

**Defeated Demos -
On the Anti-Nationalist, Reform and Democratizing Initiatives
and Tendencies in Yugoslavia 1989-1991 (with focus on Bosnia-
Herzegovina and Macedonia)**

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Abstract

The work sets out to explore how the Yugoslav-oriented, pro-European, reformist/democratic and anti-nationalist tendencies before the definite break-up of the Yugoslav federation in the period 1989-1991 manifested themselves and secondly, focusing on Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, why it was these two which had been the only openly pro-Yugoslav federal units before the dissolution. Using archival material, interview data, media accounts from the period and relevant secondary literature, the research concentrates on the historical background of the nation-building process of the Bosnian Muslim and the Macedonians, their position in Yugoslavia, relating it to the political, intellectual and popular anti-war, Yugoslav-minded, anti-nationalist and reformist initiatives, movements and events.

A determining factor in both cases appears to be that it was within Yugoslavia that both the Bosniaks and the Macedonians achieved a status of equal and recognized political partners and national groups, which, along with the relative prosperity and security helped determine their positive perception of a common Yugoslav polity. While the political elites were driven by pragmatic motives and rational calculations, the intellectual, cultural and popular milieus which advocated a reformed democratic Yugoslavia of equal citizens and nations clung to cosmopolitan, European, or personal and emotional platforms and reasons. The fact that most of these initiatives and projects were belated does not mean they do not deserve to be considered an indispensable factor which would complement the image and the story of the last Yugoslav years.

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This thesis would not have been possible with the kind assistance, help, advice, insight of many individuals who have shared a similar interest or personal connection to the history of socialist Yugoslavia. Hence, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those directly involved in the events this thesis is analyzing, who were kind enough to share their thoughts and experiences with me: Mr. Vasil Tupurkovski, Mr. Bogić Bogicević, Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, Mr. Stojan Andov, Prof. Zdravko Grebo and Mr. Safet Pihljak. I am equally thankful to my supervisor Prof. Balazs Trencsenyi for his useful insights, encouragement and patience; to Gëzim Krasniqi for the exciting debates and discussions on the labyrinths of Yugoslav history; to my Sarajevo friends who made me feel at home in Bosnia.

Finally, I thank my parents for their understanding, inspiration and support, as I dedicate this work to them - for they taught me how to be fascinated by diversity.

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Introduction

“One morning we woke up and we didn’t have a country anymore. We suspected that it might happen, but you always hope that the worst won’t happen [...] It was a strange feeling, you might imagine what it would be like to wake up one morning and find that France, Italy or England didn’t exist anymore. It was difficult to believe that Yugoslavia didn’t exist anymore. Our generation grew up with that country and we didn’t know any other.”¹

If the “annus mirabilis” 1989 for the citizens of the Eastern bloc symbolized a long-awaited return to democracy, for the Yugoslavs it marked the inauguration of a transitional paradigm from which in the following years would emanate irreconcilable voices and clashing ideologies. Understandably, due to the context and the manner in which the dissolution of the socialist federation took place, the majority of the scholarly debates and reflections have centered on the discourses of ethno-nationalism, religious nationalism, communism and nationalism, elite-nationalism, grass roots nationalism, etc. The vast scholarship on Yugoslavia has addressed the complex processes involved in the dissolution of the multi-ethnic state during and in the aftermath of years of war. The events have been analyzed from economic, social, political, cultural aspects, as well as from the vantage points of international law and international relations. Undeniably the writings of the scholars (among them John Lampe, Sabrina Ramet, Susan Woodward, Andrew Wachtel), those of journalists, the autobiographies and memoirs of

¹ Vojka Smiljanic - Djikic and Velimir Viskovic, “Why Sarajevo notebooks?” in *Best of Sarajevo Notebooks* No 18 edited by Vojka Smiljanic-Djikic (Sarajevo: Mediacentar, 2007), 7.

generals and politicians provide a valuable account of the process of a highly complex political, economic, social and cultural upheaval which will remain one of the most tragic chapters of the post-communist era and in particular of South-East European history. Yet, most of the scholarly work on former Yugoslavia fails to explicitly deal with the other opposing current which was particularly visible in the years before the official dissolution of the country in 1992 - that is the movement of Yugoslavism, anti-nationalism and preservation/democratic reformation of the Yugoslav state. As Jasna Dragović - Soso rightly notes, “there has been a tendency to ‘read history backwards’, ignoring alternatives that did exist to the dominant nationalist discourses and policies throughout Yugoslavia’s history.”² If the history of the dissolution of Yugoslavia is to be analyzed and comprehended in its entirety, the anti-nationalist, democratizing and pro-Yugoslav forces and tendencies must be included and considered as an essential part of the complex mosaic, and even more importantly, they must be analyzed as the parallel stream, movement, potent popular will and enthusiasm which from the late 1980s aimed to counterbalance that of ultra-nationalism, radical right discourses, secessionism and militarism.

Therefore, this thesis aims, at least partially to subvert the general discourse on the studies on Yugoslavia by plunging into a largely unexplored and neglected aspect - namely that of the anti-nationalist stream as manifested through the tendencies and concepts of democratic reform and Yugoslavism.

² Soso-Dragovic, Jasna. “Why Did Yugoslavia Disintegrate?: an Overview of Contending Explanations” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008), 28.

The proponents of the ethno-nationalist approach tend to leave out or unintentionally ignore the fact that the number of declared Yugoslavs in the two last federal censuses exceeded or equaled the numbers of the constituent nations of Slovenes, Macedonians and Montenegrins. Furthermore, the thesis will focus on two of the constituent Yugoslav nations: the Bosnian Muslim and the Macedonian as case-studies, with their federal republics, its leadership and citizenry being the strongholds of the pro-Yugoslav reformist option. These two usually tend to be left out from the analyses addressing the so-called first Yugoslavia of the interwar period and their positions and actions during the negotiations of the future of Yugoslavia before the start of the war remained marginalized, silenced and outrivaled by the more dominant voices from Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. In this context, the central questions would be: how these pro-Yugoslav, reformist and anti-nationalist tendencies manifested themselves; and secondly, why Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had been the only openly pro-Yugoslav federal units before the dissolution. While the first question would be approached in a descriptive and analytical manner, the proposed evaluation and answer to the second (more complex) question would have two interdependent levels - the first one related to the nation-building (political) process and the second one with the identity-building (cultural) process.

