common international action"³. This approach might be seemingly deterring the construction of any federal state based on the socialist idea , but V. Lenin came later on to provide us with a suggestion that would combine both the independence and the coexistence under the same socialist flag. The USSR serves in our case as an appropriate example of national independence within a common state.

Lenin believed that the formation of a federal socialist state would be the instrument that could enhance the unity of the workers regardless their nationality.⁴ The federation would contribute transitionally towards this unity and a federal form of socialist government would give to all nationalities within a former multiethnic state the possibility to have their own self-governing state/administrative entity.⁵ The right to self-determination was in the eyes of Lenin not mandatorily connected with the notion of secession but rather with a way of fighting national oppression in every way.⁶ Despite that the possibility of secession is in no way excluded , as each nation may express its will to form its own state outside of the federation through a

² "It is unimportant whether a reconstitution of Poland is possible before the next revolution. We have in no case the task to deter the Poles from their efforts to fight for the vital conditions of their future development, or to persuade them that national independence is a very secondary matter from the international point of view. On the contrary, independence is the basis of any common international action." K. Marx-F. Engels, *Nationalism, Internationalism and the Polish question, Marx-Engels Correspondence 1882*, found in www.marxists.org

³ *ibid.*

⁴ V.I.Lenin ,*Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions For The Second Congress Of The Communist International- Lenin's Collected Works*, 2nd English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Volume 31, pages 144-151, found in " Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org)

⁵ According to early Soviet administrative policies, a plan of "nativization" (korenizatsiya) was implemented as an outcome of the Congress of the Peoples of the East in 1920 in Baku and had an impact at the constitutions of 1924 but also of 1936. Almost all titular nationalities (53 in their number) were given their own autonomous regions, region or territory within the borders of the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics of the Union as the constitution proclaimed.

⁶ V.I.Lenin, *The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination- Lenin Collected Works*, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Vol. 22, pp. 143-56, Moscow, 1964, " Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org).

referendum.⁷ Socialism shall eventually aim at the merger of all nations and the federation will not have as its sole objective the worker's unity but also the above mentioned merger. This process will go side by side with the dictatorship of the proletariat, leading to the inevitable merging of nations.⁸

In the socialist idea the nationalist notion is the means to an end. And the end is first and foremost the proletarian revolution and consequently class unity against the bourgeois, who is trying to form a common identity with the proletariat through the adoption of nationalistic slogans, thus concealing itself behind a common national identity in their efforts to disorientate the proletariat from its true enemy; the bourgeoisie.⁹ Socialism is thus far theoretically the political ideology that might be the best possible guarantor of stability in a potential multiethnic federal state. By providing the political prospect of brotherhood, mutual respect and by putting nationality second to a common worker's goal it could construct a context that would assist to the creation of a state where nationalism would eventually lose its meaning, due to the transposition of the term "nationality" into a non-national socialist state context. Hence nationality would still maintain its existence but it would be stripped of its prior significance as a divisive factor that triggers tensions and violence.

The reflection of the socialist ideology on a multiethnic state seemed to be applicable not only to the vast multiethnic Russian Empire but to the Balkan region as well. New states arose after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, nations that shared more or less the same fate throughout the centuries strived for national independence and self determination. This new status quo in the Balkan peninsula did not go unnoticed by the socialist theorists and politicians such as Georgi Dimitrov. The prominent socialist politician from Bulgaria was one of the main supporters, who spoke in favor of the establishment of a Balkan federation promoting the socialist aspect of a federal state entity in multiethnic regions.

Dimitrov saw the Balkan wars as a bourgeois deception "masked" under the pretext of national liberation and not a true struggle for national emancipation.¹⁰ The goals of

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ V.I.Lenin, *Theses on the National Question-Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1977, Moscow, Volume 19, pages 243-251 "Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org).

¹⁰ G.Dimitrov, *The European War and the Labour Movement in the Balkan*, The Communist International, 1924, No. 5 (New Series), pp. 93-103 found in the "Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org)

the local alliances formed was a war of annexation followed by an imperialistic agenda serving the colonial politics of the European Entente.¹¹ Along with Lenin , Dimitrov believed that nationalism in the Balkans did not serve the interest of the proletariat but the profiteering agenda of the capitalists.¹²

Constantly socialists stretched out the need for proletariat unity so that the true enemy (the capitalists) , which lied firstly within their own countries, could be faced. Thus as a counterproposal to the annexation wars we find yet again the federal aspect, as this was viewed from a socialist perspective. The Balkan peninsula should be -in the eyes of both Lenin and Dimitrov- transformed to a federation in which "*all the Balkan peoples can find their only true salvation.*"¹³ The boundaries are considered to be solely artificial and posing an obstacle to the common fate of the Balkan people.¹⁴

In a region where nationalism has driven the struggles for independence and emancipation of almost every nation or ethnical entity socialism suggests that the nationalist division is a product of bourgeois politics trying to mislead the proletariat by providing the impression of true national emancipation through annexationist wars. The same ideological perception and overall principles were used whilst building the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The federate model was adopted in order to reflect to some extent this ideology on a more practical application. To be more specific , the Yugoslav Federation was based on that socialist ideology , which promoted the unification of nations and thus gave the Yugoslav Federal State the theoretical background to exist as such.

We have analyzed so far part of the theoretical background that served as the "backbone" of the Socialist Federal state both in general as well as in the case of Socialist Yugoslavia. Consequently at this point including a paragraph of the Yugoslav constitution of 1963 might be helpful so that the linkage between theory and political practice can be clarified even more;

"....The peoples of Yugoslavia , on the basis of the right of every people to self-determination, including the right to secession , on the basis of their common struggle and their will freely

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² V. I., Lenin, *The Balkan War and Bourgeois Chauvinism-Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1977, Moscow, Volume 19, pages 39-40 found in the "Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org)

¹³ G.Dimitrov, *The Significance of the Second Balkan Conference*, Georgi Dimitrov, Selected Works Sofia Press, Sofia, Volume 1, 1972, pp. 49-52 found in the "Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org)

¹⁴ *ibid.*

declared in People's Liberation War and Socialist Revolution , and in accord with their historical aspirations , aware that the further consolidation of their brotherhood and unity is to their common interest , have united in a federal republic of free and equal peoples and nationalities and have founded a socialist federal community of working people , the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia , in which , in the interests of each people and of all of them together , they are achieving and developing..."¹⁵

The passage mentioned above, enables us to see the theoretical contexts that we have analyzed thus far been clearly depicted as a legal basis of the state of SFR of Yugoslavia. Constitutionally the Yugoslav state after the second World War is a case, where the Marxist-Leninist theory is adjusted on a state re-inventing its political basis. To this extent inter-republican cooperation was of paramount importance for this proportionate reflection of theory on tangible effect. The Federal Assembly and foremost the Chamber of Republics and Provinces as stated at the 1974 constitution were yet again an evident influence of the Marxist-Leninist influence demonstrating the intention of essential mutual cooperation which would produce a governmental policy.¹⁶

After the constitution of 1967 the Federal Chamber was replaced with the Chamber of the Republics and Nationalities incorporating two legislative bodies -the Federal Chamber and the Chamber of Nationalities- into a new governmental instrument which would assume gradually up until the constitution of 1974 responsibility for every aspect concerning legislation. Ratification of treaties, federal budget , social planning, approval of defense budget, and receiving recommendations by the Presidency were some of the core tasks of this new body.¹⁷ Hoping that this Chamber would support the further enhancement of inter-ethnic cooperation and the establishment of a federal state reality this new organ would assume the role of a "Federal Parliament". The nature of the delegates status was another example that may show this reflection of theoretical federalism on a practical application on the field of governance; The delegates participating at the Chamber of the Republics and Nationalities were chosen from their local provincial or republican assemblies. Thus

¹⁵ B.T.Bлагоjević (ed.), *Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, Institut of Comparative Law, Beograd, 1963. p.3-4

¹⁶ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 65-66

¹⁷ *ibid.* pp. 67-68

they had the mandate of their home region in their representation in the central legislature in Belgrade. Moreover they were to remain in their positions as delegates in their home republics-autonomous regions, demonstrating again the connection between Federal entities and the central authority.¹⁸

The executive power's structure, after the death of Tito -which was proclaimed lifelong President- was also inspired by a federalist idea with a decentralizing notion. President of the Socialist Federation was named one of the representatives of the Republics appointed as a delegate to the presidency, in an annual bases.¹⁹ This collective presidency through a rotating "President of the presidency" could be probably characterized as the amalgamation of the decentralization efforts within the Yugoslav politics context. Prior to that in 1969 with the republican amendments the SR's were given the possibility to bypass basic policies(e.g. foreign relations, military affairs, central economical planning) that are retained from the central authority in any federal state. The amendments mentioned above allowed the SR's to enter autonomously in diplomatic relations with third states without the immediate intervention of Belgrade. As a result the SFR of Slovenia and Croatia initiated contacts on a bilateral level with the neighboring countries i.e. Hungary and Austria.²⁰ The 1974 constitution had as an outcome an even bigger decentralization of the state and the formation of a state with practically loose confederate relations, for the Republics regulated alone almost every affair within their territory whilst the vast majority of the civil servants that manned the state posts of the Republics within their administrative borders came from the local communities.

However one must not neglect nor forget the regional movements that also promoted unity of the various nations under one common state, before the appearance of socialism in the Balkan and Yugoslav region. Yugoslavism was the other important ideology that has played an essential role concerning the unification of the Yugoslavs. Not only the first Yugoslavian state (Kingdom) but also the post-war Yugoslavia found their roots partially in the existence of this movement. Yet one might say that the existence of Federal Yugoslavia did not come primarily as an answer to internal problems between nationalities created during the period of the first Yugoslav state.

¹⁸ Yet this points out a sort of an oxymoron within the context of a Federal Republic that strived to overcome ethnic rivalries and create a socialist state that would eventually wither away as one.

¹⁹ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 69-71

²⁰ *ibid.* pp. 75-76

The Yugoslav nationality existed long before the creation of the SFR of Yugoslavia and was accepted as a form of common identity by the majority of the nationalities within the Yugoslav Kingdom.²¹ By creating a federal state and equal rights for every of the six nations²² that constituted the Federal Republic J.B.Tito contributed to some extent at the "boosting" of the local national identities and subsequently at the creation of the nationalist ideology that dissolved Yugoslavia.

On our search for the ideological means that have "justified" the unification of six nations under one identity we find ourselves impelled to analyze furthermore the Yugoslavist movement and the common identity it wished to shape. Therefore beginning from the Illyrian movement ('Illyrianism') of the mid-nineteenth century, the predecessor of Yugoslavism which referred at the existence of a common nation based on the same (Southern) Pan-Slavic notion upon which Yugoslavism was founded we ought to look into the core elements of Yugoslavism and the national common grounds it shaped between nationalities that were trying to tear each other apart at the wars of 1990.²³ Illyrianism started progressively to filter down into a movement that would eventually unite all the South-Slavs according to the ideas of one of his "disciples" the Croat Ljudevit Gaj, which propagated this position after the mid-nineteenth century.²⁴

Language and common ethnical characteristics prompted the creation of a collective southern-Slav identity. This stemmed firstly from some intellectual circles of Croat and Serbian origin and started to spread widely at the eve of the Balkan wars and at the first half of the 20th century. In the view of bishop Josip Strossmayer and canon Franjo Racki, the co-founders of the National Party in Zagreb the prospect of self-determination for the Slovenes, the Croats and the Serbs within the borders of Habsburg authority as well as for the Bulgarians had to be sought as a whole for a South-Slav nation.²⁵ When the revolution of 1848 broke out Croats and Serbs of

²¹ J.R. Lampe, *The Failure of the Yugoslav National Idea*, Studies in East European Thought 46:69, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands, 1994, p.69.

²² "...The Socialist Republics of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia..." , Part I, Art. 2, Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia found in, B.T.Bлагоjević (edit.), *Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, Institute of Comparative Law, Beograd, 1963. p.12

²³ D.Djokic (edit.), *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Hurst & Company, 2003 London p.11-13.

²⁴ G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans, XVe-XXe siècle*, Fayard, 1991, Paris pp. 379-382

²⁵ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan Press, 1997 p.12-13.

Vojvodina found themselves in an alliance against the Hungarian revolutionaries and the Regent-President Lajos Kossuth.²⁶ Although this alliance did not last it was yet another indication of a potential Yugoslav unity in the future. Still these supportive opinions towards the future term of a "*narodno jedinstvo*" did not encounter wide support amongst the broad masses of the people.

The idea of Yugoslav self-determination and national awakening firstly came -as almost all national independence movements- from the intellectual circles. Strossmayer founded in the late 1860's the Yugoslav Academy of Arts an act that demonstrated the efforts for wide spreading the Yugoslav national idea.²⁷ Moreover in the same spirit many members of the South-Slav intelligentsia were working on various plans such as the publishing of a Yugoslav encyclopedia -around 1910- that would outline and support even more the establishment of a Yugoslav identity via outlining the shared cultural heritage.²⁸ Many adherents of the Yugoslavist idea were to be found amongst the ranks of the South-Slav (both Croat and Serbian) intelligentsia and numerous organizations formed by artists. *Lada* (The Association of South Slav Artists formed by Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) as well as *Slovenski Jug* (an association supporting the unity between Slovenes, Croats, Serbs and Bulgarians created in Belgrade by members of the intelligentsia)²⁹ confirmed the prevalence of an idea promoting ethnical unity in the cultural field.

Although Yugoslavism was not a widely popular idea from its beginning and only a very few channels contributed to its proliferation -e.g. the organization of *Narodna Odbrana* (National Defense) in Belgrade was founded in order to recruit both Croats and Serbs to fight against Austrian troops in Bosnia after its annexation in 1908-³⁰. The Yugoslavists however, had managed to acquire substantive influence on the shaping of regional politics in the coming future, with one of the most important results of this national movement being the founding of the Yugoslav Committee in 1915.³¹ The Yugoslav Committee formed by prominent figures such as Ante Trumbic

²⁶ G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans, XIVe-XXe siècle*, Fayard, 1991, Paris pp. 381-382

²⁷ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan Press, 1997 p.12-14

²⁸ D.Djokic (edit.), *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Hurst & Company, 2003 London p.226-227

²⁹ G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans, XIVe-XXe siècle*, Fayard, 1991, Paris pp. 381-382

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ D.Djokic (edit.), *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Hurst & Company, 2003 London p. 20-21

and other Yugoslavs from the Austro-Hungarian empire was striving for the promotion of the national-liberal cause of the South-Slavs in the Habsburg empire, in the allied countries and consequently had an essential part at the drafting of the Corfu Declaration in 1917 and thus at the birth of the first Yugoslav state.³²

Although one could describe the Yugoslav movement as a "branch" of a broader Pan-Slavic movement the elements encountered in Yugoslavism tend to differ from the typical key-features of Pan-Slavism. The strictly regional focus and the fact that religion although important did not play a decisive role in the formation of both two states of Yugoslavia, deviate from the standard Pan-Slavism that was encountered in early 20th century czarist Russia. In catholic Croatia, political organizations such as the Progressive Youth considered religious differences between Orthodox and Catholics to be of a minor importance whilst the Party of Croatian Rights endorsed the aspect that Serbs and Croats are going to construct the citizenry of a future south-Slavic state.³³

This state that would unify the Slavs of the South and was visualized from the Yugoslavists was not solely a vision about a common country but at the time the formation of a unified Yugoslav state appeared to be an alternative, providing many of the Habsburg empire South-Slavs (Croats and Serbs) with the political means to their independence from Austria.³⁴ Despite the fact that many times throughout the centuries both Croats and Serbs -the two most important instigators of Yugoslavism- and their irredentist ideas of a Great Croatia and a Great Serbia accordingly, did not share a common plan with Yugoslavist tendencies and perceptions at the first half of the 20th centuries their paths relatively converged. Serbia was eventually attributed to some extent with the role of a Yugoslav equivalent of the Piedmont although not every Croat consented to this unification under a Serbian dynasty.³⁵ This does not

³²The best proof of the impact that the Yugoslav movement had upon the political developments after the First World war may be found in the following passage; "... The State of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, who are also known as the Southern Slavs or Jugo-Slavs, will be a free and independent kingdom, with indivisible territory and unity of allegiance. It will be a constitutional, democratic and parliamentary monarchy under the Karageorgevitch Dynasty, which has always shared the ideas and the feelings of the nation, placing liberty and the national will above all else..." The Corfu Declaration Art.1, R.J. Kerner, *The Jugo-Slav Movement-Appendix II*, Project Gutenberg, rel. date 2005-07-01

³³ J.R. Lampe, *The Failure of the Yugoslav National Idea*, Studies in East European Thought 46:69, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands, 1994, p.77

³⁴ D.Djokic (edit.), *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Hurst & Company, 2003 London p.22-23.

³⁵ we will describe the factor of Stjepan Pasic and the People's Peasant Party and their role at the early years of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) later on in this chapter.

mean that Slovenes and Croats shared the same viewpoint of a "Greater Serbia" with the Serbs, but they saw Serbia's potential intervention in the name of the Yugoslavist idea as rather a way to defend themselves against the common oppressor, namely the Habsburgs.³⁶ A new Yugoslav state that would give them the chance to be equals among equals was therefore another reason for endorsing the movement of Yugoslavism that led to the creation of the first Yugoslav Kingdom.

Eventually ideology found its realistic implementation and in 1918 the National Council in Zagreb declared the severing of any legal and authoritarian ties that Croats, Slovenes and Serbs of Austro-Hungary had with the Habsburg empire. The international momentum that deprived international recognition from the newly formed National Council, the military threat from Italy and the civil unrest in Croatia led to negotiations with Pasic and Serbia. As a result the National Council -with the disapproval of the People's Peasant Party- voted in favor of a unification with the Kingdom of Serbia under the rule of the Karadjordjevitich dynasty. Finally in December 1918 A. Karadjordjevic declared the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and with that the realization -in general terms- of the Yugoslav movement's main objectives.³⁷

Nevertheless Yugoslavism did not represent only an ethnical notion which was stemming from 19th century romanticism, hence from a notion of national awakening of the South-Slavs. Post-war Yugoslavism was radically re-defined through the socialist prism. The 'New Yugoslavia' in the eyes of the Yugoslav socialists would have to organize itself in such a manner that it would root out the core of 'Greater Serbia' that according to the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was put in the center of a highly centralized Yugoslav Kingdom by the bourgeoisie.³⁸ According to Tito;

"...In the new, socialist Yugoslavia the existing equality of rights for all nationalities has made it impossible for one national group to impose economic exploitation upon another. That is because hegemony of one national group over another no longer exists in this country. Any such hegemony must inevitably bring with it, to some degree or other, in one form or another, economic exploitation; and that would be contrary to the principles upon which socialism rests. Only economic, political,

³⁶ D.Djokic (edit.), *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Hurst & Company, 2003 London p. 26-27.

³⁷ H. Sundhausen, *Geschichte Serbiens 19.-21. Jahrhundert*, Boehlau Verlag, Wien, pp. 234-236.

³⁸ *ibid.* p.158-159

cultural, and universal equality of rights can make it possible for us to grow in strength in these tremendous endeavors of our community...."³⁹

This passage clearly shows that the Yugoslav idea in the eyes of unifying symbolical figures such as Tito, was empowered with a socialist imperative after the war and combining the remnants of "old" pre-war Yugoslavism took a new position within the socialist context. It is this coexistence of both ideological movements that resulted in the birth of a Socialist Federation in Yugoslavia. Therefore the political feuds and conflicts concerning the Yugoslavist idea did no longer occur on a national-ethnocentric basis, but were based on the predominant -and subsequently explained through- a Marxist-Leninist perspective.⁴⁰ Yugoslavism was aligned along with the Leninist 'withering away' of the socialist state helping the Yugoslav state to decentralize and eventually 'wither away' giving his place to the communist self-governed society.

The new decentralized state that adopted the self-management doctrine (or at least tried to do so) in his state-economy functions according to the policies implemented and propagated by Edvard Kardelj wanted to imprint this decentralization and multi-ethnic equality in every aspect of the state. The JNA (Yugoslav People's Army) serves as a good example, for the existence of a standing army and its structure can provide us with some insight about the implementation of multi-ethnic federal laws in reality. The JNA was forced by the Constitution of 1974 to have a proportional representation of the state entities (autonomous regions and republics) that made up the SFR of Yugoslavia in the officers core of all branches.⁴¹ This would render the JNA in theory a true outcome of a Yugoslav Socialist Federation which would find its war tradition not in the army of the Yugoslav Kingdom but in the efforts of the Partisan Army which were presented as a collective war effort from every nationality in post-war Yugoslavia.⁴²

³⁹ Josip Broz Tito, *Concerning the National Question and Social Patriotism, Tito: Selected Speeches and Articles, 1941-1961*, Naprijed, 1963 pp. 96-105 found in the "Marxists Internet Archive" (www.marxists.org)

⁴⁰ D.Djokic (edit.), *Yugoslavism Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Hurst & Company, 2003 London p.160-161

⁴¹ *ibid.* p.218-219

⁴² However the reality was different. The Serbs prevailed in the officers corps with 57.17% of the members of the officers corps being Serbs ,whereas Croats (the second largest nationality of Yugoslavia) constituted merely 14% of the officers ranks. (*ibid.*219)

Bearing in mind all of the above we ought to say that Post-war Yugoslavia in the eyes of communist figures such as Kardelj would no longer be just a multiethnic state but a Marxist example for the whole world to see. The SFR of Yugoslavia by its multiethnic Yugoslav unity would prove that the permanent answer to the National Question in general goes through the socialist way.⁴³ After the war and the decay of the old Yugoslavist perception the Yugoslavist ideology finds itself indisputably connected with the Marxist-Leninist approach to the National Question. Hence its failure to preserve the state unity of post-war Yugoslavia or its success to do so would show that the communist approach is the best way for the brotherhood of nations making the surpassing of their prior differences and rivalries possible.

Yugoslavism and Socialism were the two "ingredients" that tried to unify nationalities attributed with numerous common elements and cultural grounds, but had on the other hand many internal differences and unresolved conflicts. These rivalries were outcomes of various reasons and gave in their turn the theoretical and ideological support needed for maintaining local nationalistic tensions. Still both of the ideological movements did not manage neither to suppress nor to surpass the differences between the South-Slav nations that would eventually "eat" their way out of the Yugoslav state and prove themselves stronger than any attempt for a common Yugoslav co-existence within the borders of the same state.

c) Ideas that divide- Nationalism

We have analyzed thus far the movements and ideological efforts undertaken in order to dissolve the nationalist problematic in the South-Slav region and we have demonstrated that they were indeed strong and successful in quelling the nationalist conflicts for a long period of time. So how did nationalist ideology persevere despite the apparent success of Yugoslav unity? Nationalism endured for many reasons, proving thusly the failure of Yugoslavism, Socialism and Socialist Yugoslavism to provide a viable answer to the National Question as this was encountered in the Balkan region. The reasons for the survival of nationalism and for its final victory must be described both in their theoretical aspect as well as in the historical reality

⁴³ *ibid.* p.170-171

taking into consideration the reciprocal influence of history and ideological movements.

Firstly the theoretic-ideological approach must be depicted in order to see the general origins of the issue at hand. In order for nationalism to exist, the pre-existence of an overall ethnocentric idea necessarily has to precede the creation of a national idea and consequently any nationalist oriented ideologies. The potential dynamic caused by the territorial historicity alone, can not build up the notion of the National. It requires therefore cultural and ethnical connective links which will be procured through a framework of political and national loyalty to one certain group leading to the fabrication of a common ground.⁴⁴ This common ground along with the "Mythos" of a community -which later on constitutes the nation- as a summarization of central collective figures of memory are the key elements upon which the historical self-images of societies and social groupings shall be build, thus giving life to a timeline that is stretching from the past to the present and extending to the future.⁴⁵ By carrying the continuance as well as the continuant duration, this timeline created by the mythos "triggers" eventually the birth of a national idea.

Nationality however may arrive at some point later on after the people of a community ("Volk") have established common networks and similar conceptual ideas, to which they may refer to at any given moment. This leads to the construction of a common pattern of terms within the context of their day to day and general communication process.⁴⁶ The norms with the reciprocal meanings, combined with the communication patterns of the social networks, amalgamate with the economic-social functions created within the community producing a congruent, relatively homogenized community. This process results to the subsequent formation of a more concrete grouping which we may call nation/nationality.⁴⁷ Thus nationalism as the direct product of the above mentioned social-constructive procedure shapes the conditions under which an integrative community and its derivatives (e.g. nation-state) can be build rendering divisive lines, self-images and -consequently- ethnic identities much more visible. Nationalism as an ideology stemming out of this collective dynamic has been proven to have the power of mass mobilization of people

⁴⁴ H. A. Winkler, H. Kaelbe, *Nationalismus-Nationalitäten-Supernationalität*, Klett-Cotta, 1993, Stuttgart pp.58-59

⁴⁵ *ibid.* pp. 59-60

⁴⁶ *ibid.* pp. 130-131

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

and communities in a horizontal way. This means that the differences met within these communities in terms of class differences such as poverty and oppression may be “subdued” by the nationalist notion and the cultural ties it primarily utilizes.

These cultural connections originate from the communication of the community. Moreover the socially standardized behavioral contexts which are brought to "life" by the repetition of broadly accepted ways of thought and means of social interaction (e.g. language) inside the community may constitute a so called "national character" which assisted by an institutionalization of this pattern (e.g. through the organization of an educational system/tradition) could contribute to the creation of a "national conscience".⁴⁸ This "community of culture" is accompanied by the common verbal connotations that shall form the speech (language pattern), thus giving the social grouping another reference point of collectivity. Recognition of the words and verbal symbolisms that are used by most members of the group forms the common means of information sharing, that are going to serve as an interpretational framework amongst them used on every aspect of social interaction.⁴⁹ Hence the use of language and the prevalence or imposition of a specific language group, such as the stokavian dialect in the case of Serbo-Croatian, enhances the shared identity building process inside a community.

The means and interlocked communicative relations between the individuals that consist the social grouping are one of the most important characteristics of a collective identity and in our case in the collective identity upon which the nation is built. As Karl Deutsch notes;

" [...] It requires so to speak , equipment for a job. This job consists in the storage, recall, transmission , recombination and reapplication of relatively wide ranges of information; and the "equipment" consists in such learned memories , symbols , habits , operating preferences , and facilities as will in fact be sufficiently complementary to permit the performance of these functions. *A larger group of persons linked in such complementary habits and facilities of communication* we may call *people* [...]"⁵⁰

⁴⁸ K.W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication -An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, M.I.T. Press, 1966, Massachusetts pp. 36-37

⁴⁹ *ibid.* pp. 41-42

⁵⁰ *ibid.* p. 96 (writer's Italics)

Simple communication regarding specific aspects of interaction (e.g. non-continuous /sporadic commercial relations) does not provide the base for the construction of what Deutsch characterizes as "*people*" (i.e. nationality/nation). However the interlocked connotations are produced through a habitual process, which will eventually result to the creation of a symbolic framework. These symbolisms will establish a common memory and vice versa. As a result the *complementary habits* and the *facilities of communication* shall shape the collective notion known as "*people*". Hence the individuals belonging to the same ethnic group (the same group of "*people*") share a broader field of communication, due to the complementary elements which eventually facilitate the social interaction amongst a group of persons. This ethnic "complementarity" gives the members of the national grouping a sense of familiarity to one and other which because of the cultural and overall wider common grounds enhances the sense of "belonging" and consequently the national identity.

The process of constructing the "*people*" leads to an alignment of individuals which includes a consensus in aspects concerning the economic, political and social sphere. A group of prominent members - a leading group- serves usually as the core, the middle point of this alignment giving the members of the group a centre. This group and the centralization it causes may act as an incentive to synthesize the notion of the "*people*" in various cases. Thus nationality may stem from this kind of alignment in larger numbers of individuals which are connected to these leading groups as well as regional centers and as we've mentioned before, utilize numerous elements of a complementary communicative manner in their social interactions to one another.⁵¹ The case of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Yugoslav Committee that promoted the idea of the Yugoslav state serve as an accurate example where the leading group - "the established upper-class of the moment" as Deutsch notes- was mainly consisted of intellectuals that were striving for the establishment of a nationality.⁵²

It is this alignment, these interlocked complementary relations and finally the sense of "familiarity", that renders the piercing of all social strata possible. Nationality gives a promise of security, a sense of privilege, for the individual may identify him/herself with the rest of the "*people*" whereas his/her class does not offer the same conditions.

⁵¹ *ibid.* pp. 100-101

⁵² Although it should be noted here that as we will see later on the Yugoslav "people" did not reflect such a strong collective identity.

This promise of opportunity within a group of your "own people", of distinctiveness when compared to the "other" make the particularity and importance of communication patterns even more apparent.⁵³ If we apply this hypothesis to the final years of the socialist unified state of Yugoslavia we might see some correlation. For example the richer northern republics didn't want to be a part of a state where they shared their wealth with the rest of the Socialist Republics. Thus when the loss of a symbol that unified Yugoslavia (Tito), combined with the economic crisis in the '80ies this promise of national prosperity and the potential benefits that seem to come out of it were brought to surface.

Ethnocentrism as a product generated by the existence of nationality/ethnicity finds its "baseline" in the divisive line drawn between the various "*people*". It needs to condemn and diminish the characteristics both cultural and social found in other groupings.⁵⁴ In other words one of the most essential parts of nationalism as well as of ethnocentrism is the existence of the "other". If the "other" does not exist its existence is invented, in order for the one "*people*" to compare itself to another thus finding -or inventing- its own special features and characteristics.