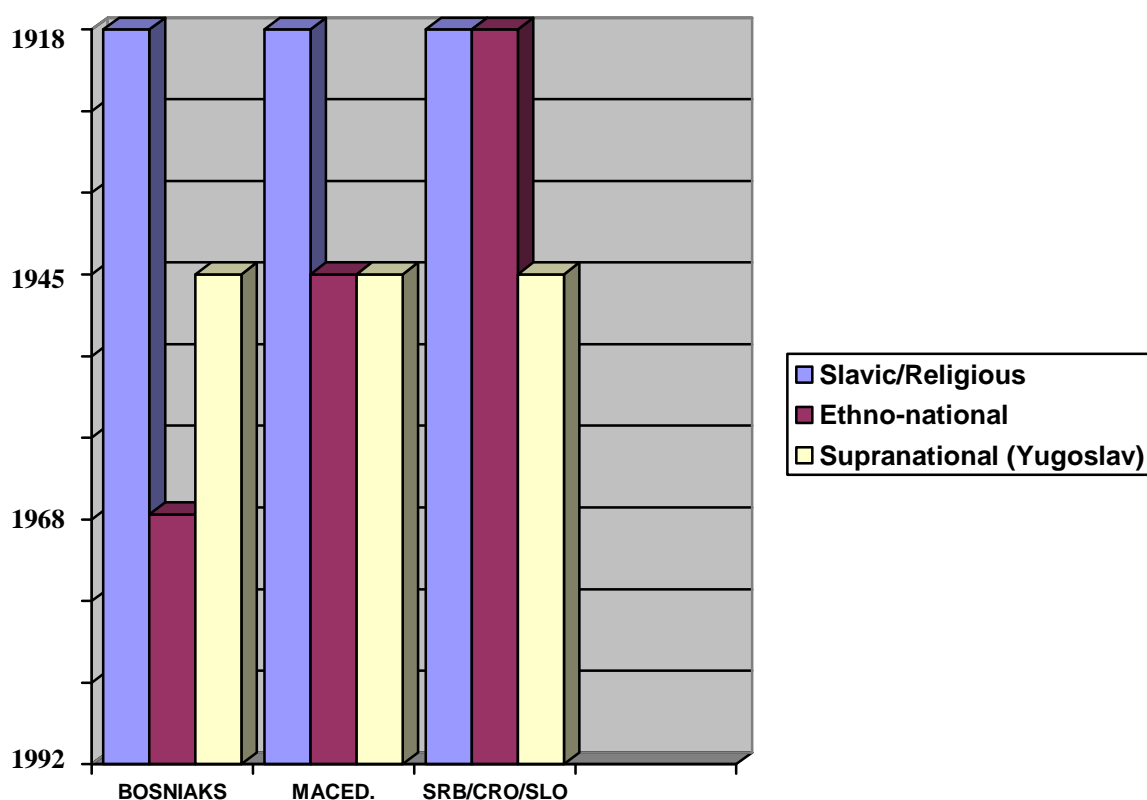
The specificities of the nation-building projects of the Bosnian Muslims and the Macedonians which bear significant patterns of similarities, and their position of being surrounded by stronger neighbors who have historically laid

claims both on the territory of their countries and on their identity, had led the Bosnian Muslims and the Macedonians to seek a solution for a lasting and successful nation-building project within a larger political entity/federation/union. Their eventual recognition as separate national groups and constituent nations in socialist Yugoslavia for the first time in their histories, as well as the envisioned insecurity outside of a stable Yugoslavia (it can be argued that the political elites were guided by predominantly pragmatic motives for their pro-Yugoslav stance), led and largely shaped both the attitudes of the Bosnian and the Macedonian political leadership upon the break-up. Popular opinion largely supported the leadership in their endeavor to preserve a reformed (con)federal Yugoslav polity.

The dimension of identity and the processes of identity formation among the Bosnian Muslims and the Macedonians form the second pole which holds the answer to the question why it was specifically these two groups which embodied the pro-Yugoslav and anti-nationalist tendency³. As the charts attached hereunder demonstrate, the four layers of identity among the South Slavs did not have an identical development, evolution and recognition. As it can be observed, the recognition of the ethno-national layer/component came at a later stage for the Bosnian Muslims and the Macedonians: in 1968 and in 1945 respectively. While the Croats, the Serbs and the Slovenes had been able to nourish, promote, build and strengthen their ethno-national layer since 1918 (and even earlier for the Serbs), the Macedonians simultaneously received the ethno-national and the supra-national (Yugoslav) layer which grew and evolved parallel

³ Or, rather, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia experienced a somewhat tame patriotism, or belated nationalism, as prior to 1992 there had not been collective manifestations and outpourings of hostile nationalism there comparable to those in Croatia and Serbia.

until 1992, while the Bosnian Muslims had the Yugoslav layer mapped onto their Slavic/religious identity **before** the ethno-national was introduced/institutionalized in 1968.



The first chapter will present certain theoretical consideration relevant to the topic. The second chapter will lay the historical basis for the thesis, namely the status and the position within and the relationship to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941) of the Bosnian Muslims and the Macedonians, with considerable references to the positions taken by the Yugoslav Communist Party and the Comintern on the Bosnian and the Macedonian questions. In order to provide a logical and a historical link to the period in question, the second part of the chapter will reflect on the position of the two groups within socialist

Yugoslavia. The third chapter will focus on the anti-nationalist and pro-Yugoslav voices from above, i.e. the initiatives of the political elites for the reformation and preservation of Yugoslavia. And finally, the third chapter will analyze the pro-Yugoslav non-political front: the intellectuals' and the citizens' initiatives aiming at preventing war and preserving a reformed and common state.

The thesis will approach the issue in a comparative manner, establishing certain prominent parallels between the Bosnian and the Macedonian case. In addition to the available secondary literature, the thesis will furthermore make use of the concrete proposals ("The Platform") submitted by the Macedonian and the Bosnian republican presidents for the preservation of a Yugoslav Union. In examining the popular support among the Macedonians and the Bosnians for the Yugoslav idea the research would make use of the available archival material (especially for the period 1989-1992): documents from the Open Society Archive in Budapest and the State Archive of Macedonia, newspaper articles from 1991, news reports, the YUTEL material of the central anti-war protest in Sarajevo in 1991, original documents from the intellectuals' UJDI initiative. In addition, the thesis will refer to several personal interviews with individuals who were directly involved or witnessed the events (Mr. Vasil Tupurkovski, Macedonian representative to the last Yugoslav federal Presidency, Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje, Bogic Bogicevic, Bosnian representative to the last federal Presidency, Mr. Safet Pihljak, Sarajevo citizen, participant at the 5th April protests and Mr. Simo Spaskovski, Chief of Staff of Admiral Bocinov).

Chapter 1: Some Theoretical Considerations

*"First I was a Yugoslav. Then, I was a Bosnian.
Now I'm becoming a Muslim. It's not my choice.
I don't even believe in God..."
- A resident of Sarajevo.⁴*

Before embarking on a closer analysis of the Yugoslav context and the two case-studies, it would be useful to present an overview of the theoretical considerations related to the core phenomena this thesis is interested in exploring and explaining. Namely, the notions of identity, nationalism/supranationalism and (Yugoslav) federalism would be reflected upon through the works of some of the prominent authors who wrote on them.

1.1. All Those Identities

Identity has come to represent an all-encompassing term which can take on very different meanings and connotations. By arguing that social analysis requires unambiguous analytical categories, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper argue against the use of the term precisely because of its ambiguity, its major flaw being the axiomatic, presupposed bounded groupness.⁵ From denoting a manner in which individual or collective action is "governed by particularistic self-understandings rather than by putatively universal self-interest", to being understood as specifically a collective phenomenon conveying

⁴ Ron Haviv, Chuck Sudetic and David Rieff, *Blood and Honey: a Balkan war journal* (New York: TV Books, 2000), 29.

⁵ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'", *Theory and Society* 29 [1] (2000):1-47.

fundamental “sameness” between group members, or on the contrary concerning the deep aspects of selfhood or the fragmented and fluid nature of the modern ‘self’⁶, the notion of “identity” has become a porous and omnipresent concept. As an alternative, the authors propose the use of the notions of identification and categorization (self-identification vs. external identification, with the state as the “powerful ‘identifier’”), self-understanding, commonality, connectedness or groupness. They plausibly argue that what needs to be kept distinct is external categorization and self-understanding, objective commonality and subjective groupness. Furthermore, one has to bear in mind the highly problematic implication of homogeneity which the “identitarian political advocates”⁷ ascribe to the presupposed bounded identity groups. The authors recommend a greater focus on the particular stories of self-identification and self-understanding, particular affinities and connections. In the Yugoslav case, this would imply viewing the primary ethnic/republican identity building blocks and the secondary Yugoslav identity as far from homogeneous and unified.

As ethnically Yugoslavia was one of the most heterogeneous polities in the world⁸, (national, ethnic, religious) identity unavoidably played a crucial role. As it will be discussed below, the Yugoslav federation therefore had tried to develop a political, social, cultural and economic model of negotiating, channeling and resolving the differences which were voiced by the different

⁶ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’”, *Theory and Society* 29 [1] (2000):1-47.

⁷ Ibid, 330

⁸ Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

constituent groups and territories. Identities in the Yugoslav context very often overlapped, evolved, changed, were negotiated and shaped with regard to the political and personal circumstances, as the federal units were far from closed and strictly defined spaces. On the contrary, people moved, were employed, married and lived across what would later become fixed republican borders.

One central distinctive feature of the Yugoslav context was the relationship between the political and the cultural identity/identities: the political identity which was Yugoslav at the same time overlapped (through a gradual process culminating in the 1970s and the 1980s) with a Yugoslav cultural identity on the one hand, but on the other hand simultaneously was totally separated and distinguishable from the various ethnic identities. Both the ethnic and the supranational Yugoslav one were equally present and upheld in the public realm and in public memory. Thus, both of them were contested or attacked by extreme supporters of the two. As P. W. Preston notes, “In general, in the sphere of political-cultural identity the contestedness of identity is centrally important” and furthermore: “The idea of political-cultural identity expresses the relationship of individual selves to the community considered as an ordered body of persons.”⁹ According to him, the political-cultural identity could work at a series of levels: first, person-centered, second, group-centered and third, collectivity centered. With the multi-layered approach to national/cultural identity also agrees Anthony Smith by claiming that “a national identity is fundamentally multi-dimensional; it can never be reduced to a single element, even by particular factions of

⁹ Peter Wallace Preston, *Political/Cultural Identity: citizens and nations in a global era* (London: Sage Publication, 1997), 9.

nationalists, nor it can be easily or swiftly induced in a population by artificial means.”¹⁰

This claim applies to the notion and the contested concept of a Yugoslav/South Slav nation, as it suggests the historical background of this failed nation-building project. Namely, the advocating of the Yugoslav idea, i.e. of South Slav solidarity, cultural and ethnic proximity and potential national and cultural unity is to be traced to the 19th century. The Illyrian movement and prominent intellectual (elite) figures mostly in Croatia and Slovenia upheld the idea of a South Slav national and linguistic merging. It has been evident that the narrower ethnic/regional affiliations were deeply entrenched and had never lost on strength and scale. As Preston notes, “The sphere of public ideological knowledge can be contrasted with the sphere of folk knowledge.”¹¹ Yet, the widespread impression and awareness of some common cultural and linguistic roots (historical and political to a much lesser extent) has persisted throughout the 20th century. The linguistic component of the Yugoslav identity and South-Slav unitarism appears to be the most prominent and the most important one, reaffirmed by the 19th century attempts to create a common Serb-Croat language which were likewise pursued in the following century. The strong relatedness which exists between language and national/cultural identity is reconfirmed by Preston: “Identity is not fixed, it has no essence and it does not reside in any given texts or symbols or sacred sites. It is carried in language and made and

¹⁰ Anthony Smith, “Civic and Ethnic Nationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism - a reader* edited by Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 182.

¹¹ Peter Wallace Preston, *Political/Cultural Identity: citizens and nations in a global era* (London: Sage Publication, 1997), 59.

remade in routine social practice.” In Karl Deutsch’s terminology, these “speech communities” refer to “a community of language [which] is a community of information vehicles.”¹² The Yugoslavs, beside their narrower ethnic/republican linguistic, national and cultural contexts, shared a parallel and more dominant (Yugoslav/federal/supranational) level encompassing cultural, communication, media, intellectual, artistic, economic and political interaction and events¹³. In this sense, Deutsch’s understanding of a nation/nationality in terms of a community¹⁴ is applicable.

1.2. Nationalism/Supranationalism/Citizenship

As Brubaker rightly notes with regard to the regime in the USSR, but in this case equally valid for the Yugoslav context, although anti-nationalist, the regime was anything but antinational, where “far from ruthlessly suppressing nationhood, the regime went to unprecedented lengths in institutionalizing it and codifying it.”¹⁵ He further cites the example of Romanians and Hungarians in

¹² Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 41.

¹³ One example is offered by Prof. Julie Mostov who, from 1974 to 1980 did a Master’s degree in political philosophy at the University of Belgrade. She pointed out the evident existence of a cosmopolitan pro-Yugoslav, pro-European orientation and identity (in particular among the youth), which was primarily encouraged and sustained by the huge student mobility across republican borders. She furthermore underlined that the youth identities in former Yugoslavia at that time were running along the lines of intellectual/school of thought belonging, belonging by the discipline one studies, while the concepts of ethno-national identities for the student population and the progressive youth were regarded as out-dated ideas whose time has passed.

¹⁴ “When we say ‘culture’, we stress the habits, preferences and institutions as such [...] When we say ‘community’ we stress the collection of living individuals in whose minds and memories the habits and channels of culture are carried.”

Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 89.

¹⁵ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. “Beyond ‘Identity’”, *Theory and Society* 29 [1] (2000):1-47.

Transylvania, which bears striking resemblances to the Yugoslav context, where “identitarian entrepreneurs” (particularly prominent in Yugoslavia from the 1980s) made significant efforts to blur and conceal “the fluidity and ambiguity that arise from mixed marriages, from bilingualism, from migration, [...] from intergenerational assimilation (in both directions), and - perhaps most important - from sheer indifference to the claims of ethnocultural nationality.”¹⁶ One can rightfully argue that especially during the last two-three decades of the Yugoslav federation there was a certain type of Yugoslav “cultural cosmopolitanism”¹⁷ which developed in spite of the institutionalized national discourses. Being a cultural project, “cultural cosmopolitanism emphasizes the possible fluidity of individual identity [...] It is the ability to stand outside a singular location (the location of one’s own birth, land, upbringing, conversion) and to mediate traditions that lie at its core.”¹⁸

The collective identity paradigm, which Giesen and Eder identify as one of three paradigms defining citizenship “favors the passive, but emotionally engaging citizen.”¹⁹ This is the level which can be associated with the cultural

As Miha Kovač similarly noted: “Nationalism is produced within the very structure of the Yugoslav system, its main root cause being the lack of institutionalized democracy.”

“The Slovene Spring” – an Interview with Miha Kovač. *New Left Review* Vol. 177 (1988): 115-128. 115.

¹⁶ Ibid, 318.

¹⁷ David Held, “Culture and Political Community - National, Global and Cosmopolitan” in *Nations and Nationalism: a reader* edited by Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 326.

“The capacity to mediate between national cultures, communities of fate and alternative styles of life [...] One of the requirements of cultural cosmopolitanism is “development of an understanding of overlapping ‘collective fortunes’ that require collective solutions.”

¹⁸ Ibid, 327.