On the contrary of what adherents of local nationalisms may believe the nationalist idea is a "child" of the contemporary political thought following the French revolution -in general- with its roots located in the political modernity. Although the "hallowed antiquity" of many national groupings has been used for the resurrection of an allegedly dormant nationalist sentiment, nationalism came as an answer to the outdated and delegitimized institution of multiethnic monarchs. Many theories such as what Hobsbawm called "invented tradition", Anderson's "imagined communities" and Gellner's "political principle of nationalism" were introduced so that the origins of nationalism might be explained. The common identity formed through either the invention of -prior non existent- traditions as the means for the formation of a community or by invoking the dormant nationalist sentiment of the already existing nation that was up until some historical point not aware-not "awake".⁵⁵

⁵³ *ibid.* pp. 102-103

⁵⁴ S. P Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 20-21

⁵⁵ E. Gellner, *Nationalism*, Weidenfield & Nicolson, London, 1997 pp. 8-10.

Nationalism according to Gellner is "...a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond..."⁵⁶. As we have seen until now culture is a key factor that facilitates the structuring of ties amongst the members of a certain social group that gradually may -or may not- form a national grouping and finally a 'nation'. Ernest Gellner comes yet another time to verify the importance of the notion of communality in terms of culture. The idea of nationalism either originates from or needs the existence of a centralized power usually a nation-state that would take up the role of the unifying force.⁵⁷ Consequently, nationalists believe that nationalism is omnipresent, that it exists at all times and that no version of organized social form with an administrative character (e.g. state) could exist without any nationalist/ethnocentric reference or baseline. It is the logical order of things which does not allow any room for a de-homogenized society to exist. Thus according to the nationalist ideology society refers to a homogenous, unified group defined as a nation, whereas any other form of social structure does not appear to be logical.⁵⁸

We have already mentioned that supporters of the nationalist ideas claim that the existence of nationalism comes from the need of a nation for the creation -or for the safeguarding- of a state which would solely include the nation at hand. Nationalism in other words in the eyes of nationalist-oriented ideologists is self-evident from the moment that the existence of its equivalent group is announced. However this nation and its nationalist sentiment are nor discovered nor invented. They were there all along waiting for the moment of the "awakening".⁵⁹ If we observe various nationalist movements we may indeed prove this hypothesis to be true. In our case the "thousand years old" efforts of the Croat nation to have its own state, the lost empire of Stephen Dushan and the struggles of the Serbs for independence against the Ottoman empire were used by numerous nationalistic circles in the South-Slav territory in order to support both the historical continuity of the nations mentioned or to revive -awaken- the dormant nationalist sentiment amongst them.

Yet this sentiment can be undermined and its voice silenced when confronted with an authority widely recognized -therefore legitimized- which has established a framework of social life that provides prosperity, security and overall economic

⁵⁶ *ibid.* pp.3-4

⁵⁷ *ibid.* pp.5-7

⁵⁸ R.M. Hayden, *Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-determination and Ethnic-Cleansing in Yugoslavia*, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23 , No. 4 (Nov. ,1966) pp. 783-801

⁵⁹ E.Gellner, *Nationalism*, Weidenfield & Nicolson, London, 1997pp. 8-11

growth, putting cultural connections in a second place in comparison to the importance that this *Wohlfartsstaat* has in the life of its members. Hence, we have witnessed the existence and collapse of state socialism under -among other factors- the pressure of economic collapse in the 20th century. When the conditions of prosperity exist nationalism can be covered in obscurity but when the authority loses its legitimization through its failure to provide a "flourishing" economy, then nationalism arises once again with its promise for national prosperity.⁶⁰

It can be said that nationalism and ethnocentrism do find a foothold and a *raison d'être* in culture and the connective connotations that it creates. Nevertheless culture has many aspects and we ought to focus on those aspects, that in the age of modernity -since nationalism is the "offspring" of modernity- have motivated the appearance of nationalist-oriented movements. In the time of multiethnic empires where the king was appointed by god himself ethnicity had little to do with the foundation of a state. When romanticism emerged it contributed to the creation -or the "awakening" - of nationalistic tendencies opposing the monarchial concept of governance. Regarding the Balkans these tendencies were expressed through irredentist national revolts. Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians ,until that point the Sultan's subjects, started cultivating a nationalist sentiment originating both by the diffusion of localized literature, that propagated common reference points of cultural nuances as well as by the feeling of belonging to a distinct group based on the differences shaped by religion⁶¹. So we may reach to the conclusion that culture connected with a specific territory, attributes a social grouping the possibility to differ from the rest of the co-habitants of the same region -and of the world- giving rise to a feeling of uniqueness that may generate at some point nationalistic notions.

This social formations that have constituted the modern nations are counting on this sense of distinctiveness and of "belonging", in order to maintain their coherence. But how do these groupings that wish to render themselves a common reference point for large numbers of individuals manage to unify so many? In other words how can members of any nation identify themselves as such and thus correlate with the rest of their co-members since they will most probably never meet every other member of this social grouping? It is in this point where Anderson responds with the notion of an

⁶⁰ *ibid.* pp. 48-49

⁶¹ *ibid.* pp. 41-44

"*imagined community*". It is characterized as an imagined one, because no one of its members will ever meet each and every one of his/hers fellow members, but they will nevertheless cultivate the image of their mutual communion as participants of the same social "platform" that acknowledges specific and distinct characteristics when compared to other similar groupings.⁶² Its element of community finds its roots in the concept -as we have already mentioned- of a "deep horizontal comradeship".⁶³

As we have already explained the term "nation" can be located in the epoch of modernity. Its predecessor endorsed a rather different source of legitimization i.e. a different state apparatus. The monarch of the Middle Ages had little to do with the contemporary nuance of "nation". The "*Kaisertroue*" were in the eyes of the Austrian Empire primary the loyal subjects of the Habsburg dynasty and secondly members of a specific religious or ethnic community. The linkage between monarch and god constructed the divinity that legitimized the core of the state through the support of religion (in the case of Europe the church). The church and the language it used was not only a communication code it was an access to the predominant ontological truth.⁶⁴ It provided a widely accepted common social code that constructed the social means of interpretation. Therefore the knowledge of Latin gave a sort of privileged contact with this social code that defined society majorly. Along with a conception of time that dictated the unbreakable, undisputed bond between the origins of mankind and the existence of the world, the context within the social interaction took place averted society from considering reference points that indicated a different communality.

Through the appearance and prevalence of print-capitalism , the elevation of many of the vernacular languages to the language of the state i.e. the administrative language and the redefinition of the notion of time due to the apparition of localized literature that proposed something else other than the anticipation of judgment time and the word of god were factors of great importance as well when it came to the origins of the national idea in its historical development.⁶⁵ Anderson believes that the existence of print-capitalism has been one of the initial causes that enabled the foundation of a national idea. Indeed many historical facts support this hypothesis and

⁶² B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1991, New York pp. 6-9

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ *ibid.* pp. 36-37

⁶⁵ *ibid.* pp. 22-39

the link between the formation of a national "conscience" (a national "awakening" according to Gellner) and printed works.⁶⁶

Print-language forged common grounds of communication below Latin and above the -linguistically- unstable vernacular, whilst helping to solidify the broadly used vernacular -thus giving the starting position from which a national feeling could arise- attributing to it an aspect of continuity and antiquity. Print-language enabled therefore, the creation of this new language of power as we have already mentioned , that acquired a wider spectrum of legitimization compared to the administrative language.⁶⁷ In other words when the first newspaper written in the vernacular, started to be widely distributed society members begun to realize that they are part of a larger community that has its own perspective and that his/her fellow member is connected to him/her through the social ties provoked by this communality.

This first stage plants the seed of nationalism. It is the moment before nationalism becomes "self-aware" and consequently proliferate the concept of nation amongst society members. Yet when the old power centers realized that the legitimacy they had was beginning to wear out they responded by assimilating into the new reality, for it was the only way for the perpetuation of their authority. So we may observe that the old centers of authority managed to "nationalize" their multi-ethnic -in many cases colonial- empires (or reinforce secessionist nationalistic movements) under the auspices of progress.

Modern school education that distributed the ideas of the metropolis to the youth throughout the whole of the empire redefining the educational lieu by building new contexts away from the localized intimacy of the community, new technologies that facilitated travelling of larger numbers of individuals and the public servants/functionaries needed for implementing the central planning of the administration, which had to be bilingual in order to implement the state policy in every corner of the empire ,created the conditions for a different interpretation of

⁶⁶ e.g. the printing of the "Hellenic Nomarchy" (a pamphlet that supported republicanism, democracy and independence for the Greeks) which is considered to be one of the most influential works written about Greek national independence in 1806 affected greatly the circles that propagated the national movement within the Greek community of the Ottoman Empire. Another example of the correlation between print capitalism- nationalist movement was the circulation of the Romanian newspaper "*Romania*" in 1840 and the publication of "*Dacia Literara*" by M.Kogalniceanu, which was the first Romanian political and literary journal with patriotic references.

⁶⁷ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, 1991, New York pp. 44-47

social space.⁶⁸ This contributed to the eventual outcome of either the unification of a previously , historically dispersed ethnical grouping (e.g. Germany) by making the central-state authority omnipresent or to the dissolution of the state by helping its members realize that they had no substantive connections to the central authority, thus it was no longer legitimized to rule them.⁶⁹

It is at this point where two or more imagined communities may form a contradictory juxtaposition thus causing friction and possible conflict. In the case of Yugoslavia the failure to embed in the conscience of a multiethnic society one common (supra)national identity was one of the causes of the conflict. By not imagining the existence of a Yugoslav community that surpassed every other ethnical identity, nationality retained an important position that evidently defined the structure of the regional imagined communities.⁷⁰ Yet all of the proper "ingredients" postulated by Anderson were present in the case of Yugoslavia both before the war as well as after. However the imagined communities that pre-existed were not overcome giving us the results of the 90ies armed conflicts.

In addition , one has to place particular emphasis on the importance of technological progress and the novelties it caused, for the industrial era has shaped the age of modernity and subsequently our times not only on the aspects of technology. The old agrarian community that helped preserving the *anciennes regimes* was surpassed by the horizontal pervasion of society provided by the new social product of an industrialized society.⁷¹ Through the prevalence of the industrialized model we see that the means of production are now transferred to the urban centers thus dismantling the social structure that existed and structuring henceforth a new system which will allow the construction of new masses in search of a new collective identity.

We have mentioned above continuation and historical continuity as another one of the "ingredients" that might help us contextualize the major cornerstones that give the

⁶⁸ *ibid.* pp.114-116

⁶⁹ To the same extent E.Gellner states: "...[Nationalism] It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated , academy-supervised idiom , codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous , impersonal society , with mutually substitutable atomized individuals , held together above all by a shared culture of this kind , in place of a previous complex structure of local groups , sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves....." E.Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, 1996 ,Oxford pp. 57

⁷⁰ R.M. Hayden, *Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-determination and Ethnic-Cleansing in Yugoslavia*, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23 , No. 4 (Nov. ,1966) pp. 783-801

⁷¹ E.Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, 1996, Oxford pp. 40-42

nationalist construct the shape it has. When observing the culture of nations and social groupings that might be attributed with the characterization of "nation" we may witness the existence of repeated rituals originating from -based on- a cultural background found within the community. These rituals are commonly named as "traditions" and in many cases they are invented from the pre-dominant authority within the social grouping in order to shape a common -national- conscience.⁷² Traditions help societies to shape cultures and social rituals by providing the social grouping with conformity. E.J. Hobsbawm gives a rather accurate definition of this phenomenon;

"...Inventing traditions , it is assumed here , is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization ,characterized by reference to the past , if only by imposing repetition..."⁷³

By introducing commemorative days and celebrations of historical events with an annual repetition , through the establishment of a new system(educational system overseen by the state) that would institutionalize the prevalent political ideology - ideological perspective- and even by erecting monuments for personalities that can be identified as main characters of major events a state can build up the new - or "awaken" the dormant- national conscience, the political elite strives for the creation of a national conscience.⁷⁴

This process of "traditionalizing" is distinguished also by the retrospective contemplation of past events and folklore myths as well as by laying down distinctive lines for "what is not of us" and the appropriate traditions through memory days and monuments in memory of victories upon the "other", the foreign that threatens the nation, proving accordingly its existence whilst rendering the need for national unity even more important.⁷⁵ Whether it was through instituting new common reference points that would work connotatively and bring us the new traditional "product" , such

⁷² E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, Great Britain, pp. 263-265

⁷³ *ibid.* pp. 4-5

⁷⁴ *ibid.* pp. 270-271 (Although Hobsbawm takes into account the policies established by the Third Republic in France in order to embed Republicanism in the civic society, we are able to come up with a corresponding event -a tradition- in the Yugoslav case; the celebration of St. Vitus Day (Vidovdan) in contemporary Yugoslavia - today Serbia- as a commemoration of the Battle of Kosovo in the 14th cent. AD , symbolizing Serbian patriotism.)

⁷⁵ *ibid.* pp. 276-279

as the adoption of national sports or by establishing in public opinion the traditional attire as a representative mark of nationhood, invented traditions have the means to strengthen the sense of community amongst the members of a cultural grouping supporting the solidification of the national notion.⁷⁶ However all of the above do not suggest that tradition is merely -and solely- a politically constructed fallacy, but rather pointing to the fact that the parts which are intentionally invented or in some cases re-invented/rediscovered to justify a national unity which did not pre-exist, are there so that a politicized notion of culture may find a way to manifest itself prevailing - eventually- on society.

Nationalism and nation are two terms that simultaneously manifest themselves as a political ideology destined to be experienced by the masses, having an evident interconnection; i.e. one may not exist without the other. Therefore after the appearance and establishment of the idea of the National the results generated by it -at least in Europe- could be categorized in two wider categories; either nationalism evolves and adopts itself in the old kingdom of the Middle ages (as we have similarly advocated before) or transforms itself into a national movement in areas where the ethnic/national grouping does not have directly the power in its hands, whereas this does not mean that this movement will deterministically strive solely for the establishment of its own independent nation-state.⁷⁷

Yet again in national movements it is the educated elites that usually instigate or animate the national notion. Nevertheless we ought to underline this nuance between the elites found in the national movements and those participating in the case of the state that adopts to nationalism(e.g. France). In the first case the elites that are considered from the nation at hand to be its vanguard, its leading class which on the same time is partially recognized by the head of the multiethnic empire -or by the central authority that holds the power in general- are the ones that ultimately form the leadership of the movement. However in the second case the propagators of nationalism are the members of the same elite that takes part in the affairs of the state and government and is directly vested with power by the lawful leader of the state.⁷⁸ Therefore we may relatively safely make the assumption that at some point the two

⁷⁶ ibid. pp. 297-302, pp. 79-81

⁷⁷ M.Hroch, *Das Europa der Nationen, Die moderne Nationsbildung in europäischen Vergleich*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005, Göttingen pp. 41-42

⁷⁸ ibid. pp.112-114

formalized bearers of powers -power vested by the law and power vested on the grounds of a recognized representation of the respective ethnic community- collide. Through this collision the national movement consolidates itself amongst the members of the national grouping, solidifying eventually the idea of a "national conscience".

The "knez" in Serbia , the "Phanariotes" and the "Prouhontes" in Greece constitute examples that may support the aforementioned hypothesis; in both national movements the one's that were considered from the community as the leading elite whilst recognized by the Sultan as the representative authority of their communities, were the ones that instigated the revolutionary idea of a national movement in their regions.

As we have already mentioned the modernization period and its procedure helped nationalist development. The establishment of bureaucracy was a key feature of both the experience of modernization and the formation of the nationalist idea, for it provided the conditions which eventually shaped a "juxtaposition" within the multiethnic empires; the ethnic communities would either assimilate themselves into the bureaucratic system created by the state apparatus or try to exclude/differentiate themselves from it. In other words if and when the ethnic group forms its own national movement it severs ties with the dominating group that has already created its own bureaucracy, due to its intention to build its own autonomous centre.⁷⁹

One of the most important examples of bureaucratic procedures that had -and still has- an evident influence on the formation of a national conscience, is the mandatory military service which decisively contributes to the identification of the male populace that has the legal right to bear arms -thus enforces the will of the state's leading authority- with the power centre of the state. Through this process the state shows its efficacy concerning the connection and recognition that society has with and for the institutional leadership of the state. In the earlier multiethnic empires where the army language was not always the language spoken by every subject of the crown the experience did not result to an enhancement of the connection between society and the state whereas in nation-states (e.g. France) the same experience was far more familiar to the participants, for it was connotatively linked with their overall social

⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 79

reality.⁸⁰ Therefore the latter were able to strengthen their nationalist feeling during their obligatory military service whilst the first were part of a bureaucratic institution founded by an emperor/empress who in the eyes of many based his/her power on a dynastic concept of legitimization.

Since we have repeatedly underlined the necessity of a collective identity as a general prerequisite for the existence of nationalism and the ways its construction is achieved, we ought to expound a little more about the social "products" it procures. The feeling of familiarity (of "belonging") and that of distinctiveness have been mentioned before, but one should not neglect one of the corner stones of nationalism in its 20th century racial-totalitarian version; the element of power. When the consolidation of the National takes place and the nation manifests itself it is at this moment where the nation and the collective identity it carries are given the visage of an individual. From this personification notions like the "nation's interests" or the "nation's power" are ensued.⁸¹ Therefore the member of the nation by feeling part of the community enters into a reciprocal relationship through which he/she too may feel stronger.

Moreover prior to the consolidation of the National the aforementioned personification of the nation may also be detected in various mottos during the development of the national movements that led to revolutions in the 19th century. "Freedom or Death" for the Greeks of 1821, "Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood or Death" for the French in 1790 are mottos that depict the direct connection which the participating individuals had with the existence of their nations and their reaction to the denial of their "national rights". Achieving the final victory against the foe that withholds the scepters of power denying them what is rightfully theirs immerses as a matter of life and death for the members of the national movement.⁸²

Still, the personified attributes of the nation and above all the "nation's power" can not exist without the existence of the "other". When it comes to a nation or the National, the "other" is the other nation or national groupings. By positioning itself in

⁸⁰ *ibid.* pp. 78-79

⁸¹ *ibid.* p. 125

⁸² *ibid.* pp. 127-128

against other nations it may antithetically verify the reasons for his existence by proving itself stronger -or weaker- than the rest of its "competitors".⁸³

d)Summary

Nation and nationalism are two interlocking notions, thus by giving a general definition about the one we may briefly describe and summarize the main characteristics of the other. Ernest Renan in a speech of his in Sorbonne in 1882 defined the idea of "Nation" very accurately;

"...A nation is a mental principle which results from profoundly deep connections of history, a spiritual family , not a group built through a concrete ground condition..."⁸⁴

According to him a nation is both a soul and a mental principle; the first being attached and originating from the past whereas the second is based upon the present.⁸⁵ The aforementioned summarizes in a few lines the parts that form the quintessence of both nation and nationalism. It is this connection -the interlocking- of past and present through a mental image of continuity a will to maintain the historical legacy alive. Through the deployment of heroic figures and facts that outline the collective historic efforts of a group a social capital is created upon which the continuation and the legitimization of the nation's existence will be constructed.⁸⁶ After the momentum of the creation occurs, the grouping -which we may henceforth refer to as a "nation"- is in need of a coherence factor that shall render his existence necessary for all its members and constituent parts. Once more Renan gives a more than adequate concept that engulfs both the aftermath of the nation's creation and collective interactivity of its members that leads -quasi- to a self-evident necessity;

⁸³ ibid. p. 125

⁸⁴ E. Renan, *Was ist eine Nation? Und andere politische Schriften*, Folio Verlag, 1995, Bozen, p. 56

⁸⁵ ibid.

⁸⁶ ibid.

"...The existence of a nation is a plebiscite that repeats itself every day just as the existence of an individual is a lasting confirmation of the life principle...."⁸⁷

Taking into consideration the complementary communicative links of Deutsch's theory, Anderson's imagined communities and Hobsbawm's invented traditions, we may say that Renan accumulates their basic meaning and origins in the phrase mentioned above. For it is the construction of this "daily plebiscite", that is both the ultimate goal and the means of contextual endurance of the National, as we have come to know it over the centuries.

In short, nationalism is rooted in atavistic concepts, used to explain society's origins. In this perception the social construct and its development is seen through the transformation process of ethnic groupings from a community based social form to a nation. Therefore historicity and every notion that implies continuity of an ethnic grouping throughout the centuries is valued by every nationalist movement and advocates of ethnocentric beliefs. Tradition, culture and distinctive characteristics, that could be considered as trivial if seen through a different non-national oriented prism, have been politicized by nationalists. Foremost in the case of Yugoslavia every element that could be used as a mean to empower the national idea and thus to have a political impact, was utilized by the political elites in charge, leading to an open conflict in early 90s and the end of a unified Yugoslavia.

Part II- Historical origins of national ideas

a)Introduction

In the last years of the unified state, Yugoslavia witnessed a general shift and a collective relocation of the prevalent ideology. We have so far elaborated on the overall aspects of nationalism in theory, which will enable us to understand easier the rapid ascension of actively nationalistic and nationalist oriented movements and political parties in the last days of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the united Yugoslavs. This will show us the conditions that preceded the conflict and the reasons that led to it.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 57

From the first years of its existence of the Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes two major poles appeared in this multiethnic state, due to political, cultural and economical controversies. The Croats being the second largest nationality and the Serbs being the first within the new state had to learn to co-exist. The catholic orientated, economically robust Croatian north differed from the orthodox and relatively poor South of the Kingdom, building up a situation that supported secessionist tendencies from the Croat political elite. After the war economy became an essential matter for the Socialist Republic and despite the fact that new nationalities arose in the new state of Yugoslavia the Croatian and Slovene Republics of the north had a higher per capita income compared to the Yugoslav south. Whilst the per capita income in the S.R. of Macedonia was 36% lower than the national average the Slovene was 95% higher than the national average in 1963.⁸⁸ This antithesis along with a Serbian tendency to lead and prevail amongst the rest of the economically weaker Republics instigated eventually various political crises between the communist parties of the S.R. of Croatia -as leader of the more liberal economy perspective- in the one hand and Belgrade -supporting a more centralized direction- on the other hand.

The numerous Serbs that were pre-dominantly managing the civil service mechanisms of the federal state and originated from areas around Belgrade did not contribute to a "de-Serbization" of the state image that the rest of the nationalities and foremost the Croats had in mind. Belgrade gradually became another symbol of Serbian chauvinism in the eyes of the rest of the nationalities.⁸⁹ Combined with an allocation of industrialization initiatives focused in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo around the 1960's the Northern Republics started viewing the Federation as an exploitation of their resources in order for the less developed to progress in their expense.

These tensions and ethnic rivalries were to be surpassed and "quelled" through a multiethnic federal model, where each Socialist Republic would be the political incarnation of every ethnic group/nationality within the borders of the socialist Yugoslav state. The endorsement of a "Yugoslav culture" by the LCY congress in 1958 as well as the fact that in 1981 more than one million citizens defined

⁸⁸ S. P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 8-9

⁸⁹ *ibid.* pp.24-25

themselves as "Yugoslavs" during the census showing a substantive increase compared to 1971 seemed to be positive signs of a policy that could deliver the anticipated result.⁹⁰ However as history has proven us this was not the case. The revival of nationalisms due to specific reasons starting with the Croatian Crisis in the 1970'ies, the death of Tito, the economic situation of Yugoslavia in the 1980'ies followed by a massive relocation of political arguments from socialism to a deeply nationalist-oriented basis, showed us that the national question in Yugoslavia was far from answered.

Three major nationalisms started their regeneration and energetic re-appearance in the political affairs in Yugoslavia and laid the foundations for the first phase of the Yugoslav wars; Croatian, Slovenian and Serbian. If one of them or even if all of them together pre-existed their time of "reactivation" and remained "dormant" until the '70ies and the 'Croatian Spring' movement or if they came to exist as an answer to other nationalistic tendencies within the Yugoslavian state remains to be closely examined in this chapter.

b)Croatian nationalism

Croatian nationalism was of the most prominent ones amongst the nationalistic perceptions found in Yugoslavia.⁹¹ Having a national myth that located its roots to the early medieval times, the atavistic concept for Croat nationalist circles reached back to the late 800 A.D.. From the historical perspective of Croatian nationalism the roots of the nation were located in the times of Ljudevit, Prince of the Panonnian part of Greater Croatia, who defeated the Franks in the 800s as well as Trpimir the 1st. Moreover the kingdom of King Tomislav was considered to be the peak of Croat medieval power spanning from Slovenia to Serbia including Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁹² King Kresimir the 4th (Kreshimir the Great) and the last "golden" year of the Croat kingdom followed by the Hungarian annexation after the defeat of king Peter the 2nd in Gvozd could be named as the starting point -the baseline- of nationalistic reference

⁹⁰ *ibid.* pp. 52-53

⁹¹ This is quite a paradox if we remember that some very important figures of both Yugoslavian states (e.g. Ante Trumbic and Josip Broz Tito) were Croatian supporters of a unified Yugoslavia.

⁹² I. Omrčanin, *Diplomatische und Politische Geschichte Kroatiens*, Kurt Vowinckel Verlag, Neckargemünd, 1968 pp. 42-91 (It is worth mentioning here that the later king of the Independent State of Croatia -an Italian nobleman- would be named Tomislav the 2d, with the intention of displaying a continuity of the Croat state throughout the centuries.)

and general origins of the Croatian national myth.⁹³ The reason for this hypothesis is the reference made by Franjo Tudjman that the Croatian people has been "striving for freedom for nine centuries now", thus giving us a rough idea about the origin point of the Croatian national idea.⁹⁴

Tracing back and looking into the course of Croatian nationalism and its development through time will provide us with a better aspect concerning its "outbursts" under the political "condition" of state-socialism and during the final years of Federal Yugoslavia. Just before the unification of the South-Slavs under the Karadjordjevic dynasty in 1918 as proposed by the National Council of the Croats, Slovenes and Serbs there were voices that expressed openly both their concerns and their disagreement against the prospect of a Yugoslav state under a Serbian dynasty. We have mentioned before the case of Stjepan Radic and the Croatian People's Peasant Party and his opposition against the union. Radic the leader of the smallest Party of the Croatian Diet during the Habsburg times was the minority that would be proven right in the years to come. His initial position concerning the Yugoslav state was the formation of a federation of four states (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro) after a transitional period, where a regent would temporarily be in charge until the federative state was formed.

However Radic did not overlook the nationalist-oriented perspective of the Croatian independent state stating that a Yugoslav state under a Serbian royal house would ultimately lead to despotism by the Serbs through the realization of the Serbian national myth. Self-determination of the Croats was in his eyes an imperative need after the end of WWI.⁹⁵ Yet this would take place within the contexts of the Austro-Hungarian empire through the emancipation of Croatia -meaning Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina-, for Radic feared that the fate of Croatia if unified with Serbia would be similar to the fate of Macedonia which was experiencing an intense integrative process of "Serbization".⁹⁶ Still by naming him a total supporter of an independent Croatia away from the Serbs and the rest of the South Slavs would be both inaccurate and unjust. *Narodno jedinstvo* still remained a

⁹³ *ibid.* pp. 94-109

⁹⁴ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2007 pp.64-65

⁹⁵ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan, 1997, Basingstoke pp.22-23

⁹⁶ M. Biondich, *Stjepan Radic, the Croat Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1904-1928*, University of Toronto Press, 2000, Toronto pp. 122-123

very clear objective in Radic's agenda as an efficient solution against Magyar intervention and oppression in the South Slav regions of the empire but it was nevertheless -partially- another way of fulfilling the rightful existence of a Croat state.⁹⁷ When Radic realized that Austro-Hungary would cease to exist after the end of WWI and that the rest of the empire's Slavs (the Czechs and the Poles) had no intention of forming a connection in the form of a state union in the Danube region his initial stance about autonomy within the Habsburg empire was abandoned.⁹⁸ Nonetheless Croatia's state right was not putted aside and Radic continued propagating the concept of an independent Croatia. After the creation of the Kingdom of SHS he strived for a federate/confederate state model which would protect Croatian autonomy amongst equal states from unitarian policies introduced by Belgrade. The demands for the establishment of a Croatian Republic, a constituent assembly and national sovereignty persisted and remained the same.⁹⁹

When the newly formed state started taking its first steps, the Croats would see that their equality within the kingdom would be relatively limited. The pressure applied by the Serbs on the Croatian representatives to drop the proposals made by the National Council concerning the two thirds majority in the future Constituent Assembly and substantial self-administration on legislative affairs for the Ban of Croatia resulted to violent protests in Zagreb and gradually paved the way for the Serbs to take over the role of the oppressor in the eyes of the Croats in the first state of Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁰ The apparent "depletion" of the Yugoslavist idea as a national liberation ideology and the fact that the Serbs consisted the majority of the new state had an important influence on the shaping of the Croatian viewpoint, regarding their position within the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and the Slovenes. When Stjepan Radic was shot dead in the Parliament of Belgrade the unity of the Kingdom was hanging by a thread. The fact that the murderer of Radic, Punisha Rachic was placed under house arrest and not executed irritated the Croats even more. Combined with the election of Vladko Mashek as the new leader of the Croatian Peasant Party bringing even more followers to the ranks of Radic's party forged the conditions of civil unrest under which the

⁹⁷ ibid. pp. 122-124

⁹⁸ ibid. pp. 126-130

⁹⁹ ibid. pp. 161-163

¹⁰⁰ A.Pavkovic , *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State* ,MacMillan, 1997, Basingstoke pp.22-23

dictatorship of January 6th 1929, that promulgated the renaming of the state, took place.¹⁰¹

Mashek was eventually imprisoned due to the publication of the Zagreb Manifesto which was openly proclaiming the existence of an independent Croatian state and was set free only after the death of King Alexander and the end of the dictatorship established by him in 1929.¹⁰² Mashek, a successor of Stjepan Radic and leader of the Croatian People's Peasant Party, was successful in acquiring partially what Stjepan and Antun Radic set out to do at the first decade of the 20th century. The new prime minister appointed by Prince Paul replacing Milan Stojadinovic, Dragisha Cvetkovic managed to ensure the unity of the Yugoslav state by agreeing to give the Croats a "bigger portion" in the state governmental affairs. Autonomy for the Croatian Ban, which included all the areas where catholic Croats constituted the majority of the local population was agreed upon whilst Mashek became vice-prime minister and the Croatian People's Peasant Party took over the government of the Croatian Ban.