¹⁹ Bernhard Giesen and Klaus Eder, “Introduction - European Citizenship: An Avenue for the Social Integration of Europe”, in *European Citizenship Between National Legacies and Postnational Projects*, edited by Eder, Klaus and Bernhard Giesen. (Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

identity, as the level which is featured by subjective inclinations towards cultural, historical or ethnic solidarity and similarity. As opposed to the ethnic conception, “a political community in turn implies at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties [...] It also suggests a definite social space, a fairly well demarcated and bounded territory, with which the members identify and to which they feel they belong.”²⁰ The idea of *patria* - the community of laws and institutions Smith refers to, the common culture and civic ideology, the common public and mass culture were undeniably all present in the Yugoslav context, in a symbiotic entity with the narrower cultures, ideologies and institutions within ethnic/republican frameworks. His assumption that “whereas the Western concept laid down that an individual had to belong to some nation but could choose to which he or she belonged, the non-Western or ethnic concept allowed no such latitude”²¹ seems relevant for the Yugoslav case, as with the introduction and the acknowledgement of the existence of a supranational identity, the space for individual choice and avoidance of prescribed national belonging was wider. After 1990, most of the people were forced into ascribed and prescribed ethnic categories, without the right of ‘not to belong to’.

Smith enumerates five features of national identity:

- “1. an historic territory, or homeland
2. common myths and historical memories
3. a common, mass public culture

²⁰ Anthony Smith, “Civic and Ethnic Nationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism - A reader* edited by Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 177.

²¹ Ibid. 179.

4. common legal rights and duties for all members
5. a common economy with territorial mobility for members.”²²

These features were viable and applicable both in the national/republican/ethnic realms and on the level of the Yugoslav/South Slav attempted nation-building project, as there were identifiable Yugoslav homeland, common myths and historical memories (usually associated with the anti-fascist struggle of WW2), common mass public culture, common legal and economic framework. But at the same time, all of these had a parallel ethnic attribute referring to the eight constituent nations and nationalities.

A different approach is assumed by Karl Deutsch in his seminal work on nationalism and social communication. If effective, social communication and intercourse can lead to internal integration and formation of a nation out of the people. Social mobility and having the sense that one has a “stake in the country”, accorded security and prestige, social reforms, well-being, leads to “more effective complementarity of social communication.”²³ Here Deutsch refers to blurring of class lines, but in the Yugoslav case, the increased quality of life, general security and the attempts at ethnic and social justice also led to the blurring of ethnic boundaries. “Only if nationality is valued”, he further notes, “if it is seen as a winning card in the social game for prestige, wealth, or whatever else may be the things culturally valued at that time and place, [...] only then does it seem probable that consciousness of nationality will strengthen its

²² Anthony Smith, “Civic and Ethnic Nationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism - A reader* edited by Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman (Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 181.

²³ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 99.

development.”²⁴ Evidently, the Yugoslav denomination and emerging nationality was valued and for a certain time when prosperity was at its climax it was indeed seen as a winning card, in addition to the other aspects which were culturally valued: openness and the international prestige of Yugoslavia, non-alignment, flourishing cultural life, etc. These processes in Deutsch’s view entail that “experience and complementary may then continue to reproduce each other [...] in a syndrome of **ethnic learning**, that is, a historical process of social learning in which individuals, usually over several generations, learn to become a people.”²⁵ In the Yugoslav case the process of ethnic learning was undeniably begun, endorsed, and opposed by more ethnically conscious actors and disrupted by the break-up of the federation.

Deutsch also differentiates between the concepts of national consciousness and national will: “National consciousness is the attachment of secondary symbols of nationality to primary items of information moving through channels of social communication, or through the mind of an individual. Not wit, but ‘French wit’; not thoroughness, but ‘German thoroughness.’”²⁶ In the Yugoslav context, there was a double, or multi-layered attachment of secondary symbols: Yugoslav greatness AND Serb/Croat/Macedonian etc. greatness, wit or thoroughness. This often led to double loyalty, multiple identities, but also to pronounced polarizations.

²⁴ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 178.

²⁵ Ibid, 174.

²⁶ Ibid, 172.

1.3. Federalism

“As an idea, federalism points us to issues such as shared and divided sovereignty, **multiple loyalties and identities**, and governance through multi-layered institutions.”²⁷ During its existence, Yugoslavia²⁸ believed to be building and developing an original Yugoslav model of federalism whose primary aim was to resolve the nationality problem²⁹, reconcile or level down disparate ethnic narratives from the past, anything which might lead up to ethnic enmities and thus promote a system of ethnic and social/economic justice³⁰. In this context Ramet asserts that “socialist Yugoslavia evolved a particular system of conflict regulation and social integration through devolution, seeking to assure communal loyalty through the abandonment of nation building and the provision of far-reaching autonomy to the federal units.”³¹

²⁷ Richard Simeon and Katherine Swinton, “Introduction: Rethinking Federalism in a Changing World”, *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Markets, and Governments in a Changing World* edited by Karen Knopp et al. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), 3.

²⁸ “The first Yugoslav state, established after World War I as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was not an artificial entity created by great powers. The idea of Yugoslavia, and demands for a common state by its main ethnic constituents, has long existed.”

Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism”, *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 108.

²⁹ Viktor Knapp, “Central and Eastern European Federations: Communist Theory and Practice” in *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Markets, and Governments in a Changing World* edited by Karen Knopp et al. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995).

The author uses the notion of “socialist federalism” underlining the unique role the Communist Party played in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

³⁰ As Yugoslav federalism went through many different phases, it is possible to argue both its positive and negative features and implications. Dennison Rusinow, for example, emphasizes the fact that Yugoslav federalism established a framework for the republic-based corrupt party elites, preventing the population from effectively exercising self-government, which became especially obvious in the late 1980s.

Dennison Rusinow, ed. *Yugoslavia: A Fractured Federalism* (Washington: Wilson Center Press, 1988).

³¹ Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 16.

The claim that federalism is a process, rather than a fixed state³² is highly applicable in the Yugoslav context. Although haunted by the dilemma centralism/unitarism vs. decentralism/confederalism since the establishment of the Yugoslav Kingdom in 1918, the Yugoslav polity after 1946 (when its first constitution was passed in the Federal assembly), through numerous reforms, new constitutions and constitutional amendments tried to ameliorate its federal model. The 1963 constitution introduced a system of “socialist democracy” based on the ideology of self-management, with the class component being prevalent over the ethnic one³³ (which will dramatically change with subsequent amendments and the 1974 constitution). Eventually, the Yugoslav model could not compensate for the basic (unfulfilled) condition that “all of its constituent parts must have passed through the historical stage of nation statehood.”³⁴ Furthermore, if understood exclusively as a system applicable for multination societies, “federalism tends to make national identity and national interest the focus of all social considerations.”³⁵ The Yugoslav federation was made totally non-functional in the late 1980s when local national elites vetoed various bills meant to reform the economic system, or refused to respect federal regulations and laws.

³² Richard Simeon and Katherine Swinton, “Introduction: Rethinking Federalism in a Changing World” in *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Markets, and Governments in a Changing World* edited by Karen Knopp et al. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), 3.

³³ Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

³⁴ Mihailo Markovic, “The Federal Experience in Yugoslavia” in *Rethinking Federalism: Citizens, Markets, and Governments in a Changing World* edited by Karen Knopp et al. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), 83.

³⁵ Ibid.

There have been numerous attempts at explaining what essentially caused the violent dissolution of the Yugoslav federation and why this particular model failed. First of all, it is important to note that the collapse of communism and the events of 1989, in which context the Yugoslav dissolution took place were not predicted either by policy makers or by area specialists.³⁶ Although the political situation in Yugoslavia was aggravated by the simultaneous economic crisis from the late 1970s, even the political elites were prone to believe that it would all end by a new constitution, a radical set of reforms or an establishment of a union or a confederation of states. However, as Ramet rightly notes, “in a multiethnic state, diverse social problems also manifest themselves as interethnic problems.”³⁷ Ignatieff uses an intelligent coinage - “narcissism of minor difference” referring to Croatia and Serbia and their irreconcilable claims and visions of the Yugoslav federation. The authors on Yugoslavia in works which have appeared after 1992 referred and analyzed different factors in the Yugoslav story: politics, economy, culture, religion, demographics, history, each putting the focus on a different dimension. While Susan Woodward underlines the (negative) role of Germany and Austria and their recognition of the Croat and the Slovenian independence, Sabrina Ramet chooses to emphasize the system's illegitimacy and Joseph Rotschchild points out the disparate historical legacies (citing for example the fact that first Yugoslavia inherited eight different legal systems). John Allcock in *Explaining Yugoslavia* offers a broader perspective by giving an

³⁶ Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, And What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

³⁷ Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 19.

equal attention and importance both to economic/social and political factors. Andrew Wachtel is among the rare ones to put culture and cultural policy *in medias res*, noting the failure of forging a true supranational Yugoslav culture instead of the institutionalized ethnicization of it. Branka Magaš locates the core of the dissolution in deterioration of the Serb-Albanian relations, while the accounts/memoirs of the directly involved actors likewise offer different views. Warren Zimmerman, the last US ambassador to Yugoslavia stresses the individual political agency of the extremist republican leaders, the “villains” as he terms them, who bear the primary responsibility for not coming up with a viable solution to the crisis. His view that the disintegration of the Yugoslav polity was not inevitable is what, among other things, this thesis is trying to show. The political memoir of the last Yugoslav President Stipe Mesić provides an insider’s outlook of the negotiations between the republican presidents and the developments in the federal presidency, by accentuating the (negative and destructive) role the Serbian political elite played.

To broaden the theoretical ground, one might refer to Karl Deutsch’s chapter “Extreme Nationalism and Self-Destruction: The Inner Problem of the Will”, where he states that “consciousness of nationality might harden into will. This would mean the refusal to accept communication conflicting with, or even merely different from, the national separateness, or the national unity, or the image of a national character adopted as a goal [...] In practice this meant the closing of inconvenient channels of communication in society, and the attempted

closing of the mind of individuals.”³⁸ The propaganda war and the responsibility of the media for the bloody disintegration is likewise emphasized in Mark Thompson’s work *Forging War: the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* and Kemal Kurspahić’s *Prime Time Crime*. Deutsch’s much earlier assertion about the danger concealed in the process of the drowning of whole streams of information by the “deafening volume of coordinated mass propaganda - the manipulation of mass communication”³⁹ reconfirms the essential role of media, communication and the framing of the communication space for the destiny of polities and nations. He rightly concludes that “the danger of such closing of the avenues of understanding and of the loss of both outside information and internal self-control - these are major and perhaps increasing risks in any of the systems of social communication which we call nations.”⁴⁰ Although the theory of the ‘century-old ethnic hatreds’ has been largely discounted, it is important to underline the fact that in multinational states there is always a lurking danger of framing political and social conflicts in ethnic/religious/cultural terms.⁴¹

Lastly, Jürgen Kocka’s argument on the German *Sonderweg* seems highly applicable in the Yugoslav case. His question of “why did Germany - unlike

³⁸ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: an inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), 181.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 183.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 184.

⁴¹ “Ethnic affiliation and nationalism became important political factors in all republics and provinces. The use of nationalism and historic and ethnic myths contributed to the transformation of political conflicts into ethnic conflicts.”

Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 123.

comparable countries in the West and North - turn to fascist and/or totalitarian perversion?" could be as well translated into "why did Yugoslavia - unlike comparable countries such as Czechoslovakia - turn to nationalist and war perversion?"⁴² Likewise, his thesis that it was the fact that "three basic developmental problems of modern societies came to the fore at about the same time" and "the temporal overlap of and interaction among these three crises [formation of a nation-state, constitutional decision on parliamentarization and the social question]" which led to their incomplete resolution and National Socialism, seems equally plausible if transposed to the Yugoslav context. The fact that an international and a domestic economic crisis coincided with a political/constitutional one at home and a major post-Cold War reconfiguration in international relations (in addition to the unrest in Kosovo) meant that several critical developments had to be handled at the same time by generally older elites which could not keep productive pace with the new times.

Although history often takes unexpected or undesired directions, it is up to those who look back at history with the eyes of posterity to do their best in order to portray the past times in a fair and balanced manner. In this sense the historian should transcend his/her own times and, assuming the role of a good and creative writer, travel back in time and try to see the events stripped of the lenses of "today" or "the end of the story". An attempt to include the history of those who believed their country to be Yugoslavia and hence natural that it

⁴² Jürgen Kocka, "Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: the case of the German *Sonderweg*" in *History and Theory*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (February 1999): 40-50.

continues to exist albeit in a different form, would at least illuminate the past, its victors and its victims in a different way.

Chapter 2: The Maze of (Un)Recognized (Non)Existence

The Bosnian Muslims and the (Slavic) Macedonians⁴³ are the only Balkan nations whose national identification draws upon a territorial marker: the river Bosna and the geographical region of Macedonia. Moreover, considered to be the late-comers to the nation-building and state-building projects of the region, the existence of these two communities, their self-perception, historiography and perception by outsiders has been largely conditioned by, dependent upon and thorn between their principal neighbors' ideological, political, historical and cultural projects, stances and symbolic geographies. Serbia and Croatia in the Bosnian, and Serbia (Yugoslavia) and Bulgaria in the Macedonian case were often the focal points towards which wavering loyalties were proceeding simultaneously with state-sponsored projects of claiming, appropriating and labeling the territory and the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia as "ours" (as Croat, Serb, or Bulgarian). It should be however emphasized that the claims on identity were ultimately and essentially used as a legitimization of advancing claims on the territories of Bosnia and Macedonia.

The new political reality of post-1918 Europe which saw the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and (not only nominally) left out all the ethnic groups which did not come to fall into the South Slavic triad of the one nation with three names, represented for the Bosniaks and the Macedonians the

⁴³ I will henceforth refer to the Slavic Macedonians only as Macedonians, since beside the ongoing ideological, historiographic/scientific and symbolical battles, they are the only ethnic/national group which self-identifies as "Macedonian", and to the Bosnian Muslims as Bosniaks, or Bosnians in the cases when it refers to all of the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina no matter whether of Muslim, Orthodox or Catholic faith.

crucial point and context which indeed helped frame and voice their demands for recognition as separate and equal partners in the Yugoslav polity. Although there is one core difference between the two groups in that the Bosniaks did have a political representation and actually partook in the governing of the Kingdom through the JMO - the Yugoslav Muslim Organization (although not proportionally and as fully equal partners), both groups eventually came to politically and ideologically support the Yugoslav communists who (beside the initial ambiguous stands regarding the separate national identity of the Muslims and the Macedonians) did openly favor and advocate the self-determination and broad autonomy for the subject peoples and lands of Yugoslavia (among which Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Dalmatia and Vojvodina).⁴⁴

2.1. *Denied/Contested Nations*

As John B. Allcock rightly points out with regard to the nation-building of the Macedonians and the Bosnian Muslims, “it is important to recognize that, whereas the construction process in these cases is quite recent and hence more visible to us, it is not fundamentally different in character from that experienced by other nations, whose nation building is now concealed from us by historical distance.”⁴⁵ One can argue that the vacuum in state-sponsored “invented traditions” and symbolic cultural maps which was typical for the unrecognized national groups of interwar Yugoslavia was prone to be filled in with content of the competing ideologies and national projects which had it in their interest.