The *Sporazum* (accord/agreement) gave the Croats the self-government they demanded since the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, while the sectors of foreign policy and defense remained in the hands of the administration in Belgrade.¹⁰³ The *Sporazum* was not only an attempt to rescue the unity of the Yugoslav state, but also an effort to pacify the Croat nationalistic tendencies that found their political answer at the Ustashe movement and Ante Pavelic on the one hand and to dissolve the communist approach that opposed the authority of the crown in Croatia and the stability of the state in general, on the other.

Pavelic having received initially support from the Croatian Right Republican Youth, that contributed to the revival of the Croatian nationalist ideology after adopting a resolution in its second congress stating its demand for the establishment of an independent state of Croatia, managed to establish himself as a political faction that ought to have been taken more seriously.¹⁰⁴ The end of the first Yugoslav state would come as a reaction to the cooperation between the Mashek-Cvetkovic administration and Nazi Germany. By signing the Tripartite Agreement and entering the Axis the government of Prince Paul triggered a coup which overthrew himself and its

¹⁰¹ A. Kossutitch, *The Croatian Problem*, International Affairs, Vol. 12, No.1, Jan. 1933 pp. 79-106

¹⁰² G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans, XIVe-XXe siècle*, Fayard, 1991, Paris pp. 414-415

¹⁰³ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2007 pp.163-165

¹⁰⁴ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 82-84

administration causing eventually the invasion of the Axis powers in the spring of 1941 and the surrender of the Royal Army in the same time.¹⁰⁵

The general unrest prior to the invasion would eventually lead to a polarization during the occupation time in Yugoslavia with the creation of the Independent State of Croatia supported by the fascist powers of Europe, the Ustashe regime and the open conflict between its supporters and the AVNOJ forces, as the direct results of this polarization. The mark of this era were to be imprinted on the Yugoslav post-war history, having a major influence on the shaping of inter-ethnic relations and the collective memory of the local communities in the years to come.

With the Axis invasion the Ustashe movement was presented with the opportunity to impose his agenda in the Croatian part -or at least what was characterized as such by the Axis powers- of Yugoslavia. By creating the Independent State of Croatia under the auspices of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy under the leadership of "Poglavnik" Ante Pavelic the Ustashe were enabled to enforce their program during the occupation of Yugoslavia by the Axis Powers. Ethnical cleansing in the style of Hitler's Germany took place in the areas where the NDH (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*) was the authority. Serbs, Jews and Roma were the groups targeted by the NDH and were systematically exterminated in the Jasenovac concentration camp. This purge of the non-Croat element in the Croatian territory was not gradually adopted by the NDH and Pavelic in the state policy in the same manner as the rest of the European Axis members gradually formed their ethnical cleansing policies. Instead the very base of the NDH was based from the very beginning on the "purification" of the Croatian nation through the expulsion of the ethnical elements, that would hamper the establishment of the Croat nation-state.¹⁰⁶

However in the eyes of the Ustashe, Croats were not situated only in Croatia and were not solely catholic. Although religion was an important element that shaped the difference of the ethnical identities between the Southern Slavs and despite the fact that Croatia due to the Habsburg annexation and the Roman-Catholic cultural influences incorporated Catholicism in the national identity as a key feature that divided the Croats from the rest of the Yugoslavs, the Ustashe did not perceive religion as a vital characteristic of "Croatness". The nation had two faiths; Islam and

¹⁰⁵ It should be noted that Yugoslavia's position was very difficult as it was literally surrounded by states of the Axis (Bulgaria, Romania, Italy and Germany).

¹⁰⁶ E.G. Balic, *When Croatia Needs Serbs: Nationalism and Genocide in Sarajevo, 1941-1942*, Slavic Review, Vol.68 No.1, 2009, pp.116-138.

Catholicism and due to this perception the Slavic Muslims of Bosnia were to be treated as Islam-converted Croats.¹⁰⁷ In order to demonstrate this "dual nature" of the Croat nation Pavelic took actions such as the appointment of a Muslim mayor in the city of Serajevo with a Catholic serving as a deputy mayor.¹⁰⁸

Therefore one might notice that Croatian nationalism in its fascist-totalitarian version recognized foremost the Serbs as the biggest threat towards the safety and prosperity of the Croat nation whilst the rest of the nationalities that composed the state of Yugoslavia were considered to be a secondary problem or even not a problem at all. Despite the clear goals of the Ustashe when it came to Serbs, the term "Serb" was not very clear in the whole NDH's vicinity. Yet again Bosnia and foremost Sarajevo were inhabited by Slavs that were mainly either Muslim or Orthodox and the definition of "Serb" although given by the Ustashe laws categorizing them in two groups -Serbs born in Croatia and Serbs born in Serbia-, did not help in establishing a distinctive group. "Serbs" - for some- were the Partisans or the Chetniks , constituting therefore a political group. For others, Serbs were the members of the Orthodox Serb communities, but in general the term Serb represented the main opponent of the Ustasha regime and the target of its racial laws.

Purging intensively the Serb element in the territory posed a threat to the regional stability and public order, since the measures taken by the Ustasha prolonged civil unrest causing distress to the German military authorities in Yugoslavia. Hence Pavelic, due to pressure applied from Nazi Germany was forced to mitigate its ethnic cleansing agenda by creating an Orthodox Croat church thus "baptizing" orthodox Serbs as orthodox Croats.¹⁰⁹ Germogen, Metropolitan of Zagreb was put in charge until its dissolution in 1945 giving Pasic a way to follow the German directive whilst remaining -theoretically- true to the Ustashe agenda of Croatian purification.

Yet the war years came to pass, the AVNOJ-Partisan struggles were proven victorious and were used as the means to build a collective socialist Yugoslav identity through the common Yugoslav war struggle, which evidently did not last. Relations between the Socialist Republics could not overcome ethnic rivalries despite the efforts for decentralization -which may have also contributed to the final dissolution of Yugoslavia to some extent- and some of the first signs of these antagonisms appeared

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften , Wiesbaden, 2007 pp.174-175

in the Reform Crisis of 1962 and in the case of Croatia, during the Croatian Crisis ("Croatian Spring") in 1967 that lasted until 1972. The apparently everlasting Croat perception of economic exploitation from Serbia and the centralized authority of Belgrade resurfaced around 1969 when Croat economists -amongst them Sime Djodan , later Minister of Defense of Croatia in 1991- underlined the problem that although the Republic of Croatia concentrated a very big amount of wealth had little control over the banking system, which was primarily controlled by Belgrade banks.¹¹⁰ Still this opinion did not instigate the outburst of the Croatian Crisis, but it was rather part of a general discomfort within the Republic which was triggered by a mixture of alleged "ethnic threat" from a growing attempt of "Serbization" of Yugoslavia and a disproportionate participation in the profits-distribution produced by Croatian wealth.

However, adding to this dispute of ethnical nature between Belgrade and the SR of Croatia, linguistic differences arose, enhancing the already existing tension. Despite the fact that language issues were considered tabled and resolved after 1945 , "Matica Srpska" the Serbian cultural association took an initiative for drafting a new unified standardized dictionary from which all parts of the linguistic family that included Montenegrins, Serbs and Croats would benefit. Following the publication of the first volumes in 1967 the Croats saw expressions used in their language being characterized as parts of a local dialect or even expunged from the Serbo-Croatian (Croato-Serbian) language. As a result Croatian linguists demanded Croatian to be treated as a separate language from Serbian, the inclusion of this demand to the Yugoslav constitution , the continuous teaching of Croatian in every educational institution in every place that Croats resided throughout the Federation , as well as the mandatory use and knowledge of Croatian by every civil servant of the Federal government serving within the borders of the SFR of Croatia.¹¹¹

The resemblance of the actions of Matica Srpska to the ideas of Vuk Karadjic and the Vienna Literary Accord of 1850 are visible and the reaction of both linguists and members of the society would eventually create the conditions for the escalation of the crisis with the unfolding of its other ethno-centric aspects. Cultural "threat" was only one part of the problems the Croats were facing in the '70ies when it came to

¹¹⁰ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 98-99

¹¹¹ *ibid.* 102-103

their relations to Belgrade. Demographic decline of Croats in the Republic as well as in the general populace of Yugoslavia, efforts of Serbian nationalists -including the Serbian Orthodox church- to cause a secession of Dalmatia from the rest of Croatia and the revival of symbols of Croatian independence such as Stjepan Radic strengthened the presence of nationalist-oriented politicians such as the leading figures of the Croatian Spring S. Dabcevic-Kucar and M. Tripalo.¹¹²

In addition, the Partisan generation of the 50ies that "manned" the posts of the LCY started giving its place to the younger party-members. Since the experiences of the Partisan movement were not an imminent part of the political structuring process of the new political personnel in Croatia as well as in the other Republics a new ideological base that would rally society around the party needed to be found. As a result, in the 1960ies the new elites formed within the parties appealed to a more nationalistic rhetoric that could consolidate their claim to power.¹¹³

Cultural and political centres such as Matica Hrvatska, the Croat equivalent of Matica Srpska were trying to create a sovereign state of Croats within the framework of the Socialist Yugoslav Federal state following the general nationalist wave that prevailed in the SR of Croatia at the time, after the ousting of Alexandar Rankovic chief of the federal state's intelligence services¹¹⁴. Centralism and unitarism two of the major characteristics of Rankovic's policies were officially condemned, giving way for public criticism to unitarian policies introduced by the federal government.¹¹⁵ Since the Party in Croatia was one of the power-centers responsible for Rankovic's political liquidation, its leading elite perceived his abdication as a Croatian victory and for that reason encouraged the initiation of a public debate in Croatia on the topic of Croatian interests, which would consequently form the socio-political context that would lead to the eruption of the Croatian Spring in the 70's starting with the literary language issue in the late 60's¹¹⁶. Proposed amendments in the Croat constitution and an overall promotion of the Croat language, culture and history came as a response to the Serbian threat felt by a very large part of the Croat population. As a result of spreading nationalist tendencies throughout the Republics and the autonomous

¹¹² *ibid.* pp. 104-110

¹¹³ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan, 1997, Basingstoke pp. 64-69

¹¹⁴ A more extensive reference about Rankovic's role will be made later on in this Part.

¹¹⁵ J. Dragovic-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, p. 31

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

regions around 1967, amendments were indeed introduced reducing the powers and possibilities of actual intervention from the side of the Federal Government. Miko Tripalo was once again one of the protagonists who tried to reshape the state apparatus of the federation through the inter-republican committees which would substitute the authority of Belgrade giving to the Republics more power through self-governance organs.

The creation of five committees about monetary policy, market affairs, development policy, foreign trade and hard currency were supposed to take away the fields of responsibility that were -prior to 1971- managed by the Federal Assembly and redirect them under the authority of nine-member committees, that were consisted of one member from each Republic.¹¹⁷ However the nationalist course could not be altered and when the executive committee of the League of Croatian Communists decided to take action against the primary agitator of this nationalist fever -Matica Hrvatska- it was blocked by Dabcevic-Kucar, Tripalo and Pirker which consequently led to the expulsion of Sime Djodan from the party under the accusation of instigating nationalistic unrest in the Republic. The demands assisted to the cultivation of an even more ethnocentric voice which was now calling for the attachment of western Bosnia-Herzegovina to Croatia, due to the ethnic Croat populace that inhabited the region.¹¹⁸

At the peak of this Croatian nationalistic wave the main demands expressed by the Croatian nationalists in general were the transformation of the JNA stationed in Croatia to -practically- a Croatian army, the relocation of Naval Supreme Command to Split, the founding of a Croatian national bank under the direct authority of the Republic, recognition of the Sabor as the highest authority in the Republic, thus the diminution of the LCC and the largest absorption of foreign currency by Croatia, as -in the eyes of nationalistic circles- the local industry and tourism enterprises have caused the major influx of hard currency generally in Yugoslavia. In other words the nationalistic clamor for reform that coiled around the Matica Hrvatska demanded a fully independent state or at least a confederate status. This triggered Tito's intervention and in July 1971 during a scheduled visit in Zagreb a meeting with the Croatian leadership was held. Tito clarified that Radic was in no way affiliated neither was to be supported by the Yugoslav Communists and condemned every nationalistic

¹¹⁷ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 106-119

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* pp. 123-126

tendency provoked in Croatia, that was using historical personalities of Croatia as a reference point for ethnic struggle.¹¹⁹

Student protests that turned violent broke out in Zagreb and Tito was convinced to dismiss prominent members that were held responsible -i.e. Tripalo and Dabcevic-Kucar-. After quelling the unrest Tito addressed the problem of leadership within the LCY and by the end of 1972 approximately 6000 party members in Croatia were purged.¹²⁰ The gap created due to the purge had to be filled, but Tito for reasons of political management did not transfer Serbs in positions of power in the Republic of Croatia so that the arguments of the adherents and supporters of the "Serbization" threat would not be justified.¹²¹ The Croatian Spring was one of the (maybe *the*) primary cause for the new constitution of 1974 that laid down the foundation for reshaping the SFRY's state apparatus nature from a federal to a rather more confederate one by giving the Republics more power over their own affairs. Tito managed to regain control over the party mechanisms within the constituent Republics but he gathered a great portion -one might say the greatest- of power in his hands and under his imminent authority. In a short-term perspective his symbolic personality and the authority he inspired would guarantee the Yugoslav unity but in a long-term aspect the same direct connection linked him with the survival of a unified SFR of Yugoslavia, hence the state's perpetuation after his death seemed uncertain.

The aftermath of the Croatian Spring had an impact on Croat nationalism until the years just before the conflict. Tudjman, Djodan and other prominent members that actively participated at the crisis were imprisoned and in some cases -e.g. Tudjman- their writings were banned from publishing in Yugoslavia.¹²² The state, despite the fact that Rankovic and the anti-nationalist purges policies diligently enforced by the UDBA under his command were no longer thriving, started locating -some might say fabricating- terrorist organizations with Croat nationalistic ideologies operating in the SFRY. Terrorist organizations of nationalist orientation-existent or non-existent- and official institutions such as the Catholic Church were the primary instigators of unrest in the eyes of federal and party authorities. In the case of the Croat Catholic Church, which in the beginning of 1980 decided to commemorate in mass the death of the

¹¹⁹ *ibid.* pp. 122-124

¹²⁰ A.Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan, 1997, Basingstoke pp. 68-69

¹²¹ *ibid.*

¹²² S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 201-204

controversial and accused as Ushtasa collaborator Cardinal Stepinac, federal authorities initiated an anti-clerical propaganda against the Catholic Church of Croatia which had the opposite effect; Croats gathered in masses to attend the mass as a reaction to official propaganda.¹²³ Along with the actions taken against the Catholic Church in Croatia, which was seen by both state authorities and the Croatian society as the main official *porte paroles* of Croat nationalism, the effort for maintaining an effective crackdown against nationalist tensions was intense throughout the 1970ies.

Under these conditions and a deteriorating economy that triggered an inflation increase, the Socialist Republic of Croatia strived for independence and a new national identity that would prove the continuous existence of a Croat state, thus fulfilling the atavistic "pre-requisites" of nationalistic ideology that would both politically and ideologically legitimize the nationalists' claims in Croatia. It was for this reason that Franjo Tudjman already from the 1970's attempted to "purify" the murders and ethnic cleansing of the Ushtasha by placing the figures and events of the occupation era within the context of overall war atrocities and barbaric behavior. In his view the victims of Chetniks, Ushtasha and Partisans were all casualties of war, hence the Croat nation should feel in no way ashamed for the NDH era. Tudjman wanted simultaneously to deprive the Serbs of the victimized picture that they acquired which created a sense of guilt to the Croats and functioning therefore as another mean of ideological protection for safeguarding the existence of Serbs as a constituent-titular nation in Croatia.¹²⁴

When Croatian nationalism failed to find its answers within the framework of a Socialist Federal Yugoslav state and seceded, all of the above shaped the conditions under which the Serb insurgency in Krajina, Operation Storm and the overall armed ethnical conflict took place in the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars (1991-95).

c)Serbian nationalism

Until this point we have presented the background that "fueled" Croat nationalism. Nationalist ideologies in Croatia were one of the major factors that led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, but many of the nationalist aspects that were generated in the Croatian society were not caused only by reminiscing about the Croat grandeur

¹²³ *ibid.* pp. 205-207

¹²⁴ A.Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan, 1997, Basingstoke pp. 93-94

of the past. As in most cases of nationalism the fear and the threat of the "other" plays a substantial part in building up the nationalist sentiment. In the case of the Croats, the Slovenes and the Kosovo-Albanians, Serb expansionism to the detriment of the rest of the nationalities co-habiting under the same "roof" of the Yugoslav state - both pre and post-war- was the threat that all ethnocentric-nationalist notions need so that their popularity can be augmented.

Thus Serb irredentism and the general context that eventually stimulated nationalist tendencies in the late 1980's bringing into power the most prominent nationalist political figure of 20th century Serbia Slobodan Milosevic, ought to be described in this part. Stephen Dusan and the Serb empire of the 14th century was the momentum of national greatness that the Serbs had as a reference point in the process of building their national myth and shaping the framework of the "Unification of all the Serbs" which would be the primary goal of Serb foreign policy until WWII.

Regarding the historic continuity and the atavistic context found in the Serb interpretation of the national notion, the Serb national myth re-emerges as the means of legitimization of the nationalist notion's claims in the 19th century. Through the use of a historical narrative, that combined Orthodoxy and the Medieval kingdom of Stephen Dusan, a national myth was build invoking the historical continuity and "just" existence of a Serbian state. In the beginning of the 19th century the *pachalik* of Belgrade was in turmoil due to the continuous insubordination of the Sultan's janissaries that led to anarchy in the region. Feeling threatened by this situation many Serbs started fleeing and sought refuge in the forests. The janissaries wanted to establish their power, therefore the elimination of the local Serb authority that could stand in their way -the *knez*- was systematically enforced as a measure to that end.¹²⁵ It is under these conditions where the election of Djordje Petrovic (widely known as Karadjordjevic) as the leader of the Serbian struggle on the 2nd of February 1804 took place.¹²⁶ Although the first Serb uprising met its bloody ending in 1813 it managed to inspire the 19th century nationalism sentiment in the Serbs. Autonomy was achieved by Milos Obrenovic -the first prince of the Principality of Serbia - in 1833 under a semi-independent status and followed an expansion to the south-east with the Berlin Treaty (1878) after having the Ottoman troops expelled a few years earlier. After a while the Principality would cease to exist giving its place to the Kingdom of Serbia.

¹²⁵ G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans, XIVe-XXe siècle*, Fayard, 1991, Paris pp. 244-246

¹²⁶ *ibid.* pp. 246

Serbian independence was achieved -ironically enough- with the assistance of the Habsburg empire as well as with tsarist support. But it was the first state that would be unavoidably targeted by Serb irredentism in the years to come. The reason for that was the Serbian speaking populace within the borders of the Austro-Hungarian empire along with the Serbs that inhabited Bosnia which were part of both the military frontier (Militärgrenze) of the Habsburg monarchy and the rest of Bosnia.

Before the annexation of Bosnia by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1908 the relations between Serbia and the empire were already strained. The coup d'état organized by the military and the murder of king Alexander Obrenovic in 1903 (May Overthrow) followed by the tariff war in 1906 brought tension in the bi-lateral relations.¹²⁷ When the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred one of the first specimens of Serb nationalism in the 20th century was established. The "Black Hand" the military organization with irredentist features that was formed in 1908 as a response to the policies of Pasic and the Radical Party which the members of the Black Hand -many of whom were co-conspirators of the 1903 assassination- considered them to be very mild and disappointing for the nation, strived for the unification of all the Serbs . According to the founders all provinces inhabited by Serbs were to be annexed and unified under one state, these provinces being; Bosnia and Herzegovina , Montenegro, Kosovo-Macedonia (the northern part), Croatia-Slavonia, Vojvodina and Dalmatia.¹²⁸

When the Balkan Wars erupted, Serbia was presented with the opportunity to increase its territory including hereby the majority of the Serb population living outside of the kingdom. After the end of the war Serbia -as well as Greece- had enlarged its grounds incorporating historically important for Serbs (Kosovo and Metohija)and Serb populated areas of the Ottoman Empire. Although in many regions the Serbs constituted the linguistic and national minorities -e.g. Kosovo- Serbia managed to establish itself as an important power in the peninsula taking up a place as the k.u.k Monarchy's significant rival in the South. Through its function as a core of nationalist Serb and Southern-Slav attraction, Serbia was to face sooner or later a response of Austro-Hungarian force that would clarify the landscape in the Western Balkans determining the equilibrium of regional power. Despite the fact that Gavrilo Princip the assassin of the Austrian Archduke in Serajevo had little to do with the

¹²⁷ H. Sundhausen, *Geschichte Serbiens 19.-21. Jahrhundert*, Boehlau Verlag ,Wien, pp.208-211

¹²⁸ *ibid.* pp. 212-213

Serbian state and the Black Hand, since he was a member of a rather anarchist/socialist oriented group called Young Bosnia (Mlada Bosna) the Habsburg crown held Serbian nationalism responsible for the murder.¹²⁹

The impact is more or less known, for it triggered a chain of events that brought the beginning of WWI and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Serbia suffered tremendous losses compared to its overall populace and the war had set the generally progressing state's economy many years back. However Serbia emerged out of the war on the victorious side and was given the chance not only to incorporate the remaining Serb populace that lived outside of its borders but also to co-found a new state which would include all of the Slav population at the south of the Habsburg empire. The new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and the Slovenes was a new multiethnic state in the Danube region that was supposed to bring the Yugoslavist idea to life. Yet Pasic and the Radical party did not forget the goal of a "Great Serbia" and managed to impose a Serb dynasty -i.e. the Karadjordjevitch dynasty- as the ruler of this new multiethnic „Southern-Slav realm.

After the creation of the Kingdom, Pasic had no intention to quit any plans that would forge a Serb hegemony amongst the nationalities that constituted the state. Centralizing power belonged in the agenda of both Pasic and king Alexander Karadjordjevic and it was in this political climate where the assassination of Stjepan Radic occurred as an act of protecting "Serbhood" as Punisha Rashic an MP and the murderer of Radic in the parliament stated at the time .¹³⁰ The backlash of the assassination was the dissolution of the parliament and the proclamation of a royal dictatorship under the reign of king Alexander Karadjordjevich. By using the events of the parliament as a pretext the king obviated the possible secession of Croatia and the potential federalization of the kingdom.¹³¹ It was no intention of the king to have a federation made out of a unified kingdom. It was either to be the kingdom where the Serbs would have the predominant position or to substantialize the idea of a "Greater Serbia" and thus cutting the connection with the rest of the South-Slavs.¹³²

Later on when the king was assassinated and the *sporazum* was signed -instituting Croat autonomy- the Croatian Banate started taking over sections of state policies that

¹²⁹ *ibid.* pp. 222-225

¹³⁰ *ibid.* pp. 265-267

¹³¹ W. Libal, *Das Ende Jugoslawiens, Selbstzerstörung Krieg und Ohnmacht der Welt*, Europaverlag, Wien, 1993, pp. 24-27

¹³² *ibid.* pp. 26-27

previously belonged solely to the central authority of Belgrade. When the regional government of Mashek started recruiting local militia, members of Serb nationalist circles such as the former PM during the royal dictatorship General Zhivkovic considered the situation developing in Croatia to be catastrophic for Serbian interests.¹³³ In general the fact that the vision of the Greater Serbia was within their grasp but it withered away since the Kingdom of Serbia ceased to exist politically after the formation of the new kingdom, did not please Serb nationalists at the time. Croat "insubordination" to the Serb royal dynasty was suggesting a sort of ungratefulness towards Serb sacrifices for the liberation of the Southern Slavs from the Habsburg yoke during WWI and the Balkan wars.

The Serbian element was not only in the top of the ruling class through the Karadjordjevitich dynasty, but was dominating the majority of key state positions politically as well as culturally. Serbs that volunteered for military duty during the war were "awarded" with priority in the land distribution -of previously Muslim ownership- in the newly conquered regions, whereas Kosovo and Vojvodina were witnessing increased waves of Serb farmers that were sent to inhabit the new conquests.¹³⁴ Serb nationalism was striving to overcome the new political status quo of the Serbian nation within a multinational Yugoslav kingdom by retaining the larger portion of power in the new state. Serb nationalist circles had no intention of allowing the war sacrifices to be in vain and thus letting the dynamic of Serbian regional power acquired after WWI to subside.

Nationalism did not relinquish its position in the name of a new Yugoslav nationalism that would support the consolidation of Yugoslav unity. New Serb-nationalist oriented organisations emerged capitalizing on the ideological product of the past years. One of them being the Organization of Chetniks for Freedom and Honour of the Fatherland (one of its most infamous members was Punisha Rashic), which was one of the most precise examples of the continuous existence of the Serb nationalistic element within the new state. The Chetnik Organization founded in Belgrade in 1921 embodied the politicized form of an aspect of Serb nationalism that traditionally represented the armed version of the Serb national liberal struggle in the Balkan peninsula following irredentist ideas.¹³⁵ Accompanied by the Serbian

¹³³ *ibid.* pp. 37-39

¹³⁴ H. Sundhausen, *Geschichte Serbiens 19.-21. Jahrhundert*, Boehlau Verlag, Wien, pp. 285-286

¹³⁵ *ibid.* pp. 287-289

National Youth (SRNAO) and the Yugoslav national movement "Zbor" -the Serbian equivalent of the Ushtasha- Serb nationalism was far from extinct in the interwar era.¹³⁶

Moreover, one must not neglect that the connection between religion and nation is a cornerstone of national identity in the Balkan area. Thus within this context one may observe the strong, unfading identification of the Serb Orthodox church during this time with the Serb nation and its development under the conditions of a multiethnic - thus multi-religious- state with no official state religion despite the fact that the Karadjordjevic dynasty was an Orthodox one. Therefore another basic criterion of Serb nationhood was the Serb Orthodox church with one of the most important examples proving this sentence to be basically right, being St. Vitus day and the sainthood of the leading figures of the Kosovo battle. Religion along with art demonstrate the vital and rather strong presence of nationalist ideology in the interwar period with paradigms such as the Serbian poet Milos Crnjanski implying once more the Serbian society's need for nationalistic references.¹³⁷

After the coup d'état in response to the kingdom's accession in the Axis on the 21st of March 1941 Yugoslavia was attacked from three sides and was overrun after a short while. The NDH was founded and armed resistance divided into two sides was born. The clash between these two camps was not only a struggle for power within the Nazi occupation context, but a collision of two perceptions representing the old order of royal centralism orbiting around the prominent position of Serbs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the multinational new order that was trying to install itself replacing the old centres of authority. The Cetniks of Drazha Mihailovic were mostly based in areas where the Serb element was stronger whilst the Partisans tried to include all of the nationalities in a common cause against Axis occupation.¹³⁸ It is the first of the two names that would be later casted aside as a Nazi collaborator because of his support and his dealings with the head of the quisling Serb government Milan Nedic. Nedic a member of the Zbor was appointed in 1941 as the leader of the Nazi puppet regime of Serbia and was one of the many versions of Serb nationalism in its fascist-

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ *ibid.* pp. 289-297

¹³⁸ W. Libal, *Das Ende Jugoslawiens, Selbstzerstörung Krieg und Ohnmacht der Welt*, Europaverlag, Wien, 1993, pp. 52-56

Aryan aspect.¹³⁹ For Nedic WWII although a tragedy, it presented the Serb nation with an opportunity to reattach itself back to its national roots. Nedic believed that when and if the Serb nation could return to its pristine form than it would demonstrate once again its natural inclination to justice.¹⁴⁰

Sadly enough along side with the puppet state formed from Nedic the Chetniks of Mihailovic came around 1941 to its support after entering secret negotiations that provided him with a large amount of money so that he would help both Nedic and foremost the Germans in combating the Partisans. To the same spirit the Chetnik commander Pavle Djurisc was released in 1943 as a part of the German diplomat's Hermann Neubacher plan for the stabilization of German occupation in the Balkans. Djurisc was equipped with German ammunition and funds so that he could deal with Partisan activities in the Montenegro region.¹⁴¹ The same nationalism that has structured the idea of a Greater Serbia was also the cornerstone and the political priority of the Chetnik movement.