⁴⁴ Marko Attila Hoare, “The Seed of a New Bosnia-Herzegovina 1878-1941” in *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007).

⁴⁵ John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: C. Hurst, 2000), 315.

Bulgaria and Serbia in the Macedonian case and Serbia and Croatia in the Bosnian case competed for the loyalties of the ordinary people essentially driven by territorial appetites, often with violent and discriminative means. Beside the divided elites, there were significant autonomist streams and manifestations of distinctive Bosniak and Macedonian identities in cultural and in political terms through the work of the JMO and the underground political activities in Macedonia.

Muhamed Sudžuka, the editor of JMO newspaper *Pravda*, in 1933 rightly noted that the Muslims and their homeland “lay at the center of the Serbo-Croat conflict”⁴⁶ and thus followed other political figures that condemned the internal disunity of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the inclinations linked to Zagreb and Belgrade.⁴⁷ All of these aspects are likewise to be found in the Macedonian case which in the interwar period was in itself a center of the Serb-Bulgarian conflict, with the ruling elite in Sofia openly voicing its revisionist policies and discontent with the post-WW1 settlements. However, it was precisely the aggressive policies and the real and symbolic violence and terror against the Bosniaks and the Macedonians which provided the consequent strong incentives for autonomist and nationalist initiatives and voices for an acknowledged national existence.

The first decade of the existence of the new Kingdom brought not only general disillusionment, but significant unrest and violence against the Bosniaks and the Macedonians, considered to be former (pro-Austro-Hungarian, “Turkish”,

⁴⁶ Marko Attila Hoare, “The Seed of a New Bosnia-Herzegovina 1878-1941” in *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 150.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Muslim Other) or present (pro-Bulgarian) enemies of the state. Until 1929, 2.418 colonizing Serb families were settled in the eastern regions of Macedonia, with the final aim of colonizing the border zone towards Bulgaria.⁴⁸ The project to “Serbianize” Macedonia or what was considered to be Southern Serbia also included a strict language policy, changing of personal names, a Serb administration, teaching staff and strong military presence. Mr. Trifun Pavlovski, a Skopje citizen born in 1921 recalled the story passed on by his parents of his own act of baptizing, when the Serbian priest refused to baptize him “Trpko” because of it being a “Bulgarian” name and thus he was given the Serbian name Trifun.⁴⁹ He also recalled the notorious military *chetnik* “Association against Bulgarian Bandits” established in 1922, its leader Kosta Pečanac and what Sabrina Ramet terms the “arbitrary terrorization of Macedonians.”⁵⁰ Hence, in 1923 the entire adult male population of the village of Garvan in Eastern Macedonia was executed with no trial, while 70% of the total number of the Yugoslav gendarmerie (12 000 out of 17 000) were stationed in Macedonia for the project of its “pacification”.⁵¹ Thus, Keith Brown rightly concludes that “Vardar Macedonia at times appeared to exist in a state of virtual war between the population and the forces of government, which many civilians perceived as

⁴⁸ Ivan Katardziev et al. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod/History of the Macedonian People* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 1969), 31.

⁴⁹ Personal interview with Mr. Trifun Pavlovski (December 2008). See Annex.

⁵⁰ Sabrina P. Ramet, “The First Yugoslavia” in *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), 47.

Ivan Katardziev et al. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod/History of the Macedonian People* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 1969), 40.

Personal interview with Mr. Trifun Pavlovski (December 2008).

⁵¹ Ivan Katardziev et al. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod/History of the Macedonian People* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 1969), 40-41.

foreign.”⁵² It is also necessary to point out that in the case of Macedonia, VMRO - the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization had split into two dominant warring and radically hostile organizations and ideological streams, the one - VMRO United with leftist/communist and Macedonian autonomist orientation, with headquarters in Vienna and later in Berlin, arguing for an independent Macedonia within a Balkan federation and liberation of the Macedonian people under Serb, Greek and Bulgarian rule⁵³ and the Bulgarian-based, revisionist (claiming the territory and people to be Bulgarian) and pro-fascist VMRO which was responsible for the virtual state of war in Macedonia, the numerous assassinations of Serb officials and the murder of King Alexander.⁵⁴

Similar parallels regarding the state of violence and terror can be drawn with regard to the post-1918 situation in Bosnia. The revenge taken on Muslim landowners or the crimes committed by Serb and Montenegrin soldiers after their arrival in 1918, the illegal arrests and burglaries of Muslim houses led many to voice their complaints to the Reis ul-ulema Džemaludin Čausević and made even

⁵² Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 42.

⁵³ *State Archive of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje*: 1.1260.1.43/463-470 (“Declaration of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United) from 1925).

“Declaration of the Central Committee of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), 29 April 1924” in Snezana Trifunovska, ed. *Yugoslavia through Documents: from Its Creation to Its Dissolution* (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1994).

⁵⁴ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Andrew Rossos, “The Macedonian Question” in *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* edited by Norman Naimark and Holly Case (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Ivan Katardziev et al. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod/History of the Macedonian People* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 1969).

the Minister of Interior Svetozar Pribićević to react.⁵⁵ While the Croat leadership followed the nationalist tradition of Ante Starčević in considering the Bosnian Muslims as “the best Croats”⁵⁶, the demonstrators of the Radical paramilitary forces in Sarajevo in 1928 held up slogans such as “Long live Great Serbia, long live Serbian Sarajevo and Serbian Bosnia!”, as opposed to the “Long live Croatian Bosnia!” of the Croat Peasant Party.⁵⁷ The Bosnian Radical leader Srškić, later a Minister of Justice under the dictatorship and Prime Minister (1932-1934) was the outspoken, embittered opponent of Bosniak political representation and the JMO and advocated Serb-Croat allying in resolving the Bosnian question.

Thus, the 1929 administrative reorganization of the Kingdom into nine *banovinas* which cut across historical borders, to the pleasure of Serb and Croat radical nationalists and JMO enemies, saw the partition of Bosnia (devised by Srškić himself acting as a Minister of Justice) into four *banovinas* with Muslims being a minority in all of them.⁵⁸ The 1939 “Sporazum” which created the new Banovina Croatia further modified the historical map of Bosnia, as additional Bosnian territory was included, while JMO leader Mehmed Spaho was on his deathbed and his successor, the leader of the pro-Croat faction Džafer Kulenović

⁵⁵ Atif Purivatra, *Jugoslovenska Muslimanska Organizacija u političkom životu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca / The Yugoslav Muslim Organization in the Political life of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1977).

⁵⁶ Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 99.

⁵⁷ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 116.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

was in vain calling for the formation of a similar special *banovina* status for Bosnia.⁵⁹

2.2. New Kingdom, Old Grievances

Simultaneously, with an increasing intensity in the 1930s, the Bosniaks and the Macedonians voiced in different ways and manners their opposition to the status of unrecognized national groups and to the dismemberment of their historical territories. In the Bosnian case politically and in a more systematic manner, in the Macedonian case in cultural and rather subversive terms, the distinctness of the two unrecognized yet different identities was becoming all the more exposed and publicly present.

Džafer Kulenović's opposition to the partition of the territory of Bosnia was a shared sentiment among Bosniaks, as it "was seconded by most Muslims, whether of Croat or Serb orientation."⁶⁰ Throughout the existence of the Kingdom, this thread of Bosnian particularism and patriotism was preserved and even in the early 1920s it was voiced through the JMO. Thus, its paper *Pravda* in 1923 spoke of a "particular historical development and social existence, particular territory and composition of population, particular mentality of Bosnians and Herzegovinians."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia - A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007).

⁶⁰ Ivo Banac, "The Bosnian Muslims: From Religious Community to Socialist Nationhood and Postcommunist Statehood, 1918-1992" in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina* edited by Mark Pinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 141.

⁶¹ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 114.

Being recognized only as a religious community, the Bosniaks were expected to declare as Muslim Croats or Muslim Serbs. While in 1924 all the Bosnian Muslim deputies in the Yugoslav Parliament (except for Mehmed Spaho who expressed his preference of being called Yugoslav) identified as Croats,⁶² by the end of the 1930s leading Bosniak and JMO representatives were openly declaring that Bosnia is neither Serb nor Croat, were opting for the option “undeclared” or “Yugoslav”, in spite of the claims by figures such as Srškić or Stjepan Radić that JMO is to blame for preventing the assimilation of the Bosnian Muslims into Serbs or Croats.⁶³ Kulenović’s argument for a fourth Bosnian *banovina* actually displayed the early roots of Yugoslav supranationalism, which was seen as the most viable defense tool against Serbian and Croatian territorial appetites and a way for the Bosniaks to leave the narrow limits of possessing solely a recognized religious peculiarity/identity. In Kulenović’s words, “Nobody can say that Bosnia-Herzegovina is Serb or Croat or Slovene, but everyone can say that it is Yugoslav.”⁶⁴ Although this period was also marked by pro-Croat or pro-Serb leanings among Bosniaks, it is evident that through the JMO and the cultural and religious societies, their distinct identity was crystallized and they established themselves as “a community on a par with the others, a community which defended its own identity”⁶⁵.

⁶² Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia - A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

⁶³ Atif Purivatra, *Jugoslovenska Muslimanska Organizacija u političkom životu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca / The Yugoslav Muslim Organization in the Political life of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1977).

⁶⁴ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 128.

⁶⁵ Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia - A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994).166.

In the Macedonian case it is easy to draw very similar parallels, although with certain significant differences. Namely, while the Bosniaks enjoyed the status of an officially recognized religious, cultural and political community, the Macedonians' Orthodox Christian faith and the hegemonic policies of Serbia placed them in the category of (Southern) Serbs. Mr. Trifun Pavlovski recalls that "they wanted to Serbianize us, as the Bulgarians similarly in 1941 wanted to gain our loyalty. We celebrated King Alexander's birthday as a state holiday and later we had to wear black ribbons in sign of mourning for Tzar Boris' death."⁶⁶

The competing Serb and Bulgarian national projects, the brutal means, the name changing policies and the stigmatization of the Macedonian "dialect" as incorrect Serbian or Bulgarian in schools and in general, fostered revolt and a national self-awareness even where it only existed in rudimentary form; or, with regard to the Macedonian language, as Friedman rightly argues, "such treatment only helped confirm the popular sentiment that Macedonian was a separate language."⁶⁷

The Bosnian formula of "neither Serb nor Croat" was translated into "neither Serb nor Bulgarian" in the case of the Macedonians. An example of this is the observation of the third secretary of the British Legation at Belgrade R.A. Gallop, who after a visit to Macedonia reported that the people whom he met "were equally insistent on calling themselves neither Serbs nor Bulgars, but Macedonians... There seemed to be no love lost for the Bulgars in most places.

⁶⁶ Personal interview with Mr. Trifun Pavlovski (December 2008).

⁶⁷ Victor Friedman, "Modern Macedonian Standard language" in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* edited by Victor Roudmentof (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000), 190.

Their brutality during the war had lost them the affection even of those who before the Balkan War had been their friends...⁶⁸

As it was noted above, the Macedonians did not have a political party within the Kingdom which would represent their interests as an ethnic/national group. The above-mentioned IMRO (United) functioned illegally and enjoyed a significant support among the Macedonians, in particular among the leftist youth and the intelligentsia (in what Rossos terms “Macedonian nationalism on the left”)⁶⁹. In 1933 it submitted a Resolution concerning the situation in Macedonia to the Executive Committee of the Comintern and subsequently it was published as a resolution of IMRO (United) in its newspaper *Makedonsko delo* in April 1934. Its other publication/newspaper was *Balkan Federation-Fédération Balkanique* and by its many activities IMRO (United) promoted the cause of liberation and reunification of the Macedonian people.⁷⁰ Eventually, after much debate, the Balkan Communist Parties and the Comintern (in 1934) recognized the Macedonians as a distinct Slavic nation.

2.3. The Communist Embrace

The above-mentioned connection and cooperation of the Macedonian IMRO (United) with the Comintern brings about one of the most important dimensions of the interwar Bosnian and Macedonian history - the relation of their

⁶⁸ Andrew Rossos, “The Macedonian Question” in *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* edited by Norman Naimark and Holly Case (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). 145.

⁶⁹ Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: a history* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 165.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

national questions and recognition as distinct national groups with communism. Although outlawed at the end of 1920, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (along with the Comintern) played a crucial role for the overall emancipation of the Bosniaks and the Macedonians and their eventual recognition as separate and equal nations in Yugoslavia (with the significant difference that the Bosniaks did not get their recognition until 1968, while the Macedonians entered the Yugoslav socialist federation as a constituent nation). What was true about the mainstream political life in Bosnia and its being thorn between Serb, Croat and Bosniak interests, it could be as well said for the Bosnian communist movement and party, while in Macedonia, although not that prominently, the communist activists were cooperating with their Bulgarian and Greek like-minded comrades.

Although the Yugoslav communists (and the Comintern) had changing attitudes concerning Macedonia and Bosnia, Macedonia's right to national self-determination and existence as an independent unit in a Balkan socialist federation was recognized, while the Bosniak nationhood would remain a disputed issue until much later. It was in Macedonia that the communists won the largest number of votes, while the Comintern with the above-mentioned 1934 Resolution officially recognized the right of Macedonians to exist as a separate nation.⁷¹

As Aleksa Djilas rightly argues, in absence of their own national political movements, the Macedonians and the Montenegrins saw the Communists as “their defenders because the CPY opposed Serbian nationalism and ‘hegemony’

⁷¹ Victor Friedman, “Modern Macedonian Standard language” in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* edited by Victor Roudmentof (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000).

and advocated fundamental changes.”⁷² The 1920 elections to the Assembly made visible the widespread support the communists enjoyed among the Macedonians: out of 105.000 registered voters, the Communist Party won 40.201, the Democratic Party 30.379, the Radical Party 10.702; or out of the 59 seats the communists won, 15 mandates/deputies were from Macedonia.⁷³ Thus, the Communist Party was the third largest party in the Assembly after the Democratic and the Radical Parties which shared almost the same number of seats (92 and 91 respectively).⁷⁴

From the beginning of the 1920s the Yugoslav Communist Party accorded Macedonia a separate place and a right to autonomy and full recognition. Thus, at the second Country Conference in May 1923 the CPY pronounced itself “in favor of the reordering of the Yugoslav state on the basis of broad autonomy for ‘Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo with Metohija, Montenegro with Hercegovina, Vojvodina, Bosnia, Croatia, Dalmatia and Slovenia’”⁷⁵, while in a document/report on the national question from the same year by Sima Marković⁷⁶, it is underlined that the Macedonian question is still an apple of discord for the Balkan nations and its successful solution would come only with the establishment of a “brotherly alliance of the Balkans peoples whose equal member would be autonomous

⁷² Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 63.