In a post-war Greater Serbia Montenegro, Macedonia, northern Albania, the vicinity of Dubrovnik , Herzegovina, parts of Bulgaria, part of Lika and generally speaking all the regions that the adherents of Greater Serbia envisaged as Serbian territory were to be annexed to Serbia and the non-Serb elements were to be expelled from the region for the sake of Serb homogeneity.¹⁴² From 1942 to 1943 Chetnik groups terrorized Croat civilian population in Dalmatia by burning down villages and murdering non-combatants, whilst providing support to Italian forces during anti-Partisan operations. This combined with atrocities committed against Muslim population gave the Chetnik groupings an infamous name as representatives of Serbian nationalism during the occupation. Mihailovic organized his group (which was the largest and most known if we consider the fact that the Chetniks were not a unified army like the Partisans) as a reaction to the Axis occupation but when his and his comrades' priorities changed, objectives such as victory over the Partisans and the creation of a Greater Serbia led them inevitably to a collaboration with the occupation forces.¹⁴³ The peak of this cooperation was the Fourth Offensive (Fall Weiss) where

¹³⁹ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias ,State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana Univ. Press, 2006, Washington D.C. pp. 132-133

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *ibid.* pp. 133-135

¹⁴² *ibid.* pp. 145-146

¹⁴³ *ibid.* pp. 148-149

Chetnik, Italians and Germans fought alongside against the Partisans throughout the entire operation and in the battle at Neretva.

After the war, finding¹² the answer to the national question was given top priority in the political agenda of the newly build SFRY. Already in 1943 when at the 2d conference of the AVNOJ in Jajce, the new form of state was decided and agreed upon, Yugoslavia was provided with a foreseeable solution to the co-existing of nationalities. The new state form was promising and was structured upon the common experiences of the Partisan movement with its supranational socialist aspects that shaped a legacy which could form a common ground for the new Yugoslavia. Yet again the Serbs were linked to authoritarianism and centralist policies. As we have mentioned earlier Serbs made up the majority of federal functionaries in many key-sectors of federal government. One of these functionaries was Aleksander Rankovic the chief of the UDBA and the Yugoslav secret service (OZNA), who would be gradually identified as a key figure associated with Serbian centralism at the time of the SFR of Yugoslavia.

Rankovic was a prominent figure among the Serbs and was considered to be the party member close to Tito that was in a position of power allowing him to protect the Serbian interests. The Serb-nationalist tendencies of Rankovic entwined his name with centralist policies foremost in Kosovo where he endeavoured to safeguard the status quo of the Serbs by implementing authoritarian policies against Albanians through large scale surveillance operations targeting the Albanian majority and weapons confiscations in 1956.¹⁴⁴ His name is worth mentioning at this point not so much for his career as for his political demise and his funeral. When he was expelled from the party after losing his position in 1966 the Serbs reacted and public statements were made regarding the anti-Serb climate cultivated by the LCY.¹⁴⁵ Still this alone does not prove the statement that Serb nationalism found its "icon" in Aleksandar Rankovic but the fact that some years later in 1983 at his funeral a very large crowd was present bidding him farewell in Belgrade may confirm how symbolic this figure was for Serb nationalists during the Tito era of Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 188-189

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.* pp. 90-91

¹⁴⁶ W. Libal, *Das Ende Jugoslawiens, Selbsterstörung Krieg und Ohnmacht der Welt*, Europaverlag, Wien, 1993, pp. 115-116

Although Rankovic was a more obvious case of Serbian nationalism at the time the idea seemed to be entrenched even in other parts of the communist ranks inside the SR of Serbia. Another sample of surviving ethno-centralism manifested itself through the reaction to threat. As we have elaborated in the first chapter (**Part I**), nationalism many times requires the existence of an arch-enemy or in general an entity that visibly threatens the existence of the nation. The publication of a report concerning the RS of Serbia after the constitution of 1974 where Vojvodina and Kosovo upgraded their status and acquired a higher level of self-governance excluding the interference of Serbia, demonstrated criticism against the "reduction" of the Republic's authority over its constituent autonomous regions.¹⁴⁷ The authors (members of the LCY) meticulously refrained from clearly using nationalist phraseology but they underlined nonetheless the wrongdoings of Belgrade against the Serbian nation.¹⁴⁸ This report that was published in 1977 was though not the purest and most obvious example of Serbian nationalism that would clearly insinuate discomfort amongst the members of the LCY in Serbia on the basis of nationalist ideology. At least compared to the case of Rankovic this occurrence was a mere indication rather than strong and irrefutable proof of nationalist tendencies, but when one combines them both, then one might observe the presence of nationalism in spite of the rigorous anti-nationalist vigilance of party members.

The voices of nationalist-oriented unpleasantness from inside the party and the appearance of nationalist rhetoric on behalf of Titoists such as the writer Dobrica Cosic at the late 60'es-70'ies who was criticizing Nikola Pasic for accepting a Yugoslavia instead of a Greater Serbia were pointing out the fact that Serbian nationalism was still rooted in many prominent persons surrounding or participating in the state apparatus of the SR of Serbia.¹⁴⁹ It was another similar circumstance that can indeed verify even more the overall "national awakening" by the late '80ies. Another publication this time from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences where in the draft form of memorandum published in 1986 made clear references to Serbian nationalist aspects stating -among other things- the existence of an "anti-Serbian coalition of Croats and Slovenes" that ruled Yugoslavia for a long period of time

¹⁴⁷ F. Bieber, *Nationalismus in Serbien vom Tode Titos bis zum Ende der Ära Milosevic*, LIT Verlag, 2005, Muenster, pp.72-73

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.* pp. 79-81

which has resulted in the deduction of Serbian territory from the SR of Serbia through the upgraded status of the two autonomous regions within the Republic after 1974.¹⁵⁰

Serbian nationalist sentiments were apparently kept alive throughout the Titoist period as it seems, especially when it came to matters concerning the Kosovo Albanians. The sanctity of Kosovo has been repeatedly mentioned earlier here and despite the socialist federative model and the predominance of Marxian ideological patterns nationalism they did not wore off. As the years went by and Tito died the perseverance of nationalism in Serbia would instigate situations and occurrences that would ensue from the endurance of ethno-centralized sentiments. Slobodan Milosevic's rise to power of was one of the most important ones and was triggered by the situation of Kosovo Serbs.

Slobodan Milosevic was born in Pozeravac -Serbia in 1941 and started participating actively in politics from the age of 18 as a member of the Communist Party. He became a general director of state owned Tehnogas after his promotion through party ranks and hierarchy and in 1978 president of Beobanka. With the support of his mentor and close friend Ivan Stambolic, Milosevic reached the Party's Central Committee in 1984 and two years later when Stambolic left his position as chairman vacant, Milosevic took over managing to solidify his power by the end of 1987.¹⁵¹ At the same time the situation in Kosovo due to ethnical tensions between the Serbian minority and the Albanian majority were escalating. Kosovo was an Autonomous Region, that during Rankovic's era (in office from 1946 to 1966) and due to his support the leadership of its administrative instruments were primarily Serbs.¹⁵² In a society, where the Albanian ethnical element was dominant and the security services imposed a very strict surveillance policy against the Albanian majority, when 1966 Rankovic was politically liquated the Serbian dominancy supported by him gradually ended.¹⁵³ Consequently, the Serbs were ousted eventually from the Autonomous Region's power organs and the Serb element was targeted by the rest of society as the group responsible for autocrat policies.

¹⁵⁰ W. Libal, *Das Ende Jugoslawiens, Selbstzerstörung Krieg und Ohnmacht der Welt*, Europaverlag, Wien, 1993, pp. 122-125

¹⁵¹ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana Univ. Press, 2006, Washington D.C. pp. 342-343

¹⁵² J. Dragovic-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, p. 39

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

In April 1987 a meeting in Pristina (the suburb of Polje) took place where 300 party delegates participated in order to come up with a solution that would defuse the potentially explosive unrest. It was on this meeting where Milosevic would consolidate his fame and prestige in the Serbian community both in Kosovo as well as in the rest of Serbia. Some say that the events were pre-determined and that everything were set up for Milosevic to appear as a protector of the Serbs because the timing , his reaction, the reaction of the crowd and the reaction of the police were indeed a political "bliss" for his image.

When approximately 15,000 Montenegrins and Serbs started a demonstration ending up at the hall where the meeting was taking place in a - pre-determined- closed for the public procedure the police reacted. The authorities started pushing back the crowd using batons whereas the Serbs found a truck full of rocks parked nearby and responded to the police at which point Milosevic came out telling the police to stop. "No one should beat you, no one should beat you" where the first words of Milosevic to the crowd after signalling the police to let the masses come through. Afterwards Milosevic stayed with the Serbs and Montenegrins that took part in the demonstration inside the hall until the crack of dawn listening to their problems and accusations against the Albanian leadership of Kosovo.¹⁵⁴

The reason for this detailed description of the event is the symbolical position as protector of Serbhood, with which Milosevic was attributed with in the aftermath. He emerged as the preserver of the interests and the security of the Serbs in a region that was already a symbol in the eyes of Serbian nationalist narrative. It was this momentum that would provide Milosevic with the possibility to start beguiling his countrymen in Serbia with a nationalist rhetoric that would grant him a place of power. The incidents of Kosovo were followed by another event that involved an Albanian and a Serb inside the territory of Serbia. When Aziz Kelmendi a recruit in the JNA stationed in Serbia shot dead 4 of his colleagues (Muslim Bosnians, a Croat and a Serb) several months after Milosevic's visit in Kosovo, the Serbs reacted once again with a massive participation in the Serb recruit's funeral in a move of national solidarity to the victim's family. Meanwhile, since the incidents of Kosovo Milosevic began infiltrating the media in an attempt to secure a foothold on the field of political publicity. Combined with his effort to come to better terms with the Orthodox Church

¹⁵⁴ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias ,State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana Univ. Press, 2006, Washington D.C. pp. 342-343

in Serbia one might say that Milosevic was trying to create a new platform that would allow him to claim power not only in Serbia but in every area throughout the Federal Republic where Serbs were residing.¹⁵⁵

"Slobo" was establishing himself as the new persona of ethnic heroism in Serbia slowly but gradually ousting Tito from the top. An overall sentiment of bitterness against Tito, who in the eyes of many at that time had weakened Serbia during his rule. Tito was many times openly criticized with the highest outburst of this negativity towards him being the demonstration on the anniversary of Tito's death in 1990 when around 2,000 people marched in Belgrade destroying things that were bearing his face and demanding his tomb to be removed and sent to Croatia.¹⁵⁶ Serbia was changing rapidly after the death of Tito, as a result of the economic hardships that the Federation was experiencing throughout the '80ies and the lack of unity between the Socialist Republics.

Between 1988 and 1989 Milosevic consolidated his power within Serbia by using the concept of "the nation under threat" with which he managed to mobilize masses of Serbs both in Serbia as well as in the two autonomous regions. Especially when the Committee for the Protection of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins was founded in 1988 with Milosevic's political sanction, the overall nationalist sentiment foremost in the disputed areas where the Serbian element was -according to Serb nationalist circles- threatened with expulsion, was at his high peak. Characteristically the aforementioned committee has succeeded in organizing -altogether- 100 rallies and demonstrations by the spring of 1989 that had accumulatively gathered up to 5 million people in total.¹⁵⁷

Serbian nationalism -as every nationalism- did not constrain itself within its own borders. When the revival of nationalist sentiments began in the 1980's the Serb communities in the neighbouring Republics started "rattling the cage" expressing concerns about the situation of the Serbian nation. Dr. Vojislav Sheshelj in 1984 suggested that Yugoslavia should go through a new territorial division which would revive the Kingdom of the Serbs the Croats and the Slovenes regarding the nationalities. Three main nationalities were to be maintained namely the Croats , the Serbs and the Slovenes. If this were indeed to happen based on the analogies and the

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.* pp. 344-346

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.* p. 346

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* p. 350

nationality quota stipulated in the Yugoslav federal system, then automatically the Serbs would lawfully assume total control of both the legislative and the executive powers of the state.¹⁵⁸ As a result Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and the rest of the recognized *narodi* and *narodnosti* would practically lose their influence whilst parts of the Autonomous Regions as well as of the neighbouring Republics would be integrated to the SR of Serbia. Although Sheshelj was prosecuted and imprisoned for two years and his opinion did not manage apparently to mobilize the Serbian community in Bosnia his case denotes the general "awakening" of Serb nationalism.

One may easily connect this re-appearance of the nationalist platform that was causing a general upheaval with the name of Slobodan Milosevic. He managed to "resurrect" a kind of irredentism despite the fact that all the Serbs were living typically in one independent state which -sadly enough for the nationalist Serbs- was not named Serbia. Another strong example that advocates an overall nationalistic resurrection was the mobilization of a crowd of approximately 100,000 Serbs in Novi Sad in 1988 instigated by the same Serbian-nationalist political agenda as the rest of the pro-Serbian rallies organized at the time. In the case of Novi Sad this rally resulted to the abdication of the provincial leadership.¹⁵⁹ Shortly after Milosevic replaced them with persons that had his favour whilst Serbs and Montenegrins demonstrated in masses once again in August of the same year gathering 17,000 people in Pristina.

This civil unrest and the massive reaction of Serbs especially in Kosovo where they constituted the minority was politically provoked by Milosevic when in an interview to a weekly magazine in 1988 he clearly targeted the leaderships of Vojvodina and Kosovo by making allegations against them of conspiring to "detach" the autonomous regions from Serbia thus rescinding any jurisdiction that Serbia had over Vojvodina and -foremost- over Kosovo.¹⁶⁰ By using Kosovo and Vojvodina as pretexts Milosevic gathered the Serbs around a new cause and finally managed in March 1989 after intimidating the provincial deputies of Kosovo, to take away the province's autonomy through a series of amendments voted by the parliament in Pristina.¹⁶¹ The arrest of Azem Vllasi, leading figure of the League of Communists in Kosovo and other prominent members of Kosovar society connected with the miner's strike in

¹⁵⁸ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan Press, 1997 pp. 89-90

¹⁵⁹ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana Univ. Press, 2006, Washington D.C. pp. 351-352

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* p. 350

¹⁶¹ *ibid.* p. 353

Trepca in 1989 marked the final stage before Kosovo was fully incorporated into the SR of Serbia.

However Kosovo and Vojvodina -although the most important ones -were not the only regions affected by the new era of Serbian politics. Montenegro and Macedonia were also troubled by overall discontent and turmoil. In January 1989 Titograd witnessed a wave of massive protests similar to those in Kosovo and Novi Sad. Moreover the government of Serbia initiated a plan for an indirect "re-colonization" of Kosovo introducing a law , through which the owners of land titles from the interwar period were allowed to make claims on land that they used to own before 1940.¹⁶²

On January 10th a crowd of 15,000 adherents of the unification of Montenegro with Serbia poured into the streets of Titograd followed by another 35,000 on the next day leading to the resignation of the Republic's administration which was eventually replaced with Milosevic's supporters. It was the revived aspect that the Montenegrins were a part of a Greater Serbia that fuelled the tension in Montenegro stemming from the general enhancement of Serbian nationalism.¹⁶³ Combined with the fact that Milosevic would not consent to a rearrangement of the Serbian-Macedonian border , so that the monastery of Prohor Pcinjski would be included in the territory of the SR of Macedonia, along with the potential dislocation of Macedonians due to the land titles law we have mentioned before, it seemed as if the whole region was affected imminently by Milosevic's policies.¹⁶⁴

His "anti-bureaucratic revolution" and the modernization of the state that he propounded were -as history has shown us- a facade concealing an effort to revive nationalism in Serbia. Milosevic invested on the general discontent of the Serbian population and its disappointment by the existing institutions. Through this tactic he managed to grasp the momentum, which gave him the opportunity to ascend into power by shifting the political agenda on an alternative topic, that was considered to be a taboo by the majority of the official state functionaries and policy stakeholders of the Yugoslav state; ethnocentrism and nationalist rhetoric.

This rhetoric began establishing itself as a political jargon after the successful ousting of Stambolic's faction -the supporters of Milosevic's mentor- in 1987 , for it

¹⁶² *ibid.* p. 355

¹⁶³ *ibid.* p. 353

was shortly after when the Serbian media started constructing an anti-Titoist sentiment in an effort to delegitimize its era and describe it as a harmful epoch for Serbia.¹⁶⁵ Along with the massive protests and rallies, nationalism was consolidating its position in Serb society as a new daily plebiscite where the -previously named- dissidents were re-introduced as the new dominant political ideologists in Serbia , criticizing both Yugoslavia and the Titoist period.

Except Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia, Serbian nationalist sentiments were stirring in almost every corner of Yugoslavia where there were Serbs , hence Croatia was not an exception. In this Socialist Republic where almost 12% of its population declared themselves as Serbs in the 1991 census inhabiting the south-central and southern part of Croatia(Krajina) , efforts were undertaken in 1989 for a national awakening of the Serbs. The first attempt took place in 1989 after a clerk named Jovan Opacic and other Serbs of Croatia tried to establish a Serbian cultural organized community, which caused the reaction of the Croatian authorities. The state immediately banned the organization and imprisoned its chief, who with the help of Jovan Raskovic a psychiatrist in Sibenik founded the Serbian Democratic Party(*Srpska Demokratska Stranka*) in February of the same year.¹⁶⁶

Despite the fact that the establishment of SDP in 1989 can be considered as a reaction of the Serbs in Croatia against the "Croatization" policies introduced by HDZ and Franjo Tudjman, Milosevic's interference was far from absent. Jovica Stanisic the chief of the Serbian Secret Service was already from 1989 planning along with Serbs within the Croatian security forces (e.g. Milan Martić) the military means for an annexation of Serbian territories of Croatia to Serbia.¹⁶⁷ A year later this plan would be set in motion triggering the first phase of the armed conflict.

It was under these conditions where the pluralisation of the Yugoslav political scene started in 1988 and reached its peak in 1990 with 86 political parties putting an end to the one-party domination of the LCY. Although pluralism would generally point to a sign of political reform connected with political progress in the Yugoslavian scene this was not the case. Almost every of the newly created parties were ethnocentric

¹⁶⁵ A. Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia Nationalism in a Multinational State*, MacMillan Press, 1997 pp. 102-103

¹⁶⁶ S.P. Ramet, *Whose democracy? Nationalism, Religion and the doctrine of Collective Rights in post-1989 Eastern Europe*, Rowman & Littlefield Publ. , 1997 p. 87

¹⁶⁷ D. Melčić (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften , Wiesbaden, 2007 pp. 132-133

parties propagating the independence of their Republics and their constituent nations/nationalities.

The nationalist tensions of the constituent republics escalated when the Slovenian delegation left the 14th congress of the LCY followed by the Croats after their proposed amendments concerning the political trials in Kosovo, the nature and organization of the LCY , the lifting of sanctions imposed by Serbia on Slovene goods and finally the recognition of the Republic's sovereignty were voted down . The situation in Yugoslavia was clearly sliding towards a dissolution of the federal state.¹⁶⁸

Many hold Serbian nationalism and Milosevic foremost to be mainly accountable for the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia and above all for the atrocities committed during the armed conflict. However Serbian nationalism should be examined within the framework and context of an era during which nationalism established itself as the primary political "fashion" in the constituent Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia. Whether this was a phenomenon that developed independently from the reanimation of Serbian nationalism or an occurrence directly linked to its revival remains to be expounded and further examined in the chapters to come.

d) Nationalism in Bosnia

It is of paramount importance to comprehend and analyse at this point the origins of nationalism and ethnocentrism in Bosnia & Herzegovina. We should heed nonetheless the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina was -and many would add that it still is- a melting pot so to speak, of nations and ethnicities and a meeting point of two of the biggest nations that constituted Yugoslavia as well as a region where each of the nationalities (Croats, Serbs and Bosniacs/Bosnians) encounter their own traditional national "arch enemy". This centuries-old -more or less- peaceful coexistence was in tatters the moment when nationalist sentiments were revived in the Socialist Republics surrounding Bosnia & Herzegovina, which was an intrinsic and decisive factor for the armed conflict that followed in the 90's.

The situation in Bosnia & Herzegovina regarding its demographical synthesis could be characterized as a commonality in the Balkan peninsula where in most cases all of the nation states include within their territories at least one ethnic minority of a

¹⁶⁸ D. Jovic, *Yugoslavia: A state that withered away*, Purdue Univ. Press, 2009, p. 350

neighbouring state(e.g. Bulgaria and Greece have a substantive Muslim population of Turkish origins whilst in Albania one can find a Greek minority in the south of the country and in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia an Albanian population inhabits the Tetovo region). Yet both of the nationalist-irredentist ideas found in the major nations situated at the Bosnian & Herzegovinian borders do not consider only the Croat and Serb populace living in B&H to be a prospective part of their nation-states respectively, but claim the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniacs) as their own people, Islamized during the Ottoman reign.¹⁶⁹

The notion of Bosnian autonomy finds its origins, concerning its historical narrative, empowering the existence of a national myth the nations historical continuity in society, in the 12th century AD. When Croatia was annexed to the Hungarian kingdom, during Hungary's expansion to the South of the Balkan peninsula including Bosnia the administrative status of a Banate was given to the territory, that includes the modern state of Bosnia & Herzegovina (mainly the Bosnian part) with a part of the Dalmatian coast. During this century the Bosnian Bans became gradually more autonomous from the Hungarian crown and shortly after the campaign of the Byzantine emperor Emmanuel Comnenus, followed by his demise -in the mid-12th century approximately- the Bosnian Banate was practically independent.¹⁷⁰

This period poses a particular interest , due to the fact that three of the Bans are considered to be of high importance, for their reign was very influential for the development of Bosnian history in the centuries to come. By examining a little more thoroughly this period of Bosnian history we will be in a position to clarify the reasons for the claims of both Croats and Serbs alike in modern history. Three figures could be marked as the most influential and important ones in this era; Ban Kulin , Ban Kotromanic and King Stefan Trvko. The first of them, Ban Kulin reigned peacefully for 24 years and for this he earned a place in Bosnian folklore as a benevolent ruler ,that tended to the economic progress of his Banate by concluding commercial agreements with neighbouring cities (e.g. Ragusa/Dubrovnik) and maintaining good relations with the orthodox Herzegovina.¹⁷¹ The next most notable Ban in line , Ban Kotromanic was the one that created an even larger Bosnian Banate incorporating territories situated in Northern-Serbia with the lands of the old Banate ,

¹⁶⁹ J.R. Lampe, *The Failure of the Yugoslav National Idea*, Studies in East European Thought 46:69, Kluwer Academic Publishers,Netherlands, 1994,p. 72

¹⁷⁰ N. Malcolm, *Geschichte Bosniens*, Fischer Verlag, 1996, Frankfurt am Main, p. 29

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* pp.29-30

whilst expanding to the west , east and south annexing regions of Croatia and the biggest part of Herzegovina, thus establishing the political entity of Bosnia & Herzegovina for the first time in history (in 1326).¹⁷² Stefan Trvko the nephew and heir of Ban Kotromanich took the throne and secured its power in the late 14th century AD with the help of the Hungarian king. Since, Hungary -the regional power in the North- was preoccupied with problems on its northern borderline Trvko was able to focus on the Balkan South taking advantage of the situation in Serbia after the death of Stefan Dushan and the clan conflicts that ensued from the dissolution of his empire. By successfully supporting one of the Serbian noblemen in the struggle for power he managed to acquire many regions in the South (e.g. Southern Dalmatia , Herzegovina, and the Novi Pazar territory).¹⁷³

As we have mentioned before religion has been, was and still is a very important factor strongly connected with ethnical identity in the Balkan peninsula. Therefore we ought to describe the dogmatic and religious state of affairs in Bosnia prior to the Islamicization of Bosnia after the Ottoman invasion. The Catholic church played a very influential part in the Bosnian Banate but what must be noted is establishment of the schismatic Bosnian church, that pre-dominated the region for almost a century before the Franciscan monks arrived in the 14th century AD converting a large portion of the population to the Catholic faith.¹⁷⁴ The Catholic church gained control over the Banate for the years remaining until the Ottoman conquest through the decisive intervention of King Stefan Tomash in late 15th century AD when he presented the choice to the schismatic supporters either to leave Bosnia or to massively convert to Catholicism, accordingly dissolving the Bosnian church.¹⁷⁵

The Islamicization of Bosnia was a milestone in the history of the region, for it was during the Ottoman reign, when the Bosniac ethnical identity was formed. The origins of contemporary Bosniac differentiation and distinctiveness, regarding the rest of the regional nationalities can be found in the first centuries of Ottoman rule of Bosnia. In the late 15th century the numbers of Muslims inhabiting Bosnia were rising and by the beginning of the 17th century the Muslim population was numerically predominant in the region.¹⁷⁶ Although many have claimed, most of the times in order

¹⁷² *ibid.* p 35

¹⁷³ *ibid.* pp. 36-37

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.* p. 32

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* p. 41

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* pp. 72-73

to support their national claims on the territory and its population, that the Islamicization was enforced and that the local inhabitants were forcefully coerced into conversion, there are no signs of mass coercive conversions to Islam.¹⁷⁷ Therefore in the years between the 16th and 17th century the majority of the inhabitants was relatively peacefully Islamicized. Due to the Ottoman conquest, the subsiding position of both Catholicism and Orthodoxy in the area and the fact that Bosnia was practically almost permanently after the 16th century a frontier line of armed conflict between the Sultan and the Habsburg crown causing the influx of Muslim population fleeing the Austro-Ottoman borderline Bosnia gathered accumulatively a solid Muslim-Yugoslav populace over the centuries.¹⁷⁸

The aforementioned populace stated its distinctive difference from both Croats and Serbs many times and foremost in the 19th century, when the nationalist movements and ideologies of both Croats and Serbs were establishing themselves as a dominant political ideology. In this point efforts for an autonomous Bosnia as they were made from noblemen of the Porte shall not be analytically expounded, for they were not clear struggles for national independence heeding nationalist rhetoric but more of a personal cause similar to the one of Ali Pasha in Ioannina (Epirus).¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless they were cases that could be perceived as the first signs of a Bosniac/Bosnian-Muslim identity, which may be characterized as a reaction to the Croatian and Serbian positions concerning the region. Despite the fact that one of the first propagators of a Bosnian identity was an imperial minister named Benjamin Kallay, appointed administrator of the Condominium of Bosnia & Herzegovina by the emperor, the reality was that segments of an independent identity were present. Kallay saw the creation of a supranational Bosnian identity as a "remedy" to the contesting nationalisms in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

It was in the early years of the Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes, where through the parliamentary institutions the Bosnian-Muslim identity started voicing itself as such. In 1919 in Sarajevo the Yugoslavian Muslim Organisation was

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.* p. 73

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.* pp. 106-107

¹⁷⁹ However it should be noted that the deposition of the Vesir of Travnik-Northern Bosnia by Husejn Kapetan/Hussein Berberli Aga the "Dragon of Bosnia" and his vision for an autonomous Bosnia in the 1830's animated and is considered to be the most important figure of Bosniac national struggle for independence, regarding the era of the Ottoman empire, although his movement came as a result of general discontent amongst the Muslim populace and the Ottoman noblemen after the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-1829. (P.Coquelle, *Histoire du Monténégro et de la Bosnie depuis les origines*, Leroux, Paris, 1895 pp.154-155)

founded with Mehmed Spaho being one of its prominent leaders. He believed that within the context of the new Yugoslav state the Muslim identity could be established as a constituent part of the new Kingdom, thus achieving the creation of a separate Bosnian-Muslim unit within the state.¹⁸⁰ A year later in the elections of 1920, when representatives for the constitutional assembly were elected, the Muslim Organisation won 24 seats and the vast majority of Bosnian Muslim votes. Spaho and the YMO were always trying either to maintain a balance between the centralist-unitarian Serbian policies and the federalist policies proposed by the Croats and the Slovenes, taking usually the side of the latter. Generally the Muslim identity in Bosnia was existent, but throughout the history of the Kingdom the majority of the Bosnian Muslims did not identify themselves foremost as Muslims or Bosniacs but were divided between the two primary nationalities in Bosnia & Herzegovina the Croats and the Serbs. As a result even the MPs of the parliament belonging to the YMO considered themselves as Muslim-Serbs or Muslim-Croats.¹⁸¹

Until the dissolution of the Yugoslav kingdom by the Axis powers the Bosniac/Muslim-Bosnian identity was not fully solidified and accepted even by the Muslims residing in Bosnia & Herzegovina, but it made its appearance nevertheless changing drastically the future of Yugoslavia. In the same manner we may observe the continuation of the Bosnian-Muslim differentiation regarding the rest of the regional nationalities, during the occupation period and the existence of the NDH. Already from the early years, the successor of Mehmed Spaho, Aga Hadzihanovic along with Bosnian-Serb politicians proposed to the NDH's commissar for Bosnia the establishment of an autonomous Bosnia.¹⁸² However, the demands for autonomy were not the only nationalist claim-tendency that the Bosniac community displayed at the time. One of the darkest pages of Bosnian-Muslim history was written during WWII with the foundation and combat operations of the SS Division "Handschar" in the Bosnian regions and the atrocities committed against the Bosnian-Serbs when the Division was used to suppress insurgency and Partisan activity. Despite the fact that the Handschar Division's members were the only SS military formation ever to have mutinied against their superior officers, while they were training in France, the Division was nonetheless responsible for numerous cruelties against the Serbs in

¹⁸⁰ N. Malcolm, *Geschichte Bosniens*, Fischer Verlag, 1996, Frankfurt am Main, p.193

¹⁸¹ *ibid.* pp. 194-195

¹⁸² *ibid.* p. 218

Bosnia , due to the nationalist-ethnic hate rooted between the two communities , a sentiment that would emerge once again in the 1990's.¹⁸³

In spite of the occurrences mentioned above the participation of Bosniacs in the ranks of the Partisans was very active and substantively high. Nevertheless, since the contemporary political situation as well as the borders of Bosnia & Herzegovina reflect the policies developed during the post-war period, thus depicting a direct linkage between the status which the Socialist Republic of Bosnia & Herzegovina had during the years of the SFR of Yugoslavia, one should focus on this era while searching for the origins of nationalist tensions within the aforementioned state/territory. The formation of a separate state entity which would bear the name Bosnia & Herzegovina was not even a thought prior to WWII. However just before the war's end the AVNOJ, when proclaiming the federal principle in 1943 included Bosnia & Herzegovina to the constituent Socialist Republics of the federation.¹⁸⁴ The decision was taken on the basis of a general irredentism-prevention tendency that tried to put aside both the NDH legacy and the idea of a Greater Serbia , two parts of Yugoslav history , which the LCY communists was not fond of. One might say that this was a rather "Solomonic" solution , the middle way, that would ensure a harmonious co-existence of all the nationalities in the region averting future ethnic rivalries.

Bosnia & Herzegovina has maintained over the years the same mosaic of nationalities with no radical changes concerning the indigenous population. Croat Catholics , Orthodox Serbs and Bosnian Muslims have consisted -and still do- the three major national/cultural groupings of the territory. Still Bosniac (i.e. Bosnian Muslim) identity was not introduced as an official characterization for an ethnic group until 1961-1964 with the support of the Bosnian LC after the ousting of A. Rankovic and the fall of the repressive policies he followed. After the endorsement of 1964 professor Muhammad Filipovic in Sarajevo suggested that the Muslim identity question ought to be answered, due to previous experiences of the past where Muslims were forced to identify themselves either as Serbs or Croats , thus restricting their right for self-determination. In the socialist context Muslim self-determination should no longer be impeded according to Filipovic's opinion. The 5th Congress of

¹⁸³ G. Williamson, *The SS: Hitler's instrument of terror*, Zenith Press, 2004, pp. 122-123

¹⁸⁴ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 p.177

the LC of Bosnia & Herzegovina officially adopted to its positions the aspect that Muslim ethnicity should be considered as a nationality equal to all the others in the Federation. Followed by the insertion of a "Muslim" category in the 1971 census catalogues, Muslim nationality appeared to be an established reality in the SFR of Yugoslavia.¹⁸⁵

The recognition of Muslims as a nationality within the SFRY was not welcomed by many political centres of power in the constituent republics for various reasons, many of which are influencing to this day the internal and bi-lateral affairs of the former SR's. By upgrading the status of the Muslim community from a vague , quasi undefined ethnical grouping to that of a nationality every SR , that included compact minorities (or majorities) of Muslim inhabitants or had a traditional ethnic stance towards the Muslims of Bosnia (e.g. Croatia) saw a potential threat for its ethnical coherence and a disaccord with their national perceptions.¹⁸⁶

The Bosnian party was gradually transforming itself -or at least was considered by rival political powers to be doing so- to the adherent of Muslim national identity propounding the cultural-religious factor as a sufficient base for the consolidation of a nationality within the SFRY. Macedonia was strongly opposed to this , for according to the pre-dominant political viewpoint the Bosnian party had a " de-Macedonization " of the SR in mind by establishing a different nationality which could engulf the 50,000 Muslim Macedonians living within its borders.¹⁸⁷ In this context in the 1970's the Bosnian-Muslim identity and its spokesmen began intensively to advocate the consolidation of the Muslim element as the predominant ethnic-national group in the SR of Bosnia & Herzegovina. Muslim nationalists were supporting a change of the Republic's constitution which would upgrade the position of the Muslim contingent to the primary sovereign nation in the manner of the neighbouring Republic's constitution (i.e. SR of Bosnia & Herzegovina should be the state based on the sovereignty of the Muslim nation just like the SR of Serbia was the state of the Serbian nation)¹⁸⁸. This change was not intended to exclude other nationalities-ethnicities from the state, but clarifies -more or less- which nationality has the "upper hand" in the Socialist Republic, thus the reasons for this demand appear to be of purely nationalistic origin.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.* pp. 178-179

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.* pp. 182-183

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.* pp. 181-182

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.* p. 184

Muslim religion was both the cultural and ethnic attributes that helped the Bosniacs in distinguishing themselves from the other two nationalities, as we have already mentioned. Yet, by having religion as your primary distinctive characteristic, in a socialist-(officially) atheist state may cause political problems and disputes. Hence, in spite of the "boost" that Islam gave to the Yugoslav foreign policy of non-alignment, the Islamic religion was improving its stature amongst the Bosnian people and this was not tolerated by the socialist-communist elite. Taking into consideration the fact that shortly after the end of the war, the SFRY followed the example of other socialist states (e.g. the USSR politics since its establishment) concerning the Islamic culture , by abolishing the sharia and the mandatory hijab for the women as well as shutting down the Islamic seminaries and closing down the tekkes. Such actions marked consequently the overall anti-clerical/anti-religious policies of the Yugoslav state, putting the publications of 1979 in the same cadre of general anti-clericalism.¹⁸⁹

In 1979 a Muslim communist writer Dervis Susic published some parts of his book that was describing the collaboration between prominent members of the Bosnian-Muslim clergy with the Ushtasha and the Germans in WWII causing the reaction of the Islamic community. The side of Susic was reinforced by Bosnian officials in an effort to reduce the legitimization and popularity that the Muslim religion was gaining. Still it wasn't until the late 1970's when the situation started pointing to the fact that Islam would be eventually used as the means to the renewal of the Muslim identity in the region. Any demands prior to that although strongly present were scarcely presented and a solid Muslim movement of national awakening -similar to the ones we have seen before- was not evidently existent. A new generation of Bosnian Muslims in the late 70's was gradually increasing its participation in liturgies in the Mosques and Muslim religious activities, after the general upheaval caused in the Arab- Muslim world due to the war of Yom Kippur and the Islamic revolution in Iran (Persia) in 1979. Islam was being politicized and started to seem as the basis of national mobilization surpassing the borders of the Arab world. Moreover if one considers the rumours of Ayatollah Khomeini's portraits being displayed in windows in Bosnia, then the fact that Yugoslav federal authorities were becoming suspicious of this general increase of Islamic activity in Bosnia, does not seem illogical.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ N. Malcolm, *Geschichte Bosniens*, Fischer Verlag, 1996, Frankfurt am Main, pp. 227-240

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.* p. 240

It was under these conditions, when in April 1983 11 persons were indicted as members of an organization striving for the establishment of an Islamic republic in Yugoslavia, supported by Muslims abroad. Two imams and the future leader of the Bosnian-Muslims Alija Izetbegovic were among the ones accused for describing communism as a threat to Islam, supporting the civil unrest in Kosovo and conspiring for the extermination of the Serb and Croat populace in Bosnia.¹⁹¹ Alija Izetbegovic was no stranger to the authorities, for 16 years ago he was again arrested for writing a text named "Islamic Declaration", which according to the federal authorities was promoting an ethically cleansed Muslim Bosnia. This text was brought forth once again categorizing Izetbegovic as a Muslim nationalist/radical leading to his eventual imprisonment after the judicial process, that sentenced him to 14 years in prison, which was reduced to 11 after the accused appealed the sentence.¹⁹² The case of 1983 worked to the benefit of the Muslim communist elite that managed to maintain for a little longer the control of a "secularized" Bosnian-Muslim identity, establishing however Izetbegovic as a prominent Muslim political figure in the Bosnian community. This would have an impact in the years to come on the eve of the Federation's collapse in the 90's.

Having in mind the inter-ethnic historical background it seems only logical that one of the primary fields of political and military conflict would be the Socialist Republic of Bosnia & Herzegovina where three different nationalities were meeting rendering the Republic a "loot" for the supporters of irredentist policies of the late 80's and the early 90's. It was the Muslim national identity that would be put to the test amidst a conflict that would challenge its survival, for in the eyes of both the Serbs and the Croats the existence of the Islamic community in Bosnia was a remnant of the Ottoman era , an era that is considered to be a particularly traumatic one in the narrative encountered in the context of the Serbian national myth. Therefore in the late 80's reports, inter-ethnic incidents were increasing to a point which governmental officials in Bosnia were openly admitting the tension between the constituent nationalities. In 1989 the discussion about the Muslim ethnic identity was renewed by Croats and Serb nationalists claiming once more that a Muslim nationality has no

¹⁹¹ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 185-186

¹⁹² N. Malcolm, *Geschichte Bosniens*, Fischer Verlag, 1996, Frankfurt am Main, p. 241

historical legitimacy and is nothing more than a mere political construct.¹⁹³ The Bosnian leadership voiced its concerns about the possibility of an agreement between Croatia and Serbia that would redraw its borders splitting Bosnia & Herzegovina in two. These concerns were surely not put to rest when the branch of the Serbian Democratic party was founded in 1990 in Herzegovina, alarming both Muslims and Croats alike, indicating the political developments that would follow shortly after.¹⁹⁴

The Socialist Republic of Bosnia & Herzegovina should be regarded as one of the most important of the constituent Republics of SFRY for a various reasons. Bosnia and the region of Bosnia & Herzegovina in general, played a substantive part regarding the symbolism in the new national myth used by the Yugoslav communists, which based the Yugoslav unity on the people's brotherhood as this was experienced through the socialist-communist prism (**Part I- b**). Due to the numerous battles that took place in Bosnia between the AVNOJ Partisans and the occupation forces, the region was perceived to be one of the most important theatres of operations for Tito's forces in Yugoslavia.¹⁹⁵ Therefore and because it was in Bosnian territory, where the decision concerning the form and politics in post-war Yugoslav was taken -as we have mentioned before- this Republic had a particular meaning for the new political elite and the ideology of the new state.

Thus, although Bosnia & Herzegovina constituted one of the most violent post-war theatres of armed conflict that Europe has witnessed until today, one could say that it could be characterized as a paradigm - a sort of an SFRY "micrography" - regarding the overall political goals set by the ruling elite during the era of socialist Yugoslavia concerning the national question; the brotherhood and unity of three nations within the borders of the same state entity. It was the co-existence of three nations upon which the Socialist Republic of Bosnia & Herzegovina was built, after the decision taken by the ZAVNOBiH (National Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) followed by a declaration stating the formation of a state where all constituent nationalities would be recognized and would be equally entitled to participate in the administration and government of the state.¹⁹⁶ From that and from the events that led to the contemporary post-1990 reality, one could easily specify the

¹⁹³ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 p. 243

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ V. Dzihic, *Ethnonationalismus revisited Ethnopolitik ud Ethnostaatlichkeit in Bosnien-Herzegowina*, Dissertation, Univ. of Vienna, 2008, p. 125

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.* p. 126

origins of the modern state of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the aforementioned era, when the above mentioned declaration was issued.

Summarizing all of the above we should underline yet again that a turning point in the SR's history -and for the Federation's history as well- was the constitution of 1974 and the repercussions that ensued from it (loosening of the central federal state mechanisms). As we have mentioned before the recognition of a separate Muslim nation in Bosnia hampered the claims that Serb and Croat nationalists had over the land ,for it introduced a new "player" in the "game". Combined with the economic scandal of 1987 (the Agrokommerec affair) and the implication of a prominent and very popular Bosnian-Muslim politician , Fikret Abdic , which caused the official defamation of a Muslim political legacy in the SR , socialism started losing its power to unify and to provide an alternative answer to ethnocentrism.¹⁹⁷ If we add to that the overall deteriorating economies of both the Republic and the SFRY the disintegration seemed somehow inevitable by the end of the 1980's.

e) Slovenian nationalism

One is impelled not to neglect the nationalist tensions and disputes with Belgrade, that eventually triggered the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. To the peaking points of these tensions belongs the incident implicating the political elite of Slovenia and the beginning of the federal state's dissolution. It was the Slovene delegates that initiated the dissolution of the LCY in the 18th extraordinary Congress, when after almost every of their proposed amendments were rejected by their comrades Milan Kucan - later 1st President of Slovenia- as the head of the delegation left the Congress, marking thusly the last days of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia leading finally to the collapse of the federation. This development was more or less anticipated judging from the general political climate of the time, but the fact that the Slovenes a nation that had practically no experience of national independence in his history, similar to the Croatian or the Serbian historical legacy, was the pioneering "dissident" amongst the other nations of Yugoslavia, may strike as a surprise.

¹⁹⁷ ibid. p. 138

Slovenes throughout the course of the SFRY's history were relatively docile compared to the other nations and nationalities in the SRs and the Autonomous Regions. One of the primary reasons was the economical growth of the Slovene SR and the fact that -as we have mentioned above- there was no strong national myth, which any nationalist movements could use as a reference, that could create irredentist tendencies. Yet, Slovenian nationalist sentiment was there and one of the first appearances of Slovene nationalism was during the years of the Croatian Crisis (Croatian Spring) in Yugoslavia, where members of the Slovenian intelligentsia were making statements considering the exploitation of Slovene wealth through developmental projects for the less developed Yugoslav South. Marjan Rozanc a prominent novelist was sentenced to prison for stating that Yugoslav unity and prosperity were built at the expense of the Slovene nation.¹⁹⁸ These ideas had a substantive impact on Slovene society supporting the notion of an independent Slovene state in the future. Therefore we find the political leadership of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia in the 70's trying to acquire a more autonomous status within the Federation -just like almost all of the other nations of the SFRY- and following to that end, policies that would enhance its cooperation with the West.

Stane Kavcic the head of the Slovenian SR's administration in the late 60's/early 70's tried to build closer ties and connections with Western Europe by promoting Slovenian exports as well as the construction of transportation networks primarily with the northern neighbours of Slovenia rather than with the Yugoslav South.¹⁹⁹ Kavcic can in no way be characterized as a secessionist though, but rather as an adherent of a more autonomous Slovenia. For that the supporters of a centralized Yugoslavia in Slovenia such as Krajger and party member Popit were strongly opposing his actions. Mitja Ribicic the only Slovene President of the Federal Executive Council of Yugoslavia (a position equivalent to that of a PM) in the history of Socialist Yugoslavia and a member of the Slovene party's executive committee was also against the proliferation of the decentralist approach in Slovenia, pointed out in the late 60's that in Slovenia fragments of separatism are detectable. Consequently one might say that the appearance of Slovene nationalism was relatively belated and emerged within the context of the general sentiment of discontent, that started establishing itself in the

¹⁹⁸ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 pp. 116-117

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.* p. 117

early 70's. In addition if we examine more closely the political equilibrium during the years of the SFRY we may observe the fact that Slovenia was one of the primary allies of Croatia when it came to political conflicts with the centralists ,a fact which enhances the aforementioned hypothesis about a belated "national awakening" of the Slovene nation.

Still, the Slovene nation managed to persevere as a distinct national grouping throughout centuries of foreign -primary German/Austrian- occupation , maintaining its national identity despite the lack of a strong national myth. Therefore Slovene nationalism poses a rather interesting and rare case of nationalism, which emerged with practically no references to the Nation's "Golden Age". Culture and language managed to survive in spite of the annexation of Slovenian territory from various parts of the German *Kulturraum* (cultural space). An inefficient state schooling system, foremost in the rural areas of Slovenia, where the clergy successfully established itself as the lone educators of the Slovenes using the Slovenian language in their teachings, was one of the crucial factors, for which the Slovenes managed to maintain their identity .²⁰⁰ They contributed thusly to the "survival" of the national identity leading to its reproduction through tradition, upholding the Slovene cultural core that eventually conserved the existence of a Slovene nation.

It was the peasant masses , the inhabitants of the Slovenian rural regions that resisted against the more powerful Hungarian and German cultures and it was "bestowed" upon them to consolidate the existence of the Slovene identity in the urban centres where it was practically non-existent.²⁰¹ Nonetheless, the previously mentioned conditions resulted to the appearance of Slovene nationalism for the first time in the mid-19th century, around the same time when nationalist sentiments were arising throughout the whole of the Balkan Peninsula. It was Matija Majar, who propagated the importance, that a presentation of national demands and goals would have, amidst the general national upheaval in Europe at the time. But Majar's suggestions were not the sole indication of a Slovene national awakening in 1848.

The national club bearing the name "*Slovenija*" was established in the same period in Vienna having as its purpose to unite intellectuals, in a similar way to the numerous clubs that have formed in many multiethnic empires striving for the establishment of a

²⁰⁰ J.A. Arnez, *Slovenia in European Affairs Reflections on Slovenian Political History*, League of CSA, 1958 pp. 26-27

²⁰¹ *ibid.* p. 29

national-nationalist ideology amongst ethnic groupings. As a result a new Slovenian political newspaper/pamphlet was published -having the same name with the club-, followed by the publication of a memorandum signed by 44 members of the Slovenija association, which was sent to the Assembly of the Province of Carniola, demanding the unification of all Slovenes, that were administratively divided, in one kingdom with a national parliament of its own ,the protection of the Slovene language as well as the attribution of an equal status with the rest of the recognized languages of the empire and the commitment that no Slovene delegate was to participate in the German Parliament of Frankfurt.²⁰²

These demands and political goals set by the Slovene intelligentsia laid down the foundation for the national claims within the context of the Habsburg empire. The promotion of the Slovenian language , administrative autonomy through the unification of all lands where ethnical Slovenes were residing, in one kingdom of the Slovenes and the establishment of a Slovenian university in Ljubljana were repeated as the positions of the Slovene representatives in the Slav Congress of Prague in 1848.²⁰³ Although the recognition of the Slovenian language as an official language of the empire by the end of 1848 could be considered as a success -in general- of the propagators of the Slovenian national idea, the rest of the demands remained unanswered. But it was the continuous contempt and oppressive behaviour that the German speaking ruling elite had towards the Slovenian community that worked in favour of the national ideology, building gradually a solid basis upon which a Slovene national conscience would eventually develop.²⁰⁴

In the same spirit the Maribor and Ljubljana programs were adopted in 1865 and 1867 respectively, repeating and emphasizing the need for an enhanced autonomy of the Slovenes. The Maribor plan proposed that the Kingdom of Illyria, the duchy of Carinthia and the duchy of Styria should be represented in a common Assembly where issues of their regions will be discussed. This Assembly, along with a Slovenian provincial council would give the possibility to the Slovenian ethnical contingent to maintain its structures, hence it would safeguard the notion of community, which is vital for the constitution of a national identity (**Part I- c**). Nevertheless the Maribor program had little effect on the central government's

²⁰² *ibid.* pp. 44-45

²⁰³ *ibid.* p. 48

²⁰⁴ *ibid.* p. 49

planning and policies regarding the region, showing to the Slovenes that only through a unified Slovenia could their demands for autonomy be met and fulfilled. Half measures and proposals advocating partial solutions to the Slovenian problem were abandoned in the Ljubljana program, voted in 1867 by the delegates of the Slovenian provincial assemblies, demanding the union of all Slovenian regions into one entity (Slovenia), with an appointed lieutenant by the emperor responsible for leading the autonomous administration of a Slovene territory based on a national assembly. Combined with the peremptory request for an operational University of Ljubljana these two programs constitute one of the clearest and most emphatically presented demands concerning Slovenian self-determination so far.²⁰⁵

Slovenian requests for autonomy within the borders of the Habsburg empire were never granted, thus the problems ,the unmet demands ,the rise of Yugoslavism as an ideology and the disintegration of the Austrian empire resulted to the May declaration in 1917 with which Anton Korosec, one of the leading figures of both Slovenian and Yugoslav independence following the steps of Janez Evangelist Krek - a prominent Slovenian political figure- declared the secession of the Yugoslav territories, in order for them to form a unified state of South Slavs.²⁰⁶ It is worth mentioning that Korosec was one of the most active spokesman of the Slovenian community, energetically promoting the interests of his compatriots in the imperial councils and committees where he was elected and appointed, trying to establish an autonomous status for the Slovenes from the first moment he was elected in higher offices. To that end he made his presence noted by taking the floor in June 1906 in an effort to promote the founding of a Slovenian institution of higher education in lower Styria, while he protested the fact that every speech held in the Slavic languages of the empire was not being recorded nor entered in the minutes taken by the parliament's secretariat during the session.²⁰⁷

The incident presented above indicates the overall inclination towards the protection of Slovenian identity within the framework of the empire's institutions, that leading politicians such as Korosec and Sustisic had until the dissolution of the Habsburg empire and the formation of the Yugoslav kingdom. Despite the fact that the repressive policies imposed on the Slovenian community became more strict at the

²⁰⁵ *ibid.* pp.51-53

²⁰⁶ *ibid.* pp. 60-63

²⁰⁷ F.J. Bister, *Anton Korosec Und die slowenische Politik im Wiener Reichsrat*, Dissertation, University of Vienna, 1990, Vienna, pp. 69-70

first years of the war, leading to numerous cases of executions and violent prosecutions against the Slovenes, no violent reaction in the form of a massive uprising or the creation of armed organizations took place in the Slovene ranks. However, on the eve of Slovenian secession in spite the fact that the old oppression was seemingly over and the "German" yoke was uplifted giving its place to a new state, where the South Slavs would be equal living within the borders of a state constituted by nations with the same cultural origins, the troubles of the Slovene nation were far from over. Since Italy after the conflict, emerged as a winner in the south-western borders of Austria it grasped the opportunity to dictate new terms regarding the fate of a large territory formerly belonging to the Habsburg crown, including Slovenian lands. Therefore Carinthia -after Italian pressure- remained a part of Austria, although the vast majority of the population was Slovenian, whilst Rijeka was separated from the rest of Slovenia²⁰⁸ with Trieste , the Littoral , Gorizia and Gradisca were annexed by Italy.²⁰⁹

Nevertheless in 1918 when the empire was crumbling the Slovenes and their leading political elite accepted the Yugoslav idea and in their first stage a National Council of the Slovenes was formed in Ljubljana in August 1918 and in October of the same year a national government was formed under the leadership of J. Pogacnik.²¹⁰ After severing the ties with the old regime the Slovenes had to face the Serb centralized viewpoint regarding the new state of Yugoslavia. Pasic and general perception stemming from the Serbs ,which shaped the predominant opinion among the Serbs that Yugoslavia ought to be an overall extension of a Greater Serbia -as we have discussed previously here- affected not only the second largest nationality (i.e. the Croats) but the Slovenes as well. It was Anton Korosec however the political figure that took it upon himself to "rescue" the unity of the Kingdom after Stjepan Radic and other MPs were gunned down in the parliament in 1928.²¹¹ Yet, the efforts of the Slovenes for a political solution ,which would direct the country towards a more federalized structure giving the Slovenian nation as well as the rest of the nationalities

²⁰⁸ in the case of Rijeka the region was proclaimed independent forming the State of Fiume after the Treaty of Rapallo that lasted for several years until its partition in two parts (Fiume and Susek) and their annexation to Italy and the Kingdom of SHS respectively in 1924, according to the Treaty of Rome.

²⁰⁹ A. Arnez, *Slovenia in European Affairs Reflections on Slovenian Political History*, League of CSA, 1958 pp. 72-76

²¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 65

²¹¹ *ibid.* pp. 67-68

that constituted the Kingdom of SHS an enhanced right of self-determination, were not successful. His initiative was contradicting the intention of King Alexander that resulted to the King's dictatorship and the renaming of the state from Kingdom of the Serbs the Croats and the Slovenes to Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

After the capitulation of Yugoslavia in 1941, Slovenia was partitioned in three occupation zones. The Germans had under their command the largest part of the occupied territories since in the Nazi and German nationalist viewpoints Lower Styria and Carniola ought to be parts of Austria and the German "cultural space". Italy and Hungary occupied the South including Ljubljana and the upper North-east, respectively. In the Italian case another irredentist-expansionist "dream" was being fulfilled, while Italian nationalism was seeing his goals concerning prevalence in the Adriatic, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean being achieved through the annexation of the second largest part of Slovenian territory including its largest city.²¹² Both fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were planning an assimilation of the Slovene nation into their cultural space by directly implementing violent and coercive measures and authoritarian policies with the use of administrative and military means.

Yet again the AVNOJ Partisans and other political organizations were resisting in Slovenian territory just like in the rest of Yugoslavia. Still, even among this small nation of the Slovenes nationalism a military formation, similar to the Cetniks of Drazha Mihailovic made its appearance in the form of the Slovene Home Guard headed by Leon Rupnik a former officer of the Yugoslav army. They were initially named Village Guards and were targeting the communist Partisans, while being supported by the Italian occupational forces and later on -when Italy capitulated - by Nazi Germany. Their first participation in operations against communist insurgency started taking place by late August 1942 as a localized Village Guard in the beginning and as a more organized Slovene Home Guard until the end of the war under German command.²¹³ Although an important part of Slovenian nationalism the Home Guard was nothing more than a collaborationist military grouping fashioned and styled in the manner of many other Axis collaborators in Europe at the time. Therefore, since the existence of the Home Guard can be categorized as a phenomenon of common political practice followed by the Axis in Europe, another political event that could be characterized as a notable outcome of nationalist tendencies occurred at the time;

²¹² *ibid.* pp. 78-84

²¹³ *ibid.* pp.113-114

the National Declaration published in 1944 on the 29th of October -a Slovene national holiday- signed by 300 prominent figures of the Slovene political sphere , stating once more the demand for Slovene national unity through the foundation of a national state that would include all of the Slovenian territories.²¹⁴ This initiative came however from a faction of political supporters of the old regime , that remained reminiscent of the pre-war Yugoslavia, envisioning the restoration of the Karadjordjevic dynasty to the throne of a Yugoslav kingdom with a more federalized structure.

During the existence of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia Slovenian nationalism was not such an acute phenomenon in comparison with other nationalist phenomena (e.g. Croatian and Serbian nationalistic tendencies).²¹⁵ The only major opponent to the dominant Slovene Communists was the Catholic church, which was traditionally representing the non-communist perspective of the National notion.²¹⁶

Except the nationalist legacy, we should not forget the economic factor as well, which in the case of Slovenia was of importance. Slovenia along with Croatia were throughout the history of both Yugoslav states, two of the most economically advanced and robust Socialist Republics of the Federation. Therefore part of both their disagreements with the existence and function of the -pre and post war- Yugoslav state entities, was the fact that there was a sentiment of exploitation of their wealth for the "less fortunate" Yugoslav South. Still, the Slovene economy was put to the test despite its solid foundations and in at the beginning of 1970 the Slovene administration was forced to declare eleven from a total of fifty-six administrative districts of the Republic as underdeveloped. Between 1980 and 1990 the situation deteriorated and in spite the Republic's low unemployment rates Slovenia had an external debt, which amounted to six hundred million dollars.²¹⁷ All of the above combined with the policies implemented by the Milosevic administration led to the exodus of the Slovenian delegates in that 18th LCY Congress. Ironically enough the dissolution of Yugoslavia was practically initiated by the smallest and least nationalist oriented of the constituent Socialist Republics. In the aftermath of this Slovene

²¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 116

²¹⁵ However Slovenian irredentism does exist and one of its most important claims regarding Slovenia's neighboring states -not taking into consideration the former SRs of the SFRY focuses on the Julian March region and the Yugoslav(nowadays Slovene)-Italian borders and foremost on Trieste.(see also P.Ballinger, *History In Exile Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans*, Princeton University Press, 2003, New Jersey pp. 135-137)

²¹⁶ *ibid.* pp.128-129

²¹⁷ S.P.Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, Indiana University Press, 1992 p. 149

secession the Slovenes "earned" a state of their own for the first time in contemporary times.

f) Re-introducing nationalism in Yugoslav political life

The aforementioned and succinctly described historical context has assisted both the perpetuation and the regeneration of nationalism and the national idea in the 70's-80's. The narration of the origins of the national idea of each of the major ethnicities, implicated in the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars was hereby inserted in order to demonstrate the roots from which nationalism in its atavistic perspective re-emerged in the last two decades of the unified SFRY.

As we have already underlined in the beginning (**Part I-c**) Gellner contemplated, that for nationalists and the supporters of the ethnicity concept, the Nation is omnipresent, sometimes remaining dormant, but having a continuity throughout the course of history, ascribing to a certain national grouping an atavistic prospect nonetheless. This prospect leads to a social construction of the term Nation, attributing to it a certain ideology that calls upon its ideological affiliates to strive for its independent existence. In the case of Yugoslavia the existence of social structures (such as the YMO organization in Bosnia), maintaining the partial -in many times the total- differentiation of social groupings from the rest of the pre-war Yugoslav society, maintaining socially a distinctive identity for the member of the respective group. Historical facts (e.g. the existence of the Serb Empire in the medieval ages) were national myths, invoked by political elites so that the national idea can be -according to their perspective- "resurrected". The legitimacy of the Karadjordjevic claims for example, on the throne of the Kingdom of Serbia and on a pre-dominant position in a kingdom, that would unify the Yugoslav people under one flag after the collapse of the Habsburg empire, was based on a Serbian regional historicity, used to support their claim. This historicity was exploited from various nationalist circles, in order to show that there is a dire need for the existence of a nation-state as the fulfilment of the nations "destiny".

In our case, both in pre-war but foremost in post-war Yugoslavia, history contributed as -an almost "metaphysical"- legitimization to traditions and traditionalist concepts, invented (as Hobsbawm described) with social means, in order for a continuity to be underpinned in the existence of a nation state. Tudjman's references to a 900 year-old Croatian nation without its own state in the 90's gives us a clear picture, concerning

the social invention of the traditionalist concept supporting the national notion. It is rather evident that Croat rulers of the medieval Banate -for example- did not share Tadjman's perception of a Croatian state, if we take into consideration the fragmented principalities and the inclusion of Serbian territories to medieval Croat kingdoms as well as the completely different perception regarding the term Nation.

In addition, one must not neglect that almost every conceptualization of nationalist ideology throughout the modernity, was instigated by a certain political elite (as Hroch indicates) that either formed, or re-shaped -in the case of the SFRY re-introduced- the national term, making it a prevalent concept in a region's political life. The political elite in the post-war Yugoslav example, stemmed from the AVNOJ ranks having the Partisan resistance as common grounds for a political consensus, that would surpass the discord created from any nationalist concepts, therefore laying the foundation for the inauguration of the SFRY period. As we will see later on (**Part IV-c**)) leading political figures and theoreticians such as Edvard Kardelj, perceived the Partisan experience and the socialist ideology behind it, as the means that would render nationalism and ethnocentric ideologies of the constituent Yugoslav nationalities, useless promoting socialism and the Yugoslav identity as the sole ideological base of the new state. By promulgating the unified Yugoslav resistance against Axis occupation, Kardelj and the League's political leadership made nationalism an equivalent of betrayal, taking into consideration the fact that the vast majority of nationalist forces in occupied Yugoslavia collaborated -sooner or later- with the Axis forces.

Yet, this common experience was not enough for the generations to come in the 70's-80's to emerging as the new political elite, having a de facto smaller participation in the Partisan movement. New political elites required a new ideological base of legitimization and nationalism appeared to be the shortest way for popular support. Nationalism in an era, when self-management socialism failed to maintain a robust economy and governmental authoritarianism was rising, seemed to the masses as a radical ideology of reform and resistance against Belgrade's policies. This was consequently reflected to the SFRY's political scene, when pluralisation appeared in the 90's as the political elite's answer to the constant social pressures for decentralization. The vast majority of political formations/parties founded in that period was of strong nationalist colouring propagating primarily -if not solely- the interests of the constituent nationalities in the SFRY.

The attempt to politically forge two different national identities for the SFRY (Partisan Yugoslavism and socialist Yugoslavism) as the new dominant identities, in an effort either to totally overcome or to diminish the importance of the constituent nationalities' role once and for all, has clearly failed when we examine the late 80's period in socialist Yugoslavia. This effort was apparently put aside during the 1960's, due to a policy shift that demanded actions re-affirming the national diversity in the SFRY in combination with a decentralized state, foremost in the economic sector.²¹⁸ This clamour for reform mainly originating from the wealthier northern Socialist Republics (Croatia and Slovenia) came as an effect of the SFRY's economic stagnation in the course of 1960. Redistributing wealth from the North to the poorer South became eventually an acute problem over the years for the northern SRs. This was accompanied by debates considering the introduction of market mechanisms along with a request for a reform in the banking sector and the issue of foreign currency retentive absorption.²¹⁹ Together with this dispute, an impression in the midst of Croat and Slovene political elite and public opinion was formed, that Serbia's trading and re-export sectors were taking advantage of northern prosperity with the help of the centralised banking system, "perforating" the vital for the Croatian economy, sector of tourism.

Still, the economic factor alone although an extremely crucial one was not the only one responsible for the emergence of nationalism in the 70's-80's. There are three areas on which we ought to focus, when searching for the roots of the problem and these are the Croatian Spring in the 70's, the reaction of the Serbian intelligentsia to the crisis and the federal state's answer. As we have mentioned before (**Part I- b**)), the fall of Aleksandar Rankovic opened the way for the Croatian Spring, giving firstly rise to matters concerning primarily the intelligentsia (the language dispute), which triggered the turmoil in the 70's. The publication of the Croatian Declaration (*Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika*- Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language) in 1967 with signatories members of the Matica Hrvatska caused a "chained reaction" having repercussions on the Serbian intellectual circles and on the LCY. Considering the fact, that as in physics also in politics every action has an equal reaction, when nationalist oriented

²¹⁸ J. Dragovic-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, pp. 29-30

²¹⁹ *ibid.*

proclamations made their appearance in Croatia, influenced by the decentralization of the federalist state and the social restructuring it gradually instigated, by attributing wider powers to the SR's governments, Serbian intelligentsia did not leave the issue to pass by unanswered.

Members of the Writer's Association in Serbia published also in 1967 a 'Proposal for Consideration' recognizing the right of Croats for literary autonomy, but also stating the right of Serbs in Croatia to use their own prerogative concerning the same matter. By looking at the development of the language question in Croatia, this debate can be characterized as the first indication of the national notion's re-emergence in Yugoslav society, instigated by the cultural -and simultaneously political, bearing in mind that many signatories of the Proposal were also Party members- elite in both the SR of Serbia and the SR of Croatia.²²⁰ Following the decentralization of the federal state and the abandonment of socialist Yugoslavism as the state's primary ideology, political elites played once again their role in the revival of nationalism in the late 60's-early 70's.

Dobrica Cosic is a name that we have already mentioned earlier (**Part II-c**)), that can be considered as a key figure of Yugoslav and Serb intelligentsia, regarding the re-emergence of nationalist ideology in Serbia and serving as a good example of the behaviour of Serbian political and cultural elite's stance. Cosic, who in the 90's was nominated 1st President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, endorsing Milosevic's ascension to power was a diligent advocate of socialist Yugoslavism and a very prominent intellectual of his time accompanying Tito in several occasions. When decentralisation was adopted by the federal state and the LCY, thus quitting the identity promoted by socialist Yugoslavism, Cosic and his generation started retreating back to their Serbian identity as an answer to the political restructuring of the state's base. Cosic ruptured his ties with the LCY after warning his comrades about the 'bureaucratic nationalism' introduced by the new policies, describing a situation that was more or less true in Yugoslavia of the 70's.²²¹ Dissidents of the state's decentralization, advocates of socialist Yugoslavism were accused as endorsers of hegemonism and unitarism, resulting to a re-alignment of the elite's ideology in Serbia along a political axis that would eventually completely replace any elements of socialist Yugoslavism in the federal state's political actions, with Serbian irredentism.

²²⁰ *ibid.* p. 33

²²¹ *ibid.* p. 39

The cultural and political elite started directing themselves towards their Serbian identities, especially when their disagreement with the new dominant policies led to the expelling from the party of members that openly supported criticism against the 1974 constitution, the imprisonment of others (e.g. Lazar Stojanovic student leader) and the suspension of many academics, that spoke openly against the constitutional changes or in favour of a proactive Serbian nationalism, as a response to the nationalistic tendencies adopted by the political leadership in the neighbouring SRs.²²² With this crackdown in the early 70's the intellectual elite understood that any (from their viewpoint liberal) reforms, can not happen. Consequently, they had to choose channels of political activism outside of the state's structure. Dobrica Cosic was one of the leading personalities in this process, that made liberals, 'new leftists' and -finally- nationalists the ideological powers that would eventually overtake the federal state apparatus, by partially preparing the territory through his actions.²²³ Therefore, we may say that nationalism was re-introduced in Yugoslavian political life in the 70's-80's resulting to its complete disintegration in the 90's for some specific reasons:

- economic stagnation (whereas economic prosperity according to Gellner prevents the establishment of nationalist ideology as a predominant social movement).
- the SFRY's oxymoron regarding the dual nature of the federal state, its constituent Socialist Republics and the role of the nationalities, as this was reflected especially in the federal state's structure in the 1974 constitution.
- the decentralization of the state in the 70's ,which gave the opportunity for local elites to seek at some point the legitimization of their power in a nationalist ideology to which their social milieu could relate more easily.
- the decisive role of the intelligentsia -directly connected to the cultural and political elite- and the proliferation of the centralist or decentralist antithesis.
- the fact that the common experiences of the AVNOJ and Partisan struggle used in the early years of the SFRY as an ideological basis for the new state, condemning at the same time nationalism as an ideology endorsed and supported by the enemy in the detriment of the Yugoslav people, during the

²²² *ibid.* pp. 44-49

²²³ *ibid.* pp. 49-50

occupation period, did no longer serve as common grounds for political consensus and unity.

- Finally, the death of Tito and the loss of a unifying figure that represented Yugoslav unity.

All of the above equally contributed to a "social engineering" that gave birth to nationalist ideology, which used atavistic patterns invoking a historical continuity - based on a context formed by the historical events described earlier-, in order to bolster social contrariety in a multiethnic socialist society, on the grounds of national distinctiveness.

g)Summary

We have closely yet briefly examined thus far the origins of nationalism, their "dormancy" and their national awakening as well as the atavistic descent of the multiple nationalist myths that helped to re-generate the nationalist-irredentist perspectives, which in the end prevailed in spite the policies followed especially in the second state of Yugoslavia. Almost each one of the nations and nationalities that made up Yugoslavia -by Yugoslavia meaning the Kingdom of SHS as well as the SFR of Yugoslavia- raised either before the war or from the 70's a "legal" claim on a state of their own, justifying it through a more or less strong national myth and cultural distinctiveness, rendering the founding of an independent Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Slovenian or Montenegrin state a logical demand in the eyes of the constituent nations during the time of the SFRY.

Nationalism could not be quelled neither by a strong Yugoslavist ideology of common origins and culture nor by a marxist-leninist approach as this was applied in the post-war era in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavism and its socialist "version" could not provide a solution to the issue of many nations co-existing in one common state. Croats and Serbs assumed eventually the role of two separate poles of regional interests causing continuous friction and turmoil resulting to the eruption of a violent conflict. The results of this failure shall be expounded in the following chapters in an effort to give a more concrete viewpoint regarding the antagonistic ideological patterns.

Part III-The outbreak of the war

a) The beginning of the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars

The war in Yugoslavia started as an unrest -caused by pre-existing nationalist tensions- in the summer of 1990, which would progressively evolve to a full blown armed conflict between all the nations of Yugoslavia. Many things have been told about this war some of them speculations others undisputed facts. One of these facts is that the war erupted in Croatia as a result of mutual intransigence from both the newly elected administration of Franjo Tudjman, leading figure of the Croatian Democratic Party (HDZ) and the leaders of the Knin (Krajina) Serbs. This friction and political dispute created the proper conditions for the referendum declared and conducted by the Serbs in Croatia in mid-August 1990.²²⁴ Zagreb's response was imminent banning the referendum and condemning every secessionist endeavours undertaken by Jovan Raskovic, the president of the Serbian Democratic Party in Croatia²²⁵. Tudjman dispatched Croatian police forces so that order would be restored but they encountered armed resistance by Serbian militias armed with AK-47s provided by the JNA and Belgrade, setting up road blocks on the roads leading to Knin.²²⁶

Tudjman's intentions to "re-nationalize" Croatia were not sole factor responsible for the events that followed the Serbian referendum in Croatia and the anti-Serbian feeling that prevailed in the Croatian society at the eve of the Yugoslav wars, nor were the policies followed by Milosevic the only reason that explained the coming events. The Croatian governmental representation in the Republic's border regions with Serbia where the majority of Croatia's Serbs were residing, played a catalytic role in cultivating even more the anti-Serb climate within Croatia.²²⁷ Under these conditions Serbs of Croatia raided and occupied the police station as well as the municipal building in Pakrac (today part of the Pozega-Slavonia county) in February 1991, after following directives issued by Milan Babic and Milan Martić, Raskovic's successor and the man responsible mainly for the Serb militia in Croatia respectively, thus leading to an escalation that did not strike as a surprise. Zagreb's reaction was proven once again rather prompt when on March 2d 1991, Franjo Tudjman approved a counter-insurgency plan ordering the attack of counterterrorist groups which

²²⁴ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 360-361

²²⁵ see also p. 35

²²⁶ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 361

²²⁷ M. Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia The Third Balkan War*, Penguin Books, 1996, New York, p. 3

recaptured the city restoring governmental authority in the Pakrac vicinity.²²⁸

Belgrade and the JNA did not remain simple spectators in the events and using the relatively ostensible argument of federal security intervened by sending JNA troops to Pakrac following the instructions of Defence Minister Kadijevic. Although this encouraged the Serbian militants to reopen fire against the Croats, the JNA managed to function as a mediator returning control of the city back to the Croatian government.

However one should take a step back, in order to take a closer look at the omens that indicated that war and the end of the Federal state were coming when on the late 90's the majority of the constituent Republics and Autonomous Regions ,namely Slovenia, Vojvodina, Kosovo and Croatia reacted to the decision taken by the Yugoslav National Bank to directly allocate funds -a loan of 28 billion dollars- in the Republic of Serbia's budget so that debts and currency deficits troubling the Serbian economy would be resolved.²²⁹ This was one of the most explicit acts of unilateralism reminding and surpassing the policies of "Serbinization" followed by Aleksandar Rankovic some decades earlier. The loan proved all of those that supported the aspect that the SFRY had become some sort of a facade, covering the irredentist intensions adhered by Milosevic's administration, to be right.

Yet tension and secessionist tendencies did not find their origin and were not only rooted in the Serbian side. Already from May 1990 the JNA was disarming the Slovene Territorial Defence forces (Territorialna Obramba, a military formation established by the Federal government after the Soviet invasion in Czechoslovakia in 1968) following the demands of Minister Kadijevic regarding the territorial Defense Forces of both Croatia and Slovenia²³⁰. By the end of May 1990 the JNA had confiscated almost 70% of the TO's armament whilst the Slovenian presidency was ordering the TO municipal commanders to conceal their weaponry, so that the Slovene administration would have a possibility of territorial defence ,when and if it came to policies of further aggression from the side of Belgrade.²³¹ It should be noted here that regardless the fact that Slovene nationalism as we have mentioned before was not based on the same irredentist notions, if one would compare him to the Croatian nationalist ideology, Slovenian leadership was one of Milosevic's "arch

²²⁸ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 384-385

²²⁹ *ibid.* p. 376

²³⁰ *ibid.*

²³¹ *ibid.* pp. 370-371

enemies" when it came to the Kosovo question. By continuously taking the side of the Kosovo Albanians when the first Kosovo crisis broke out in 1989, the Slovenian political elite might not have shown the same ethnocentric-nationalist agenda as Franjo Tudjman and his administration in Croatia but was strongly opposing Milosevic's expansionism, rendering Slovenia a threat to Serbia's policies at the time.²³²

As a result when the time came and the JNA invaded Slovenia his commanders were assuming that this operation would be a swift demonstration of military strength, solving the problem in Slovenia whilst making a political statement giving the JNA a position of dual nature as the defender and the guaranteeing force of the Federal state. However in this stage, the JNA based its tactics on two variables; first of all the awareness and level of preparedness of the Slovenian TOs against the upcoming JNA's military force was very low and (second) the given political-diplomatic assurances that if the JNA failed to achieve its objectives, then a further military escalation would be supported.²³³ The first as well as the second were proven false, for the TO showed that JNA was not able to fulfil its duties without ordering a mass mobilization of its forces. JNA forces -specifically, the military contingents of the 5th Army District, under JNA Colonel-General Konrad Kolsek's command- were in disarray when they faced a smaller, less equipped, less organized and less trained regional TO force in the interior of Yugoslavia, failing to deliver immediate results after taking prompt action. Nevertheless, Slovenian resistance could have been crushed, had the Yugoslav Presidency and Borisav Jovic himself wanted to use even greater force that would not be easily matched by the Slovenes. However Jovic on the federal council's session on the 30th of June proposed that Slovenia should be left alone in its newly acquired independence in spite of proposals to the opposite direction made by the majority of General Staff members.²³⁴

The Ten-days-war ended and Slovenia gained its independence, due to the lack of will from Belgrade's side, to escalate the conflict, due to -most probably- other objectives with a higher priority status in the political agenda at the time (e.g. Croatia and Bosnia & Herzegovina). Therefore, if one focuses on the developments in Croatia one should mention that along with the disarmament of the militia forces, Belgrade

²³² *ibid.* pp.364-366

²³³ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2007 p. 363

²³⁴ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 395

ordered the arrest of Croatia's Defence minister in 1990 after Jovic and Kadijevic came to an agreement on the matter. Subsequently, Jovic asked the presidency to put the subject under vote. When the presidency confirmed the order for Spegelj's arrest in January 9th 1991 Kadijevic issued an ultimatum stating -among other things concerning the disarmament of Croatian and Slovenian militias as we have mentioned above- that the Croatian administration were to hand over Spegelj or to facilitate the federal forces in his arrest by the 19th of January. Until the 30th of January the Croat Defence Minister had not been arrested causing the reaction of both Jovic and Kadijevic that demanded his immediate apprehension as an instigator of possible armed insurgent action in Croatia, thus posing a threat to federal security.²³⁵ Spegelj went into hiding protected by Tudjman's administration, who tried to counter Belgrade's threats for military intervention with an open conflict when he suggested that any JNA intervention would be faced by Croat military forces causing a broader escalation of the conflict.

Despite some undertaken efforts, the conflict was seemingly escalating, if we take into consideration that the incident in Pakrac was not the only confrontation between armed Serbs in Croatia and Croatian security forces in 1991. In both March -while the negotiations in Karadjordjevo were taking place- and May of the same year, when Serbs attacked and took over a police station in the National Park of Plitvice Lakes in Croatia (Karlovac region) and unrest in the village of Borovo Selo led to clashes between Serbs and Croats resulting to the death of 30 persons, 12 of which were Croatian police officers the situation, the situation seemed to deteriorate rapidly.²³⁶ In both cases the JNA intervened establishing a safe zone between Croats and Serb militants in Croatia, but this was a mere pretext of neutrality, displayed by the JNA. The JNA's intentions became conspicuous, when a heavily armed column of armoured units and large numbers of infantry, was en route from Belgrade in July 1991 on the day when Slovenia's independence was proclaimed, heading westwards apparently towards Slovenia, ignoring all the exhortations made from Belgrade for a more moderate response. However Slovenia was not the target. Soon after its departure the column broke into three parts, one positioned itself in Bosnia &

²³⁵ *ibid.* pp. 377-378

²³⁶ *ibid.* pp. 386-387

Herzegovina, the second at the outskirts of Croatia, while the third one took up positions in Vojvodina.²³⁷

By that point it was made clear that the JNA has clearly chosen his side and Kadijevic would not sit aside watching Serb militia trying to take up arms and form the conditions for a secession of Serb-populated regions in neighbouring Republics, without participating. According to Kadijevic the primary target should be the partitioning of Croatia. This would be achieved by rapidly occupying with mechanized units Eastern Slavonia and by cutting the routes between the biggest urban centres, resulting to the securing of the regions that constituted the Serbian Krajina, thus seizing control of the country rendering the Zagreb administration incapable to react in any secession.²³⁸ In July 1991 the war reached Croatia and the JNA initiated operations, supporting Serbian paramilitary organisations in various regions with the most important being the vicinity of Vukovar. There the JNA engaged into heavy urban warfare against Croatian Defence Forces with the participation of paramilitary elements such as Vojislav Seselj's Chetnik-styled movement (the White Tigers).²³⁹ Vinkovci, Glina, Banja, Tenja, Petrinja, and Osijek were the main areas of operations for the combined JNA and Serbian paramilitary forces -including the Serbian TO's- where the Chetnik movement was revived reaching back to the WWII years, depicting once more the reanimation of Serbian nationalism. Nevertheless the revival was not unilateral and was also happening as a part of the situation between the two belligerents, on the Croatian side as well. Reports coming from Serbian Autonomous Region authorities, stating that villages in the SAR of Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srem were attacked by Croatian security forces.²⁴⁰

The Croats were considerably under-armed facing an organized military machine supported by local paramilitary forces. In spite of some weapons seizures from JNA trains and army encampments in Croatia, Dubrovnik's siege could not be averted and in October 1991 the JNA assisted by Montenegrin TO contingents assaulted the city

²³⁷ *ibid.* pp. 395-396

²³⁸ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2007 pp. 364-365

²³⁹ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 398

²⁴⁰ At this point we should not neglect that the Red Star of the Croatian SR was long gone and the red-white squared symbol used by the NDH was predominantly used also as the main symbol of the Croatian Defense Forces (HOS).

laying siege on it. JNA's military tactics both in Dubrovnik and Vukovar did not have as a primary aim to conquer the cities, as much as driving the local population out of the area and securing the vicinity from any possible insurgency efforts. One might reach to this conclusion if one thinks that the city of Dubrovnik was a far easier objective for the JNA than Vukovar and it would be possible for the Yugoslav Army to take control of the city, due to the multiple alternatives it had; a maritime invasion combined with a land assault would most probably favour the use of paratroopers, enabling Belgrade's forces to rapidly occupy a city that was practically undefended. The JNA instead, decided to massively bombard the city, which was not guarded by any substantive force capable to threaten JNA's integrity.²⁴¹

Milosevic's political agenda was almost facing completion, when by the end of 1991, Croatian government was in control of 70% of its territory, having lost the other 30% to the JNA and paramilitary forces. Serbian forces along with the JNA were practically in total control of the regions where Serbians were residing and furthermore Serbian forces were dug in and waiting in Petrinja, with only a 30 km distance separating them from Zagreb.²⁴² It was under these conditions when Milosevic welcomed the ceasefire, proposed by the international community as well as the UN peacekeepers, which would keep the peace in January 1992. This development provided him with a military force that would practically safeguard the progress made by the Serb forces and the JNA, whilst giving him a semi-official sanction for all the occupied Croatian territory. Therefore one might say that the UN peacekeepers did deprive -although they did not intend to- the Croatian military forces their prospect for retaking their lost ground.

The first phase of the Yugoslav wars that we have described until now and the violent disintegration of the Federal state did not occur due to the secession of Slovenia, for the political objectives of Belgrade, although seemingly directed towards the protection of the Federation's coherence, were proven to be purely ethnocentric. These ethnocentric political motives were rather obvious during the years before the war, after Milosevic's ascension into power, but the real goals became unambiguous, when in the beginning of the Ten-days-war events that could be characterized as a prologue to the open and violent conflict were taking place in

²⁴¹ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2007 p. 365

²⁴² S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 409

Croatia. One of the first atrocious acts bearing the scent of ethnical cleansing happened in Lika (Dalmatia), where near the village of Lovinac, five Croats were abducted and tortured by Serb militants ending up dead.²⁴³ Similar cases were reported throughout the regions, where Serb irregulars were organized escalating violence in Croatia. One of the most notable victims of this turmoil was the police chief of Osijek Josip Reihl-Kir, who was murdered after a grenade was thrown by a Croat supporter of the HDZ in the Osijek police station killing Croats and Serbs alike.²⁴⁴ Reihl-Kir was one of the few pacifists left in the region, who was trying to guarantee the safety of the Serbs, striving for a de-escalation of the violence between the two communities.

The aforementioned incident along with the tension between the communities that revived the fears, threats and obscure era of the Axis occupation, were denoting that this armed conflict would take the form of a "*revanche*" due to interethnic "grudges" that have been mainly dormant throughout most of the SFRY period and foremost when Tito was alive. Facing the new facts the warring sides had to reshape their military plans, strategies and forces or form them anew (e.g. Croatia). Therefore after the 1992 ceasefire the Croatian administration focused on shaping a proper military force, trying to combine the ammunition and weaponry, extracted from the numerous JNA barracks in Croatia, after implementing in September 1991 a plan prepared by General Spigelj (Croatian Defence Minister and later Chief of the National Guard) proposing the isolation of all JNA camps within the Croatian territory, cutting them off from water, electricity, supplies and other provisions that were basic necessities.²⁴⁵ This caused the surrender of the majority of the 33 JNA barracks garrisons, leaving the Croatian forces enough armament to evolve themselves into a military mechanism capable of resisting.

With this renewed and properly shaped military strike force, the Croatian army was able to mount two operations trying to counterattack the Serbian expansion and dissolve the Krajina state (Republic of Serbian Krajina) which occupied one quarter of Croatia's territory. Operation Maslenica in 1993 and Operation Divoselo in the same year, although proving the fact that the Croatian military had evolved and was now consisting a force that could pose a threat to Serbian plans, had some disputed

²⁴³ M. Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia The Third Balkan War*, Penguin Books, 1996, New York, p. 101

²⁴⁴ *ibid.* pp.102-106

²⁴⁵ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 400-401

results. Both operations ended up with a partial success, while the objectives were not fully achieved. In Maslenica the Croats underestimated the Serbian capability to counterattack and the Croatian forces were led into a standstill. Although advancing, the Croatian forces - by the end of the operation - found themselves being once again within the range of the RSK military's heavy artillery provided by the JNA. In the Divoselo operation, the RSK counterattacked all along the western and northern frontier using missiles and heavy artillery, stating that they would continue the bombardment if the Tudjman and his General Staff did not pull the Croatian forces out of the Lika region (today's Lika-Senj county in Croatia), where they were attacking the Serbian brigades, encircling them and taking up positions in Serbian populated villages such as Divoselo, Citluk and Pocitelj.²⁴⁶

Bearing in mind the aftermath that the Croat-Serbian conflict had after the 1992 ceasefire, we can see that this was only the beginning. This first phase of the Yugoslav Wars would be paused in 1992, regarding the Croatian theatre of operations, only to be relocated to the South in Bosnia, where terms like "ethnic cleansing", "civilian targets" and "mass murder" would dominate the analysis of the conflict in a region, where all three warring parties (i.e. Croats, Bosniacs and Serbs) would meet each other in a belligerent climate.

b) The war in Bosnia and the end of the first phase

The second part of this loathsome war between ethnic communities occurred in Bosnia in 1992. The ground has already been prepared from 1989, as we have already seen in previous chapters, through initiatives undertaken by Serbian operatives in the SR of Bosnia & Herzegovina, aiming at the preparation of Serbian armed militias. It was in 1991 when, after the elections of the same year, the communist party was no longer a decisive factor in the political arena of Bosnia & Herzegovina. The newly formed SDA and Izetbegovic organized a paramilitary organization named the "Patriotic League" after considering the situation in Croatia and recognizing that the JNA was intensively suppressing all dissidents and its leadership's actions were biased.²⁴⁷ However, the paramilitary build up was not unilateral since the JNA had already distributed weaponry to Serb volunteers in numerous Serbian-populated

²⁴⁶ A. Zabkar, *Analyses of the Conflict in Former Yugoslavia*, National Defense Academy Series 2/1994, Vienna, 1994 pp. 91-122

²⁴⁷ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania pp. 414-415

villages -approximately 52,000 firearms- in 1991.²⁴⁸ Another 30,000 firearms were distributed by the JNA to members of the SDS party in Bosnia, while JNA Counterintelligence (KOS- *Kontraobaveštajna služba*) was effectively providing cover for the actions undertaken under the nose of Sarajevo. Fikret Muslimovic the director of KOS in Bosnia & Herzegovina together with Dragisha Mihic, the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs' services in Bosnia were two of the most prominent "inside-men" that Belgrade had at the eve of the conflict.²⁴⁹

These two names and their positions are named here, so that we can fully understand the magnitude of Belgrade's infiltration prior to the war in an effort to depict the situation both in the internal affairs of B&H and the non-existent solidity of the Republic's security apparatus. The effects of this infiltration would come out later on when well armed Serbian militants, members of various paramilitary organizations, following and imitating the Chetnik structures, methods and nationalist claims, would almost immediately attack the Bosnian security forces, after the referendum held in March 1992 for Bosnia's secession from the rest of Yugoslavia. One of the most important developments, depicting the prelude of the conflict, is the implication of the JNA on the 20th September 1991 in Herzegovina. The Yugoslav military, answering the calls for help by the Bosnian Serbs, claiming that their survival in their own villages was not certain due to allegedly numerous attacks by Muslims and Croats, intervened and engaged local Croat and Muslim militants in the region -near Mostar and Ravno- leading to the destruction of the Croat inhabited village of Ravno by the JNA five days later.²⁵⁰

By October of the same year the political situation was rapidly deteriorating, following to some extent the same course with the condition of Croatia. The Serb delegates abandoned their seats in the Bosnian parliament, thus excluding the Serb element from the decision making processes in Sarajevo, indicating that the secessionist tendencies cultivated by Milosevic and Karadzic did find fertile ground to bare fruits. The SDS party and its three key political figures (Karadzic, Koljevic and Plavsic) were the major participants in the events that led to the creation of the Assembly of the Serbian People in December 1991. This was a political body which

²⁴⁸ It is at this point worth mentioning that in the SFRY a mandatory conscription was in force, meaning that a very big portion of the population, regardless the ethnicity had some basic knowledge in firearms.

²⁴⁹ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 415

²⁵⁰ *ibid.* p. 416

took shape after a highly contested referendum in November of the same year and did eventually form the core of Republika Srpska's state apparatus.²⁵¹

As we have mentioned above the plebiscite held by Izetbegovic triggered a rapid and massive escalation, that started from barricades in Sarajevo and numerous villages where the Serbs constituted the majority of the population, such as Bosanski, Petrovac and Bravsko (both villages are situated near the contemporary western administrative borders of Republika Srpska), rapidly evolving into a full scale Serbian insurgency by April with the support of the JNA. Bosanski Brod -another village near the border with Croatia, today part of Republika Srpska- was bombarded by Serb irregulars causing the loss of 10 people and the intervention of the Croat military, since the vicinity was primarily populated by Croats.²⁵² By the end of April the new status quo was formed, with a new state within the Bosnian territory covering the regions inhabited by Serbs, the JNA and Serb irregulars shelling Sarajevo and a general mobilization being ordered by Izetbegovic. Furthermore the Bosnian Croats involved actively in the fight against the Serbs, demanding a larger territory of Bosnia & Herzegovina to be included in their future canton ,since the West was proposing a cantonization of Bosnia with the Cutilheiro proposition in 1992. Pursuing this objective -i.e. a larger Croat canton- Bosnian Croats waged a war against the Bosnian Muslims and the ARBiH, shaping the political landscape the months following the March referendum.²⁵³

When scholars study the current situation in the Western Balkans , the vast majority analyses in its approach the conditions of the conflict and the origins of the violence in a region, where ethnic communities were living for centuries very close to each other with no obvious indications of discord or interethnic strife –until the events of WWII and the Axis occupation- that could gradually inflate the region causing such a violent outbreak. This approach is the most logical assumption when it comes to the analysis of interethnic relations in Yugoslavia and foremost in Bosnia & Herzegovina, but one must not diminish nor dismiss facts like the Tuzla multiethnic governance, which was a very good sample of this interethnic co-existence, as occurrences of less importance or as marginal events.

²⁵¹ *ibid.* p. 417

²⁵² *ibid.* p. 427

²⁵³ *ibid.* pp. 427-428

The municipal elections, held in the city of Tuzla in 1990, were won by a relatively heterogeneous alliance between former communists and non-nationalist elements, that managed to keep racial hatred outside of its multinational -mostly Bosnian Muslim- community. This coalition strived for shutting out any nationalist tensions outside the community during the war, putting forward the destitute idea of Yugoslavism, instigating the denial of the local reservists to go and fight in Croatia and other fronts during the war, due to the surviving concept of a Yugoslav nationality.²⁵⁴ The urbanization achieved in the times of socialist rule, left an inheritance of institutions and perceptions, that lasted during the conflict keeping Tuzla safe from the bloodshed caused by the nationalist conflict in an area situated near Republika Srpska. Just before the war the social and political reflexes built throughout the years, mobilized the local society and especially the police force, when a divisive police chief was sponsored and appointed by nationalist political forces during the early days of the conflict. This caused the reaction of the police force employees, that declared a strike which effectively led to the removal of the police chief, signifying that the case of Tuzla was an exception similar to the one in Osijek mentioned in a previous chapter.²⁵⁵

In the case of Tuzla one should also notice the old political elite which managed to surpass the new divisions and the political shift from socialism to nationalism successfully adapting itself in the newly arisen political conditions, finding a new political basis stemming from a pro-Bosnian perception. This new perspective replaced the old unifying symbolism of Yugoslavia, which along with the established political power of the local elite, that existed due to the autonomy given to the municipal entities regarding regional administration by the Federal government during the years of the SFRY, shaped the political ground for the local community's "opt-out" from the raging nationalist tensions.²⁵⁶

The city and its authorities remained under the command of Sarajevo and its administration until the end of the war. The leading elite which had a leftist-socialist political background, maintained with the assistance of local brigades the community's cohesion. Even in the case of the "Tuzla massacre" in May 1995 the perpetrator was an "outsider". The commander of the VRS (Vojska Republike Srpske-

²⁵⁴ I. Armakolas, *The 'Paradox' of Tuzla City: Explaining Non-nationalist Local Politics during the Bosnian War*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63:2, 229-261, Routledge, 2011

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*

Army of the Republika Srpska) that bombarded the city, was not part of any local paramilitary contingent, as this was the case in almost every regionalized ethnic conflict in the Yugoslav wars. Regardless of many Serbs fleeing the region in the beginning of the war, both the Tuzla security forces and the administrative apparatus - the two entities that primarily held the monopoly of power and therefore of violence - endured, upholding the multiethnic character of the city posing as a hopeful exception amidst a massive eruption of cruelty and violence.²⁵⁷

Unfortunately Tuzla was an exception to the rule as we have already stated before and the rule was that a brutal slaughter between nations was happening so that the irredentist goals and political illusions of grandeur of national political elites could be satisfied. It was in Bosnia that the conflicting irredentist visions accumulated, leading to the formation of army groupings representing the three major nationalities in Bosnia & Herzegovina. Thus, responding to the new status quo the Bosnian TO was renamed in April 1992, forming the Armed Forces under the command of Sefer Halilovic, as a result of Sarajevo's intentions to take control of Bosnia & Herzegovina, driving back - at first - the Bosnian Serbs and the VRS and -later on - the Bosnian Croats forces of the HVO.²⁵⁸

The ARBiH was formed by the pre-existing TOs, just like all the armed forces of the newly created republics. The Territorial Defence forces of Bosnia & Herzegovina as well as the rest of the Territorial Defence forces established in every former Socialist Republic were a sort of local militia, a localized military entity, subject to the JNA but with a separate General Staff, created to serve as a potential insurgency force, if the enemy breached the defences of the JNA.²⁵⁹ Therefore as a part of the Yugoslav military doctrine the Bosnian TO's training was based on guerrilla warfare. Hence, the Bosnian Territorial Defence was equipped with firepower which was practically harmless for JNA and VRS units, equipped with heavy weaponry from the JNA. Despite the relative high preparedness level of the Bosnians at the eve of the conflict and the fact that the Bosnians through the Patriotic League had already formed in 1990 paramilitary groupings, Izetbegovic was not in charge of a military force fit enough to resist neither the JNA nor the HVO forces until 1994. This resulted

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*

²⁵⁸ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 429

²⁵⁹ D. Melcic (edit.), *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte Verlauf und Konsequenzen*, VS Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden, 2007 p. 388

to massive territorial loss of control by the Sarajevo administration at the end of 1992, having 70% of the Bosnian territory under VRS command, while another 20% was lost to the Bosnian Croats of the HVO.²⁶⁰

However, each of the military formations established in Bosnia & Herzegovina had one target; to protect, expand and solidify the position of the nationality they were fighting for. To that end and in order for the concept of a "Greater Serbia" to be realized with a greater efficiency Karadzic and Milosevic introduced a general plan of ethnical cleansing. Methods of terrorizing the local non-Serb population in the areas of the Republika Srpska and in every region that constituted a possible candidate for annexation in Greater Serbia were implemented, so that all the non-Serbs would be driven out. Mass murder (e.g. Srebrenica), detention camps for both civilians and combatants and the promotion of ethnic homogeneity -thus delegitimizing the multiethnic character propagated during the SFR- were some of the basic elements of and predominant characteristics of the conflict. As a result the term "ethnic cleansing" would accompany almost every reference to the Yugoslav wars.²⁶¹

Yet again the Serbs based on the aforementioned description seem to be the most brutal of the conflict's participants. Despite all that no one should put aside numerous occasions of brutalities orchestrated by the other warring parts, such as the targeting of the civilian population by the Croatian military during Operation Storm in 1995, causing the deaths of hundred non combatant Serbs and the detention facilities similar to the ones of the VRS, that were under the command of both Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims.²⁶² Arming the Bosnian Serbs and the Serbs of the Croatian Krajina had countless disastrous consequences, but it was nonetheless a part of an organized plan as we have already mentioned before. This plan, bearing the acronym RAM, enclosed Milosevic's plan for proliferating the war in Bosnia through the arming of local Serb populace and the secession of Yugoslav parts of minor importance for the future creation of the "Greater Serbia".²⁶³ Although the existence of the plan was never -and has not been until the present day- verified by Milosevic's governmental supporters, it seems highly possible that an organized strategy was architected, in order to achieve maximum efficiency during the JNA's operations in Bosnia &

²⁶⁰ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 433

²⁶¹ *ibid.* pp. 429-432

²⁶² Approximately 89 of the concentration camps were known to be under Bosniac control and another 77 were functioning under Croatian command. (source: *ibid.* p. 430)

²⁶³ M. Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia The Third Balkan War*, Penguin Books, 1996, New York, p. 150

Herzegovina. Ante Markovic confirmed at the time the existence of such a plan targeting Bosnia's territorial integrity in September 1991, with SPS politician Mihalj Kertes carrying out the transfer and distribution of the weaponry to Serbian paramilitary groupings in Bosnia.²⁶⁴ Up until the outbreak of the war in Bosnia Kertes, a supporter -of Hungarian descent- of Milosevic's political agenda, efficiently circulated the weaponry needed for arming the Bosnian Serbs, facilitating the rapid appearance of Serb militants, that succeeded in wreaking havoc against Bosnian security forces and non-Serb civilians at the very beginning of the war.²⁶⁵

Bosnia & Herzegovina was an arena where by the end of 1992 everybody was fighting each other. In October 1992 another conflict was added and this time it was the Bosnian Croats of the HVO supported and instigated by Zagreb and local representatives of the HDZ targeting the ARBiH, which until October 1992 seemed to be the logical political alliance against the VRS forces. The HVO and the local leadership of the HDZ, sponsored by Tudjman, proclaimed in 1992 the creation of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia with Mate Boban as its first president, covering the territory next to Dalmatia, claiming the city of Mostar as its capital.²⁶⁶ Various factors have led to the outbreak of this additional conflict in Bosnia & Herzegovina. One of them was based on the political tactics followed by Tudjman, prior to the war in Bosnia, when he believed that the crisis could be averted if Milosevic and him reached an understanding, splitting Bosnia in half annexing the parts that belonged - according to the predominant nationalist perspectives- to their states, fulfilling thusly their national myths.

The existence of a military force almost equivalent to size and competency with the ARBiH -taking into consideration that the VRS was a far more superior military force than the ARBiH especially in the beginning of the conflict- that if confronted could potentially provide Sarajevo with military victories, the "internationalization" of the Bosniac military ranks through the inclusion of mujahidin militants from third countries (e.g. Iran, Afghanistan) that had no connections with the local community - thus no hesitations when it came to violent acts against non-Muslims- and the inflammatory comments and reports from both Bosniac and Croatian television regarding mutual threats were some of the most crucial reasons -along with the

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶⁶ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 433

Croatian leadership's political tactics that we've mentioned above- for the tension between Croats and Muslims in Bosnia to be intensified, resulting to the addition of one more war front in Herzegovina in 1992.²⁶⁷

The ethnic synthesis in many local communities, in every theatre of war, changed drastically, already from the early years of the conflict. Foremost in Bosnia & Herzegovina, due to the massive internal immigration of Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats, almost every regional community was affected to some extent. This created a new reality for the communities that were not accustomed in leaving with Muslims, Croats or Serbs in the same vicinity. Especially the expulsion of Muslims from ethnically homogenous villages and their relocation in areas populated by Croats, created a new situation to which both the Bosnian Muslims and the Croats eventually reacted.²⁶⁸ This reaction was accompanied and inflated even more by the Vans-Owen plan in 1993 proposing that Bosnia & Herzegovina should be organized on a national-oriented base by dividing the territory in provinces that would reflect the regional ethnical structure, incorporating nationally homogenous communities into to one province.

Hence, in 1993 perceiving the status quo that the Vans-Owen plan might ensue, the warring sides -in this case the HVO and the ARBiH- were even keener on expanding their ethnic communities in Herzegovina and the means to that end was the implementation of ethnic cleansing. Following this infamous tactic the HVO troops in April 1993, acting under the orders of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia's leadership, ethnically "cleansed" the village of Ahmici and the Lasva valley in general. In the village of Ahmici after a coordinated attack of the military against civilian population the Croat forces executed almost 120 Bosnian Muslims levelling the 169 homes-buildings owned by Muslims in an effort to expel the Muslim element from the region "upgrading" the Croat population making Croats a local majority.²⁶⁹ The massacre of Ahmici was one of the most characteristic, text-book examples of ethnic cleansing operations during the war in Bosnia showing the "triage" between "our own" and the "others". In Ahmici according to the testimonies and the verdict of the ICTY the massacre was systematic, since almost all the buildings belonging to Croats were unharmed. In combination with the evident use of snipers according to

²⁶⁷ *ibid.* pp. 433-435

²⁶⁸ *ibid.* p. 435

²⁶⁹ *ibid.* p. 437

UNPROFOR officers to cover the exit points of the village, shows that the attack was targeting the Muslims, aiming at their expulsion or extermination.²⁷⁰

In October 1993 the violence went on and as the conflict between the HVO and the ARBiH was raging on in numerous towns such as Vares another gruesome act of massacre occurred in the nearby village of Stupni Do, where commander Rajic's Croat forces murdered thirty seven Muslim inhabitants living in the village, the vast majority of which were non-combatants.²⁷¹ However acts of mass murder based on ethnic criteria were not "monopolized" only by the HVO and the VRS but the ARBiH as well followed the same path in September 1993 during Operation Neretva, when Sarajevo's forces tried to retaliate and make up for the lost ground during the HVO offensive in April in the Lasa valley. ARBiH's actions caused the death of large numbers of Croat civilians in the villages of Uzdol and Grabovica inflicting approximately the deaths of thirty to forty non-combatant persons (at least 24 of them in Uzdol) making even more obvious that the tactics of mass murder was a "quotidian" reality in the Bosnian theatre of operations amongst the belligerent parts.²⁷²

In spite of the rapid escalation and the mass murder both sides were ready for reconciliation when in 1993 an initiative was undertaken by the US government for a ceasefire between the HVO and Sarajevo's forces. This led to the Washington Agreement in 1994, restoring the military cooperation between the two sides reducing the warring sides from three to two (VRS and the Croat-Bosniac partnership) and putting an end to large scale military operations, regarding HVO and ARBiH clashes.²⁷³ The Washington Agreement did not wish only to end the bloodshed between the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims but -in addition- was proposing the formation of a Federation between Croats and Bosnian Muslims suggesting the creation of a future Confederation of Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia. In other words the Washington Agreement endeavoured to re-forge the common front against the VRS and the Serbs in Bosnia through the structuring of a state that would

²⁷⁰ ICTY Judgment ,case nr. IT-95-14/2-T,26 February 2001,pp. 220-221 §635-636

²⁷¹ ICTY Sentencing Judgment, case nr. IT-95--12-S, 8 May 2006. pp. 9-10 § 49

²⁷² ICTY Judgment case nr. IT-01-48-T, 16 November 2005, pp.276-277 §728, 730.

²⁷³ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p. 439

challenge mainly the military and potential political superiority of Republika Srpska in the region.²⁷⁴

The VRS until 1993 seemed to be the winner that would arise from this conflict, bearing in mind that his two main opponents were tearing each other apart. Two crucial facts managed to turn the situation around:

- The ARBiH the military force of the official government of Bosnia & Herzegovina, despite the multiple fronts and the almost overwhelming superiority of the enemy forces successfully held its ground -by holding its ground we mean surviving and not being thrown into disarray- maintaining its combat-ready status.
- Due to the implication of UNPROFOR and the international broadcast of the mass murder incidents through the western media, NATO intervened in numerous cases, such as Sarajevo and Srebrenica, balancing the firepower supremacy of the VRS through the use of airstrikes against Bosnian Serb forces.²⁷⁵

In the final years of the war NATO's implication was direct and the transportation of weapons through Slovenia and other entry points in the West was increasing. As a result, between 1994 and 1995, the combined forces of the HVO and ARBiH were more than able to counter the attacks mounted by the VRS. In addition the Croat military forces had reached at that point a level of combat effectiveness, that could match and overcome the Serbs in the Croatian Krajina whilst giving Zagreb the possibility to assist the HVO in his efforts against the VRS.²⁷⁶ ARBiH faced the VRS forces in Donji Vakuf -near Jajce- by successfully attacking and weakening the VRS forces. However Mladic's troops at the beginning of 1994 were about to attack the city of Gorazde -situated at the east near the Serbian border- when the VRS was forced to withdraw after NATO air strikes. An ultimatum presented by NATO command showed the VRS that the safety of their troops was under threat. When this happened in April 1994 the Serbs imminently reacted by taking hostages many UN peacekeepers, as a mean to apply pressure on the UN leadership of Butros-Ghali and

²⁷⁴ Washington Agreement, United States Institute of Peace, Peace Agreements Digital Collection, <http://www.usip.org>

²⁷⁵ S.P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias, State Building and Legitimation 1918-2005*, Indiana University Press, 2006, Pennsylvania p.447

²⁷⁶ *ibid.* pp. 449-453

his NATO liaison, the Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi, responsible for NATO-UN cooperation at the time.²⁷⁷

The 200 peacekeepers arrested by the Serbs might have had an effect in building up pressure on NATO, but by the end of April the VRS forces pulled back leaving behind 716 casualties, after a 26 day offensive against the city of Gorazde. But this offensive barely made any difference, regarding the changing situation of the war. We have already mentioned that Croats and Bosnians have received with one way or another, despite the various weapons embargoes imposed on the area, improved weaponry, augmenting – ergo - their firepower capabilities and combat efficiency. The Croats with the support of western European countries such as Germany and Austria have managed to improve their army structure whereas the Bosnians with the support of Islamic countries (e.g. besides weaponry and funding Iranian trainers arrived in Bosnia & Herzegovina, in order to train and improve the fighting status of the ARBiH) and - later on - US contributions had achieved, by the end of 1994, a huge progress in comparison with the "years of yore" of 1991's TO and Patriotic League militants.

Nevertheless the superiority of the Serbs, due to the supremacy given by the JNA arsenal and the numbers of organized regular military forces, ought to have ended the conflict much earlier. They should have suppressed every insurgency and proceed with the enforcement of Milosevic's plan, concerning Serbian prevalence in the areas of interest. However the VRS lacked primary and foremost the coherence needed for maintaining an operational structure that could put its numerical superiority to operational use, having a substantive impact in the field of battle. Lack of internal cohesion and coherence led the VRS to its defeat, through the depletion of his strength by the end of 1995, with the most acute problem being desertion or massive service avoidance -approximately 120,000-150,000 were the ones that avoided draft or deserted- that rendered the VRS practically incapable to cover the full extent of its multiple fronts of operations and to manage effectively the weaponry given by the JNA.²⁷⁸

The problem of internal coherence deficit, became evident in 1995 when the Croatian military along with the Bosnians, succeeded in inflicting a series of hits

²⁷⁷ *ibid.* p. 447

²⁷⁸ B. Mangas & I. Zanic, *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995*, Frank Cass Publishers, 2001, New York , pp. 212-213

through victorious manoeuvres on the battlefield, with the leading example being “Operation Storm” that ended Serb domination in Knin. VRS forces were overrun by an opponent with practically no aerial means, as a result of the non-existent structural unity within VRS's personnel, causing an almost chaotic retreat and an extent panic among the Bosnian Serbs, fearing that the ARBiH and the Croats would invade and take Banja Luka.²⁷⁹ Seen by a "clauswitzian" strategic viewpoint both the Croats and the ARBiH had a stronger political imperative that drastically motivated their combatants, resulting to victory. Operation “Storm” and “Flash”, as well as almost every other military operation from all the belligerent parties, were strongly dictated by a political context that -as in almost every armed conflict- wanted to establish an "everlasting" geopolitical reality in the Western Balkans.²⁸⁰ This context clearly included the creation of a new order of things that would carve "pure" nation states in an area where ethnicities and nations had no clear borders and have been accustomed to live like this for centuries. The use of military and paramilitary organizations in order to target civilian populations that would not fit in the new national cadre or could negatively influence the structure of a nation-state, may serve as a very good paradigm that can very well support the supposition made previously about the goals and objectives set by the belligerent parts.

Operation “Flash” and “Storm” signalled the end of the war in Croatia and the end of the SVK Serbian secessionism in the country. Both Operations were of high importance for the last phase of the Yugoslav Wars until 1995, for they gave Zagreb the opportunity to recapture its lost territory, whilst revealing Belgrade's intentions not to support the Serb enclave in Croatia in a prolonged armed conflict. Operation “Flash” opened the way for Operation “Storm”, capturing Slavonia and thus securing the Croatian East by "clearing" western Slavonia from RSK military elements. It was the first successfully organized military offensive mounted by the Croatian army with two primary entry points, having parallel support by Croatian air force, leading to RSK forces isolation in a matter of days. In addition, Croatian military formations operated around Lipik and Pakrac forcing RSK forces either to surrender or to retreat. In brief the entire 18th corps of the SVK (RSK forces) in western Slavonia had a devastating response to the actions undertaken by the Croatian military resulting to

²⁷⁹ *ibid.* pp. 223-225

²⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 68

the evacuation of both combatant and non-combatant Serbian elements from the region.²⁸¹

Operation “Storm” came as the final closure of Serbian military presence in Croatia a few months after Operation “Flash”, in a combined effort from the ARBiH and the HV forces, ending the existence of the RSK and threatening the territorial integrity of Republika Srpska. As we have already mentioned Milosevic realized by the end of 1994 that it was no longer possible to secure a predominant position in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore he was ready to make a deal that would at least give the Bosnian Serbs a 50:50 status within the Bosnian territory, considering the fact that Serbian Krajina's defence against Croatia was no longer achievable. He was also bearing in mind that between the RSK and Republika Srpska the latter was of far bigger importance.²⁸² Glamoc and Kupres belonged to the VRS's area of responsibility inside Bosnia and were practically given up to the Croats without a fight by the VRS "sketching" the Bosnian Serbs' loss of will to fight, consequently making the lack of coherence and moral of the Bosnian Serb military forces evident yet again.

However the turning point regarding the theatre of operations in Croatian territory came a lot earlier already during the presence of JNA units in Vukovar. The failure to secure a swift victory against an enemy inferior both in number and in weaponry made clear to the JNA leadership that the military was in no position to deliver the political plan that Belgrade had in mind. Vukovar was an indication for Milosevic that he would eventually have to settle with an agreement so that the majority of his national objectives could be achieved.²⁸³ If one tries to succinctly summarize the reasons for the revision of Milosevic's goals, one ought to remind the reader that the JNA was an organized military force that helped the SFRY in guaranteeing and maintaining a status, as an important peripheral military power, which was facing at the time of the Yugoslav Wars quasi irregular armed contingents equipped and trained by JNA authorities and was failing to deliver the anticipated result. The TOs were prepared to face an external invasion as an auxiliary element that would provide local reinforcements, having practically the role of an upgraded militia and these groupings managed in every case from Slovenia to Sarajevo and Vukovar to oppose the -

²⁸¹ *ibid.* pp. 72-74

²⁸² *ibid.* pp. 76-77

²⁸³ *ibid.* pp. 204-205

theoretically- superior force of the JNA. By opposing them we should not think solely in a win-lose pattern in the battlefield, for the fact that the JNA's failure to subdue its opponents and fulfil its targets within a matter of months could be alone characterized as a strategic and military defeat.

Bosnia was, as we have also repeatedly pointed out, probably the most intense, violent and important of all theatres of operations. The VRS from the very beginning was an opponent that constituted a regular army, organized, equipped and supported with heavy weaponry by the JNA, giving him a vital head start compared to the TO's and the police forces opposing it. The Patriotic League and the TO were the main elements that formed the core which subsequently structured the ARBiH in April-May 1990. Along with the HVO the TO, the military police and finally the ARBiH, were responsible for the defence of Bosnia & Herzegovina and they would bear the burden of mounting a resistance against the VRS and Belgrade's plans, according to the B&H Law on Defence.²⁸⁴ Although generally speaking the VRS had superiority in man power, B&H authorities had already, by the end of 1992, mobilized 75,000 volunteers but no sufficient armament to provide them with.²⁸⁵ In its early stages the ARBiH was troubled by poor communications, insufficient armament, lack of higher ranking military personnel and a level of training with which the VRS could not be efficiently met in the battlefield.²⁸⁶

Still the ARBiH and the B&H military turned the Sarajevo invasion from an operation that was supposed to be a swift intervention by the VRS with an imminent result, to a prolonged siege, which ended, despite the difficulties, with the VRS Romanija corps failure to capture the city. VRS troops managed to take some of the city's suburbs between 1992 and 1993, but due to the numerical inferiority of VRS corps, regarding their capability to both maintain a siege and to effectively conquer the city, B&H forces supported by NATO's bombardments successfully lifted the siege. The VRS had approximately 29,000 militants to cover a 64 kilometre front line, deeming weapons superiority practically useless. This, along with the fact that if the VRS was to capture the city, they would automatically be responsible for the city's proper function, whereas having it under encirclement, the VRS could regulate the

²⁸⁴ *ibid.* pp. 158-159

²⁸⁵ *ibid.* p. 162

²⁸⁶ *ibid.* pp. 161-162

influx of supplies diverting in many cases supplies to cover its own needs, led to the siege of Sarajevo and not to a brief operation.²⁸⁷

The JNA tried to enter the city in numerous cases with the most important being the one on the 2nd of May 1992. Their attempt to break through the city's defence reconnecting with the JNA garrison in the Sarajevo barracks, was repelled by ARBiH defences.²⁸⁸ This attempt combined with the fact that the VRS did not succeed in prevailing massively and decisively in B&H territory along with reorganizational plans including military endeavours, such as Operation "Trebevic" in 1993 against private Bosnian military feuds, finalized the military scenery in Bosnia & Herzegovina, stripping Karadzic from any hopes that Bosnian Serbs could eventually take up the sole leading position in the Bosnian political scene and dominate or secede from Bosnia after the end of 1993.

Military operations in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia proved to the international community that the JNA was no longer the military machine it used to be. Its ranks lacked motivation, organizational coherence and collective will to achieve the goals set by Belgrade, that transformed a federal state instrument into the "enforcer" of Milosevic's policies. Despite his superiority the JNA never managed to inflict decisive blows that would allow its paramilitary supporters and localized Serb forces to easily secure victory through the establishment of a de facto situation after military prevalence wherever the Serbian element had taken up arms in an organized manner that constituted insurgency actions against local authority. By defining an internal enemy -or better internal enemies- as the state's primary security threat , Belgrade did not give the JNA the opportunity to shape a clear target against which its personnel - most of them conscripts- could find the required motivation that would eventually forge a high moral and spirit. This doomed the JNA and its collaborating forces to failure.

²⁸⁷ *ibid.* pp. 164-165

²⁸⁸ *ibid.* p. 187

Part IV- Conclusion

a) A brief comparative analysis: The dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the collapse of the SFRY

Up until this point the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars and the outbreak of the ethnical tensions created by the newly arisen nationalisms in the 1980s-1990s, has been analysed. The dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia took place within the context of a general collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe that led to the post-socialist era. The Yugoslav Wars and the causes that triggered them were found as the general political norm, that was met predominantly during the dissolution of the USSR and the rapid transformation of eastern Europe from the bastion of socialism to the promised land of deregulating capitalism, where nationalism operated as the new foundation upon which nations and ethnicities tried to build their own nation-states, negating the anti-ethnical/antinational notion that socialism tried to build -in theory- in eastern Europe.

Yet, the so called "iron curtain" covered over 7 countries in the eastern European region, from which only one experienced a regular armed conflict in which the belligerent parts were former constituent Socialist Republics. The Baltic Republics, Belorussia, the Ukraine, Moldova, the Czech Republic and Slovakia seceded from their federal state structures with massive civil unrest and turmoil, but an armed conflict was never encountered until the dissolution of the SFRY. In order to have an even deeper and clearer understanding about the case of Yugoslavia and the unique effects that nationalism had in the region, a comparison with a similar case would be in this point useful. However we ought to underline the fact that in no way the violence and excessive force used in the Yugoslav wars resembles the dissolution of socialist governments in other regions.

For this comparison we shall consider the example of Czechoslovakia, so that the differences and the particularity of the Yugoslav case can be even more evident, compared to a relatively similar case such as the dissolution of the Czechoslovak state in 1991. The similarities between the two states are quite few, regarding the nature of these similarities and considering that both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were parts of the Habsburg empire. They were both states that included mostly the same territory before and after the war, changing their forms of government to a socialist model and

were the only multiethnic socialist federal states in the region of East Central and Southeast Europe. Czechoslovakia was fully renamed as a federative state in the constitution of 1960 recognizing equal rights for all of the ethnicities residing within its borders, following to some extent the model implemented in the SFRY. The Czechoslovak model was based upon the co-existence of the two predominant constituent parts of the country, whereas the Yugoslav system tried to give administrative autonomy and self-governance in every ethnicity/nationality within Yugoslavia.

The turning point in Czechoslovakia's political situation came with the Velvet Revolution in 1989, an event that served both as a culminating point for socialism in Czechoslovakia and as a key event, which revived the debate between the two constituent Republics in the Czechoslovak federal state. The OF party (Civic Forum- Občanské fórum) in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia and the VPN (Public Against Violence- Verejnost' proti násiliu) in the Slovak part were the two major political parties after the Revolution of 1989. They both were the direct political "output" of the newly shaped political situation in Czechoslovakia, having as their political base the Czech and the Slovak society respectively. Hence, although they were representing a collective political goal, the national-oriented political base was more evident with one of its first major outbursts being, the renaming of the state in 1990 with President Havel proposing to strike out the 'Socialist' denotation in the official name and the Slovak side taking a step further putting the issue of completely renaming the state from Czechoslovak Republic to Republic of Czecho-Slovakia.²⁸⁹ The dispute was seemingly of minimal importance and of bureaucratic nature, but it implies a feeling of inequality between the Slovaks and the Czechs. The Slovak side considered that it was time to resolve this dispute since the political status quo has rapidly changed.

In an effort to revise the relations between the two nations the newly elected administration established a committee of delegates of the Federal Parliament, assisted by a group of experts, with the participation of the Presidents of the National Czech and Slovak Parliaments in an effort to redefine the co-existence of Czechs and Slovaks within a common federal entity, through a constitutional amendment.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ R. Kipke, K. Vodicka (edt.), *Abschied in von der Tschechoslowakei*, Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1993, Köln pp. 66-67

²⁹⁰ *ibid.* p. 67

Czech politicians and members of the federal state apparatus seemed reluctant towards change, when it finally came to a decision empowering the National Parliaments with a broader spectrum of legislative capabilities narrowing the administrative jurisdictions of the Federal Parliament. Economic repercussions on Czech interests would ensue from such an action therefore the Czech political elite's stance can be explained through their intention to protect local interests.

The constitutional process was made the primary and most important issue in Czechoslovak political life. Both sides were trying to maintain the existence of the federal state by introducing legal frameworks upgrading the status of the two constituent Republics from constituent parts of a federal state entity to a quasi confederate co-existence of two state entities. The latter came as a demand from the Slovak side, supported by the Slovak PM Jan Carnogursky, stating that it would be for the benefit of a harmonious and productive co-existence, if the Czech and Slovak Speaker of the House acting as representatives of the Czech and Slovak nations respectively, drafted and signed an agreement between the two nations, before a consensus about the new constitution could be reached.²⁹¹ Carnogursky wanted to achieve simultaneously a solid federal state through the cooperation of the two nations in the central administration and the recognition of the Slovak nation as a state, so that Slovakia could have the possibility to participate at some point in the growing inter-state structure of the European Community either as a state or a state entity, probably mimicking the status of the SSR of the Ukraine and its participation in the UN, but not in the same protectoral manner as in Moscow's plans at the time.²⁹²

Nevertheless the situation regarding the co-existence of the two nations was -as it has always been in politics- the result of a long historical process that already began from the First Republic and was inherited to the socialist administration and the transitional government in the early 90s. From the early years of the Czechoslovak state the government and the political elite had already strived to table the debate regarding the autonomy of the Slovaks, due to the two largest minorities -the Germans and the Hungarians- that could constitute a potential threat (and so they did) for the existence of Czechoslovakia.²⁹³ One of the leading instigators of Slovak autonomy was Andrej Hlinka and the Slovak People's Party having all the characteristics of a

²⁹¹ *ibid.* p. 68

²⁹² *ibid.*

²⁹³ M. Kraus, A. Stanger (edt), *Irreconcilable Differences? Explaining Czechoslovakia's Dissolution*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers inc., 2000, Maryland pp. 30-32

nationalist anti-communist party, that opposed Prague's centralism, supported by Slovak farmers managed mostly to collect high percentages, leading to its participation in a coalition government in the interwar period.²⁹⁴ However, this ended with a treason trial that included prominent members of Hlinka's party, consequently narrowing down the Slovak counterparts that actively participated in the administration of the pre-war Czechoslovak state into mainly three political figures; Ivan Derer , Vavro Srobar and Milan Hodza. Still, the governmental core was based on Czech political elite that eventually demanded the cooperation of Slovak political personnel, in order to have a functional state. The Slovak nation seemed to play a sort of secondary role in the Czechoslovak state apparatus, with the overwhelming majority of state leaders being Czechs. The representation seemed to be more equal and just in the post-war Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, with two Slovaks being elected as Party Secretaries (Dubcek and Husak). The Czech political elite and the Czech nation prevailed nonetheless, in the state's government throughout the existence of Czechoslovakia.

The rivalry between Czech predominance and Slovak autonomy created various stereotypes amongst the two communities, similar to those in Yugoslavia; on the one hand the Czechs were accused for authoritarianism and insensitivity towards the Slovak demands, whereas the Slovaks were considered to have had adopted a treacherous stance when facing the Munich agreement and the Soviet invasion during the Prague Spring, in an effort to achieve their nationalist objectives.²⁹⁵ By analyzing the facts, one could assert that the Czechs did indeed have a predominant position in a state that included the names of two separate nations. The numerical prevalence, the centralization of the institutions through the actions and policies adopted by Prague and external factors -like the ones we have mentioned before regarding pre-war Czechoslovakia- indicate that the Slovaks had a position similar to the Croats in pre-war Yugoslavia.²⁹⁶

b) Similarities and Differences

Czechoslovak governments always endeavoured to create a Czechoslovak identity so that both the Czech and the Slovak uniqueness would be abandoned in favour of a

²⁹⁴ *ibid.* p. 33

²⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 36

²⁹⁶ *ibid.* pp. 34-35

new collective national conscience. Therefore many of the Slovak demands for a more autonomous form of self-governance were seen by the Czech majority as both an anachronistic propagation and as an idea opposing the core ideology of the state.²⁹⁷ For these two reasons the Czechs saw Slovak emancipation as a 19th century remnant, that "Czechoslovakism" failed to abolish through almost one century of social engineering. Another relatively solid reason for the Czechs being suspicious towards a Slovak national identity, stems from the part which autonomous Slovakia had during the dismantling of Czechoslovakia from the Axis on the eve of the war. Josef Tiso and the Slovak nationalists operating as a German vassal gave the *coup de grace*, in a semi-dissolved Czechoslovakia by declaring the independence of the Slovak state in 1939 after having declared Slovak autonomy in 1938. The independent state of Slovakia existed until the Red Army's invasion in Hungary and southern Slovakia, leading to the dissolution of a state that resembled the NDH throughout its existence; cooperation with Nazi Germany and the Axis powers in suppressing insurgency and facilitating the German Holocaust plans.

The "burden" that influenced the Czech-Slovak relations using the power of history and collective memory ought to have been extinct especially in the socialist period of Czechoslovakia. Instead, Slovaks and Czechs although citizens of the same state enjoying the same rights, did not seem to view the Czechoslovak nationality as a common identity and the Czechoslovak state as a unified state, where its citizens regardless their ethnicity could settle down in any part of the state they wished. Mobility between the two constituent nations was far from achieved. Reaching 1989 one could easily observe that the vast majority of educated Slovaks were living and working in Slovakia without crossing over to the other "side" that was separated with an administrative -practically non existent- line.²⁹⁸ The political system of the post-war (1945-1948) period and the transformation of Czechoslovakia into a Socialist Republic, seemed already segmented and more ethnically oriented. With the Slovak state's experiences being fresh, the Czechoslovak state notion appeared to be a fading idea, supported only from the Prague political elite. It was the Czechoslovak Communist Party that managed to relatively unify both nations under one ideology,

²⁹⁷ R. Kipke, K. Vodicka (edt.), *Abschied in von der Tschechoslowakei*, Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1993, Köln p. 69

²⁹⁸ M. Kraus, A. Stanger (edt), *Irreconcilable Differences? Explaining Czechoslovakia's Dissolution*, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers inc., 2000, Maryland pp. 38-39

which as we have mentioned in the first chapters promotes the abolishment of national divisions, by creating both Czech and Slovak party organizations.²⁹⁹

Yet again, we encounter another resemblance between the case of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, where in the place of the KSC (*Komunistická strana Československa*) one could place the AVNOJ and the League of Communists that propagated Yugoslavism as the means to construct a common federal identity within a socialist federal state. This identity and common consensus based on a triadic leadership structure that included the Slovak, Czech and central- governmental political groupings was the key feature that designated the structural base of the Czechoslovak state. Czechoslovakia reorganized itself by enhancing and clarifying its federal state nature after 1968 and the evolving nature of Slovak political elite taking a turn towards a political stance that would increase national self-awareness, ended this triadic nature making a "relapse" to the Czech-Slovak national debate almost inevitable.³⁰⁰

Re-introducing the national debate in a multinational state was one of the typical symptoms of the post-socialist transformation process in the 90s. In the case of Czechoslovakia the process was characterized by three factors, originating from historical and economic reasons;

- a) Slovak autonomy was strongly interlinked with a fascist-authoritarian political ideology in the interwar and occupation period with members of the Slovak catholic clergy having a leading position in the Slovak national movement (Hlinka and Tiso)
- b) Slovaks perceived Czechoslovakism and the notion of a one and unified Czechoslovak nation as a tactic implemented and adopted by the Czech majority and the government in Prague, as an impediment to Slovak national demands.
- c) The mostly agrarian based economy of Slovakia did not manage to cope and converge with the more industrialized Czech parts of the country, resulting to the weakening of local economy.

Slovaks tended to accuse Czech bureaucrats as the ones responsible for the situation in Slovakia, due to a colonial behaviour towards Slovakia, that according to the Slovaks was predominating the policies implemented by Prague in Slovakia.³⁰¹ This

²⁹⁹ *ibid.* p. 39

³⁰⁰ *ibid.* pp. 38-40

³⁰¹ *ibid.* p. 41

combined the Slovak opposition during the socialist period with the demand for an economic reform, that would allow an ameliorated allocation of funds in Slovakia, re-invigorating local economy, therefore adding another crucial factor to the equation by attributing a national note to an economic debate. As a result the economic management and the distribution of state's funds was incorporated into the central political debate between the Czechs and the Slovaks by the end of 1989.

In general, and judging by the facts and analytical approaches that we have presented so far, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia seemed inevitable, when the only unifying and simultaneously suppressive factor, the KSC, lost its legitimization and its grasp on society. Czech majority failed to subdue and to put aside its interests for the sake of a new state, that was in dire need of a new collective national identity that would unify society thereby giving the central government in Prague, from the first years of Czechoslovakia's existence, a political culture that would be bequeathed as a political capital to the political elites to come, assuring the unity and perpetuation of a multinational state. When it became evident that Prague had failed to create the Czechoslovak nationality, the political personnel did not act vigilantly and rigorously enough, so that the constituent nation of the Slovaks would have the autonomy it demanded from the very beginning of Czechoslovak independence. When the federal reforms were introduced in 1968, both the level of political implementation and the followed administrative praxis did not suffice.

The Slovak nation on the other hand appeared unwilling to give up its national identity in order for a new Czechoslovak one to arise and prevail. In any given chance the Slovak political elite strived to gain autonomy with every political means in its disposal, resulting to the connection of Slovak independence with Nazism and fascist-authoritarian beliefs, causing the loss of any political legitimization in the post-war order. We can clearly see that, with Carnogursky's proposal in the post-socialist transitional period, when the debate was once more re-opened through the newly introduced political dynamic after the Velvet Revolution, Slovak politicians did not completely abandon the Czechoslovak idea until it was more than evident that the state could no longer function, for the gap between the two viewpoints became irreconcilable. The dissolution of Czechoslovakia was the result of accumulated and unresolved issues, for which both sides as well as external factors should be held accountable.

Still, we ought to remember that the case of Czechoslovakia was hereby mentioned, in order to point out similarities and differences between the post-socialist transitions in two different versions which seemingly have evident resemblances. In both circumstances the state had a purely multiethnic character inherited from a pre-war situation, which was transformed through the influence of socialism into a - eventually- federal state apparatus, either from solely internal factors during the war (e.g. Yugoslav Partisans) or by a direct implication of a third factor (e.g. Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia). The federal state came as a remedy for authoritarian behaviours adopted by an arithmetic -regarding the population- majority that enforced unitarian policies, virtually monopolizing the participation in the state's executive power. In Yugoslavia as well as in Czechoslovakia nationalism of the constituent nations antagonized a new identity, which contested the prevailing position in the newly founded state, as a predominant national denotation. This new identity would be socially engineered through policies adopted by the centres of power and enforced through policies that conflicted with traditions, that have been invented and established themselves as the predominant national myths throughout the course of history.

Although the differences between the SFRY and Czechoslovakia were seemingly less than the similarities, they were extremely crucial. The constituent nations in Czechoslovakia were two -not including the ethnic minorities that did not have a substantive active participation in the executive political affairs of the country-, whereas in the post-war socialist Yugoslav state five nationalities co-existed under one flag. The federal state apparatus in Yugoslavia was generally built in a manner reflecting the multiethnic nature of the region, whilst trying to both reconcile and make amends for the wrongdoings against the rest of the Yugoslav nations during the Karadjordjevic years. Nevertheless, this alone does not answer perhaps one of our most vital questions; Why the dissolution process of the SFRY was the most violent one when compared to every other collapse of multinational socialist states during the 90s? In almost every country -even in the USSR- the collapse of the socialist state did not result to an armed, inter-ethnic, extremely violent conflict with ethnic cleansing as one of its primary purposes. Civil society movements, mass protests and secessions from the federal state -even coup d'états- where the primary reaction to party politics de-legitimization in almost every socialist country during the transitional early post-socialist years.

Both Moscow and Prague did not wage open war against the seceding Socialist Republics and both the Russian and Czech political elite did not openly plan an ethnically cleansed *Lebensraum*, when they realized that socialism could no longer be the state's ideological platform. The answer is simple in its own complexity; Balkan politics is something unique that has always been characterized by "ravaging" nationalism, due to the existence of strong national myths, brutal violence and constant belligerence. Although, throughout the centuries the cultural and racial exchange has rendered in many cases, foremost in the border areas between each territorial national "core", any ethnic differences practically non-existent, deeming co-existence of different nationalities a daily interaction, national traditions and history have persevered. It is for this reason, that a proposition about a referendum concerning the dissolution of the federal state in Yugoslavia would not have been a realistic approach to the matter, as it was in Czechoslovakia. In the latter, though public opinion seemed to be positive to both a referendum and the maintaining of the federation, the ruling Czech and Slovak parties at the time did not agree neither with the continuation of Czechoslovakia as a federal state nor with a referendum for that issue.³⁰² Slovak and Czech political elites had already decided that in spite of the public's opinion, their differences could not be bridged over; hence the decision for the dissolution was reached, for cooperation within the framework of a common federal administration appeared to be impossible.

In the Yugoslav case it was the competing national myths and the experiences of the past that hindered any possible peaceful resolution of the nationalities dispute. Apart from the loss of legitimization that made socialism the predominant ideology in the SFRY there was another event that led to the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations in Yugoslavia; the demise of Josip Broz Tito. He was a symbol of the Partisan effort and of the antifascist opposition and furthermore an ethnic Croat that named himself foremost a Yugoslav. It was this ethnic Croat, leading the country from Belgrade, who propagated above all the prevalence of socialism in combination with Yugoslavism, that was the "personification" of Yugoslav state ideology. When Tito died it was proven that he had the function of a national symbol, that provided the SFRY with coherence and integrity, acting as guarantor of the multiethnic federal socialist state's continuation.

³⁰² N. Perzi, B. Blehova, P. Blachmaier (Hrsg.), *Die Samtene Revolution Vorgeschichte-Verlauf-Akteure*, Peter Lang Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2009, Frankfurt am Main, pp. 247-248

The outbreak of the war was the culminating point of competing national myths and accumulated nationalist tensions amongst the nationalities consisting the federal state. Each of these nations desired ultimately its own national state, which was expressed through irredentist policies, that were antagonizing the centralist view of Belgrade and the opposing Serb plans for an incorporation of all the Serbs in Yugoslavia in one Serbian state. When nationalism became the new predominant political ideology in a state (a region) where different ethnic communities lived side by side for centuries, the objective of having a national state, "purified" by any minorities or other ethnic elements that could jeopardize the political elite's claims for such a state, was considered to be a political goal of paramount importance. In that sense and returning back to the case of Yugoslavia, if we add in this equation the fact that the JNA was one of the largest armies in the Balkan region, controlled directly by Belgrade and the intervention of neighbouring European countries (e.g. Germany and Austria) regarding the armament of the JNA's opponents, then an armed conflict of that magnitude seemed as an inevitable outcome.

In Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980's two of the most important "ingredients", regarding the possibility of a conflict outbreak were encountered; the nationalities had both a political goal and -eventually- sufficient weaponry to achieve that goal. Thus, when Belgrade tried in the beginning to retain control over the federal state, it failed to recognize in time that a military solution through the JNA -a military that consisted of conscripts from the same nationalities that it were called upon to suppress- was not a feasible plan. The solution to the problem ought to have come earlier than the end of the 1980's, as a political effort to manage the economic crisis that contributed even more to the de-legitimization of the federal state's authorities along with a reform of the federal state so that the nature of the constituent Socialist Republics would be re-shaped, based on the new regional and international political context. In sum, Belgrade did not act in time, in order to prevent an armed conflict from happening and when it did, the enforced solution was evidently a usurpation of federal power and authority by the Milosevic clique.

c) Summary-Conclusion

Nationalism was, is and apparently will be for years to come one of the most important political ideologies in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. Nationalist tensions in the Balkan region have led to at least three major armed conflicts -if we do

not include the independence movements and wars against the Ottoman Empire- one of which a World War. The latest was the result of competing nationalist tensions that have been either mostly "dormant" or did not present themselves in such a violent manner during the years of the SFRY. This puts us back to our original question that still demands a clear answer; Was nationalism in Yugoslavia a legacy of self-management socialism? Did nationalist ideology and all of its results come as a direct repercussion of the failure of the SFRY's state ideology? The answer is no, both nationalism and the re-emerging nationalist ideology were not solely a legacy of a defect federative multinational model of self management socialism in Yugoslavia. Although, self-management socialism did contribute to the accumulation of tensions caused by nationalist ideologies, by not providing an adequate political/ideological framework that would resolve once and for all the ethnic rivalries, it can not be considered responsible for the Yugoslav Wars.

From the very beginning of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and the Slovenes a Serb dynasty was put in charge of a state that included nations that had a different cultural background, socially formed by different political experiences over the years. As we have mentioned before Yugoslavism in its initial stage, came as an ideology that promoted the unity of the Yugoslavs as a unified nation, whereas the policies followed during the Karadjordjevic era did not indicate that Yugoslavism was indeed perceived from the political elites of the two largest nations as an ideal to which they could commit and implement. Regretfully, only a royal dictatorship and Radic's assassination resulted to the renaming of the state to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Drastic yet authoritarian and non-democratic measures were taken, so that Croats, Serbs and Slovenes would form a real Yugoslav nation. King Alexander's dictatorship was a false -and oppressive- move that came too late, condemning the endeavour to be a void effort for personal domination, having as an ideological base the practical realization of an ideology that ought to have been enforced already from the very birth of the Yugoslav state.

In short, the nations constituting Yugoslavia always defined the social existence of their ethnic group within the borders of the Yugoslav state, through the existence of the "other", following the general terms and rules applying to every interethnic co-existence. This interactive relationship becomes even more apparent by the boundaries between ethnicities, which are constructed socially, having variable levels

of importance depending on the momentum.³⁰³ Since, it is widely acclaimed by nationalists that the differences -and therefore the boundaries- between nations originate to a large extent from culture, one should note that cultural differences affect ethnicity when and if these become relevant in social interaction.³⁰⁴ This helps us explain once again, why all of these (basically) culturally different ethnicities lived together in the same Yugoslav territory with no major clashes and bloodshed on the grounds of cultural difference and rivalry. When culture started to relate to ethnicity (Bosniac-Muslim cultural elements, Serbs-Orthodox cultural "demarcations", Croats-Latin/Catholic cultural influences), then the boundaries between ethnicities became even more obvious, "forging" a political denominator orbiting its social interaction around a nationalist-ethnocentric centre.

It was these boundaries that the Partisan legacy managed to "fade out" during the occupation years. Nationalism was linked with Axis collaboration during the war, thus correlating nationalist and irredentist ideas such as the foundation of a Great Serbia with reactionary thinking, anti-Partisan activity and submission to fascism-Nazism.³⁰⁵ Moreover, the nature of the Partisan political base, the KPJ (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*) was the only political party left in Yugoslavia, with no ethnic/national-oriented ideology and political practice. This contributed to the unification of the Yugoslav nations, leading to the creation of the AVNOJ and the immergence of socialism as the dominant ideology, with the potential to answer the National Question in Yugoslavia.³⁰⁶

Hence, here arises the question; how did nationalism emerge in the 80's taking the position of a dominant ideology in the SFRY? The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not the only multinational state in the region, however its dissolution was the only one that inflicted such a vast conflict. For what reason did this "particularity" exist? How, in what way and to what extent did the national myth survived in the society during the interwar and post-war period in a Marxist-socialist environment of the SFRY? The socio-political unification seemed to last up until the beginning of the dissolution of the socialist world in Europe and the "inauguration" of the post-socialist era. For it is the same main regional factor in Eastern Europe, namely the "abundance" of historicity and historical legacy – which has made the

³⁰³ T. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Pluto Press, 1992, p. 38

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ E. Kardelj, *Der Weg Jugoslawiens*, Österreichischer Volkverlag Graz, 1946, Graz, p. 27

³⁰⁶ *ibid.* p. 34

building of a collective identity easier through the existence of tradition and social reminiscence- that socialism tried to combat.³⁰⁷ When the legitimization ideology changed, i.e. when the shift from socialism-communism to nationalism-ethnocentrism occurred, through the adoption of nationalist perceptions by the political elites, then the re-appearance of metaphysical concepts such as religion, nation and the link between them³⁰⁸ as the means forming the new "prominent" ideology, seemed as a political inevitability coming to salvage society's unity.³⁰⁹ Self-management socialism, despite its re-structuring through the intense institutional decentralization process in the 70's did not manage to fulfil the arising needs for national self-government. Instead, it created a sort of a paradox by weakening the federal state's authority and power, thus opening the way for local political elites to arise seeking their ideological legitimization basis for their respective power claim in a different political direction. At the same time the political elite having its political roots in the Partisan struggle, supporting the character of a strong federalized central state and the formation of a socialist Yugoslav identity as a unifying platform in a multinational society, abandoned the notion of a unified Yugoslavia. Since the intensively decentralized state did no longer represent the socialist Yugoslav identity, there was no reason for members of the old political elite to give their support. Consequently, they adapted to the new political status, contributing to the social re-appearance of nationalism. Thus, ethnocentrism and the nationalist notion eventually appeared as the means, that would appeal to a society, that had no experiences of common struggle -as the AVNOJ generation had- posing at the same time as a political notion of social resistance against either the centre of federal power or against the one's endeavouring to overthrow legitimate authority, subsequently threatening the existence of national groupings, that have socially linked themselves with the task of supporting federal central power. This chain of social and political evolvement re-aligned politics in Yugoslavia in a bi-pole ascribing to each of the two poles two different adversaries, which used the nationalist notion as the means to differentiate themselves even more

³⁰⁷ D. Segert (Hg.), *Postsozialismus Hinterlassenschaften des Staatssozialismus und neue Kapitalismen in Europa*, Braumüller, 2007, Wien, p. 11

³⁰⁸ Let us not forget that a vast majority of Serb militants during the war, carried or had painted the sign of the cross with the Cyrillic CCCC (Само слога Србина спасава- Samo sloga Srbina spasava, Only unity saves the Serbs) on it, a symbol of unity of the Serbian nation depicting the linkage between Orthodoxy and the Serbs.

³⁰⁹ D. Segert (Hg.), *Postsozialismus Hinterlassenschaften des Staatssozialismus und neue Kapitalismen in Europa*, Braumüller, 2007, Wien, pp. 17-18

from each other, solidifying the causes for their rivalry in the social formations they were addressing.

The national myth and the national idea of each of Yugoslavia's constituent nations did not dissolve during the SFRY years, causing to a clear, evident and intense influence of the war objectives and tactics during the first phase of the Yugoslav Wars for all warring parties. Nationality and political status were interlinked in the eyes of society, during the years of self-management socialism, due to both -although to a relatively lesser extent- social predisposition according to the positions taken by certain national groupings during the occupation (e.g. the Ushtasha and the NDH) and to their political stance during the SFRY years (e.g. the richer Croats and the poorer "exploitive" Serbs). Political elites in the federal state apparatus were gradually more easily identified with certain nationalities due to cultural demarcations, facilitating thereby the social process.

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Abbreviations

SFRY- Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija*)

JNA- Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija*)

Kingdom of SHS- Kingdom of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes (*Kraljevina SHS, Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*)

AVNOJ- Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (*Antifašističko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije*)

UDBA- State Security Administration (*Uprava državne bezbednosti*)

OZNA-Department of National Security (*Odjeljenje za zaštitu naroda*)

LCY- League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*)

NDH- Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*)

k.u.k.- Imperial and Royal (*kaiserlich und königlich*)

SDP/SDS- Serbian Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka*)

HDZ- Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*)

YMO- Yugoslav Muslim Organization (*Jugoslavenska Muslimanska Organizacija*)

ZAVNOBiH- National Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Bosne i Hercegovine*)

TO-Territorial Defence (*Teritorialna obramba*)

SDA- Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka Demokratske Akcije*)

KOS- Counterintelligence Service (*Kontraobavještajna služba*)

B&H/BiH- Bosnia & Herzegovina/ Bosna i Hercegovina

VRS- Army of Republika Srpska (*Vojska Republike Srpske- Army of the Republika Srpska*)

HVO- Croatian Defence Council (*Hrvatsko vijeće obrane*)

ARBiH-Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*)

SPS- Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*)

UNPROFOR- United Nations Protection Force

SVK- Serbian Army of Krajina (*Srpska Vojska Krajine*)

RSK- Republic of Serbian Krajina (*Republica Srpska Krajina*)

ICTY-International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia

OF- Civic Forum (*Občanské fórum*)

VPN- Public Against Violence (*Verejnosť proti násiliu*)

KSC- Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa*)

KPJ- Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*)

Curriculum Vitae

Name; Konstantinos-Angelos
Familiennamen; Tasopoulos
Staatsangehörigkeit; Griechenland

Schulbildung:

Griechisch-deutsche Privatschule (Grundschule und Gymnasium 1995-2001)

Hochschulbildung:

Aristoteles-Universität Thessaloniki
Institut für Politikwissenschaft
2006-2010 (Bachelorabschluss)

Verfasste Seminararbeiten während des Studiums

“Das Attentat auf G. Lamprakis und die Einstellung der wichtigsten politischen Parteien dem Ereignis gegenüber“ (Mitverfasser- geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Das Politische System und die Parteiformationen in Griechenland, 1946-1974“)

Die Koalitionsregierung von Synaspismos und Nea Dimokratia in 1989. Die Einstellung der Linke und der Rechte gegenüber der Zusammenarbeit (Mitverfasser- geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Griechische politische Parteien seit 1974“)

Massenmedien und ihre Beitrag zum sozialen Aufbau der Realität. Beitragen die moderne Massenmedien zum Aufbau von Stereotypen von ethnischen Minoritäten und Frauen?
(geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Sozialtheorie“)

Universität Wien

Institut für Politikwissenschaft (Master of Arts, Studienrichtungen: Internationale Beziehungen und Osteuropastudien)
2011- 2013

Verfasste Seminararbeiten während des Studiums

USA-Brasilien:Die bilaterale Beziehungen über die Jahrzehnte.
Ein historisch-analytischer Ansatz. (geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Brasilien als regionale und internationale Großmacht?“)

Transnistrien-Konflikt

(Mitverfasser- geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik am Beispiel der ost- und südosteuropäischen Nachbarstaaten“)

Soviet administrative system in the South Caucasus;Socialism as a mean of decompression of ethnical conflict
(geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV “ South Caucasus: a part or apart of Europe?“)

Lenin's political thought and its implementation on the sectors of state building process in the USSR.
(geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV “Contemporary Radical Political Thought“)

Frieden aus Erwartung; Marxistische Friedenskonzepte und Friedentheorien
(geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Cultures of Peace(s):Friedens- und Konfliktarbeit“)

Krisenpolitik in Griechenland

(Mitverfasser- geschrieben und vorbereitet für die LV „Neuere Entwicklungen in der internationalen politischen Ökonomie - Handel und Umwelt“)

Sprachkenntnisse:

Englisch C2 (TOEFL iBT 98/110)
Französisch DALF C1
Deutsch C2 (KDS Goethe Institut)
Russisch A2
Griechisch (Muttersprache)

Konferenzen/ erworbene Berufserfahrung:

ThessismUN (Thessaloniki International Students Model United Nations) 2009
(awarded with an honorary mention)
BISMUN(Bucharest International Students Model United Nations) 2010
ThessismUN (Thessaloniki International Students Model United Nations) 2010
(Auszeichnung -"honorary mention"- bekommen)
Rhodes MRC(Model Regional Cooperation) 2010 (Auszeichnung -"honorary
mention"- bekommen)
Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) 23d Meeting of the
Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (26. November
2010, Thessaloniki)
Greek-Turkish Chamber of Northern Greece (Greek-Turkish Economic Cooperation,
9. December 2010)

Praktikum für sechs Monaten am Büro für Handels- und Finanzangelegenheiten
Nordgriechenlands des Außenministeriums der Hellenischen Republik (Thessaloniki,
Oktober-März 2010)

Praktikum für drei Monaten am Büro der Vereinten Nationen für Drogen- und
Verbrechensbekämpfung (UNODC-Wien)- Abteilung für Europa und Lateinamerika
(Regional Office for Europe and Latin America)- Wien, Oktober-Dezember 2012

Praktikum für sechs Monaten an der Konsularabteilung der Botschaft der
Hellenischen Republik in Wien (Wien, Januar -Juni 2013)

Abstract

Am Ende der 80er Jahre war die Welt Zeuge des Zusammenbruchs eines ganzen politischen Systems und des Beginns einer neuen Ära. Mit dem Ende des Kalten Krieges und dem Einsturz sowohl der Sowjetunion als auch der sozialistischen Ländern in Europa, kam es zu einer radikalen Veränderung in der politischen Landschaft. Neue Staaten wurden geschaffen, neue Grenzen etabliert und Regime, die der bürgerlichen Demokratie ähnelten, wurden als politischer Haupttrend auf dem ganzen Kontinent durchgesetzt. Nichtsdestotrotz fand diese Umwandlung nicht gewaltlos statt. Alle Länder Europas waren durch ein scharfes Vorgehen der Regierungselite gegen die gesellschaftlichen Gruppierungen, die einen Wandel verlangten, geprägt. Dies war die "gewöhnliche" Reaktion auf die politischen Turbulenzen in Osteuropa. Diese Ereignisse haben jedoch in den meisten Fällen zu keinem Krieg und vor allem keinem Bürgerkrieg geführt. Es gab nur eine Ausnahme: die Sozialistische Föderative Republik Jugoslawien. In dieser Masterarbeit werden wir uns mit der sozialen und historischen Herkunft dieses bewaffneten Konflikts, den man als den gewaltsamsten Konflikt in Europa nach dem 2. Weltkrieg bezeichnen kann, beschäftigen. Zudem werden der Ursprung und die Durchsetzung der nationalistischen Ideologie als Hauptdiskurse im jugoslawischen politischen Leben am Anfang der 90er Jahren, sowie die Wurzeln des nationalistischen Mythos in den konstituierenden Sozialistischen Republiken der Föderation analysiert. Im Zuge der Masterarbeit wird analysiert und dargestellt, unter welchen historischen Rahmenbedingungen sich diese Ideologie im Laufe eines Konflikts entwickelte, der wiederum (nach der Beseitigung des marxistisch-leninistischen staatlichen Konzepts) zur absoluten Herrschaft des Nationalismus in der jugoslawischen politischen Landschaft geführt hat. Der theoretische Rahmen und der Unterschied zwischen Nationalismus und Selbstverwaltungssozialismus werden mit dem historischen Kontext verknüpft, damit eine Verbindung zwischen der theoretischen Analyse und der politischen Realität möglich wird.