⁷³ Ivan Katardziev et al. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod/History of the Macedonian People* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 1969), 22.

⁷⁴ Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 55.

⁷⁵ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 167.

⁷⁶ Serb mathematician, elected secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1920 and high Comintern official, expelled from the Party in 1929 for his “right wing” views on the national question. Sentenced to death in 1939 for an alleged collaboration with the British Intelligence.

Macedonia in borders established by a plebiscite.”⁷⁷ Five years later, in September 1928, the Central Committee of the CPY, in compliance with Comintern instructions and developments, argued for the formation of “free and independent worker-peasant republics of Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vojvodina”⁷⁸, while the Comintern’s formula was one of “Balkan Federation of Independent Soviet Republics.”⁷⁹ Moreover, the Comintern asserted that “равноправие наций невозможно без признания права каждой на отделение”⁸⁰ (“equality of nations is impossible without the right of each to secession”). It was not until the Fourth Country Conference of the CPY in December 1934 that separate Communist Parties of Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia was decided to be established within the framework of the CPY.⁸¹ All of this goes to show that Macedonia was present throughout the interwar years on the political agenda of the Yugoslav communists and was thus guaranteed the future status of one of the five Yugoslav constituent nations.

Because of Serbia’s close relations with Tsarist Russia prior to WW1 and the immigration of many White counterrevolutionaries from Russia to Serbia among other things, the Yugoslav Kingdom was perceived by the Comintern and

⁷⁷ “Национальный мир на Балканах может быть достигнут только братским союзом балканских народов, равноправным членом которого была би и автономная Македония в границах установленных плебисцитом.”

The Electronic Archives of the Communist International, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д.3 / Лист 12.

⁷⁸ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 168.

⁷⁹ *The Electronic Archives of the Communist International*, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д.7а / Лист 42.

⁸⁰ *The Electronic Archives of the Communist International*, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д.4 / Лист 3.

⁸¹ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007).

the Soviet Union as a hegemonic imperialistic Serb expansion. This is visible in many Comintern documents from this period, which refer to interwar Yugoslavia as being in a state “от великосербской военно-полицейской гегемонии к сербскому империализму”⁸² (from great-Serbian military-police hegemony towards Serb imperialism) or concluding that Yugoslavia “является продуктом мировой-империалистической войны” (appears as a product of the world-imperialistic war) where the Serb nation “угнетает все остальные нации Югославии”⁸³ (oppresses all of the other nations in Yugoslavia). At the beginning of the 1920s, however, the Comintern and the Yugoslav communists held diverging views on the national question: namely, the Comintern openly criticized the policy of the LCY of a single Yugoslav nation⁸⁴ or, as a 1926 Draft Resolution of the Comintern Executive Committee noted, the Party “has not always made proper use of all the possibilities to fight for the oppressed nationalities.”⁸⁵

All of this goes to show that, no matter the extent of ideological framing of the national question by the Comintern and the Yugoslav Communist Party, the elites which remained in (Vardar) Macedonia after 1918 (after the ones with

⁸² *The Electronic Archives of the Communist International*, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д.18 / Лист 30.

⁸³ *The Electronic Archives of the Communist International*, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д.3 / Лист 20.

⁸⁴ “КПЮ заняла по НАЦИОНАЛЬНОМУ ВОПРОСУ неправильную позицию, объявила себя за ЕДИНСТВО юго-славского государства и за НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ МИР в рамках этого государства и то, как раз в тот момент, когда хорватские, словенские, боснийские и македонские массы все решительней выступали против brutальной гегемонии сербской буржуазии и сербского монархизма и милитаризма.”

The Electronic Archives of the Communist International, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д.3 / Лист 40.

⁸⁵ *The Electronic Archives of the Communist International*, КОМИНТЕРН, Ф.495, оп.58, д. 15 / Лист 41.

strong pro-Greek or pro-Bulgarian sentiments had left for these countries)⁸⁶ saw the materialization of their ideas for Macedonian autonomy and full-scale emancipation possible and likely within the communist platform.

Although comparable, the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina has pronounced differences and specificities. Because of the Serb-Croat-Muslim triad as the *differentia specifica* of the Bosnian context and its irreconcilable implications in the interwar period, it was precisely in Bosnia that the Yugoslavist communist platform of the CPY found the most fertile ground. The communist ideological framework which denounced “tribal chauvinisms” and stigmatized Serb and Croat medieval and feudal-style nationalisms⁸⁷ seemed at the moment the most progressive and promising political and ideological platform which would be capable of solving the Bosnian knot, all the while preserving the compactness of the historical Bosnian territories. The consensus on Bosnian autonomy/sovereignty and territorial integrity which existed among the Yugoslav communists for a long time did not entail a consensus on a separate Bosnian Muslim nation.

The all-Bosnian outlook was taken up by the Yugoslav Communist Party from the very beginning with regard to Bosnia. Thus, 1921 leaflets and agitation material read an address to the “Working Class of Bosnia-Herzegovina!” or to the “Men and women workers of Bosnia-Herzegovina!”⁸⁸ In a similar manner advocating an anti-nationalist all-Bosnian platform, a 1923 proclamation by the

⁸⁶ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁸⁷ Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 62.

⁸⁸ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 160.

Bosnian Communist organization emphasized that “the proletariat of Bosnia and Herzegovina should not allow our workers’ movement to be lined up behind chauvinist-nationalist leaders.”⁸⁹

Although the integrity and autonomy of Bosnia was preserved and upheld as a principle and policy, both Bosnia and Vojvodina remained to be considered as not belonging to a titular nation. The main debate of Bosnian/Bosniak nationhood was waged in 1940 at the Fifth Country Conference of the CPY, when prominent communists such as Pijade or Djilas insisted on the Bosniaks being only a confessional/religious and not a national group. Some argued that the Muslims of Bosnia are “not a formed nation” but “an ethnic group”, while Tito commented that “Bosnia is one because of its [inhabitants’] centuries of coexistence, regardless of religion.”⁹⁰ But, the proclamation of 1st April 1941 addressed the “Nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina!” (subsequently naming the Serbs, the Muslims and the Croats) and in a way confirmed the already widespread although not official recognition of the Bosniaks as a separate national group.

Another interesting dimension of the Bosnian case as related to the communist movement and the struggle for Bosnian autonomy in its historical borders is the relationship between the JMO and the CPY, the former bitter political enemies which however started to interact and to cooperate after 1935 (the year when JMO joined the Yugoslav Radical Union and the Stojadinovic government) and in particular after the 1939 partition of Bosnia. The Yugoslav

⁸⁹ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007), 160.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 188.

Communist Party made pragmatic moves in trying to appeal to and lobby with the left-leaning wing of the JMO, the JMO members which opposed the coalition with the Serb Radicals and in particular with the Bosnian students at the Universities in Belgrade and Zagreb. The above-mentioned “Muslim Movement for the Autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina” which stemmed from the JMO programmatically overlapped with the communist platform for Bosnian autonomy. Moreover, a considerable number of JMO members and supporters later joined the communist and Partisan movements, among which the already mentioned editor of the JMO newspaper *Pravda* Muhamed Sudžuka who served as a member of the presidencies of ZAVNOBiH and AVNOJ.⁹¹

2.4. New Nations in a New Yugoslavia

WW2's battle fields in Yugoslavia, beside the presence of the Axis forces saw fierce clash between mainly Croat and Serb ultra-nationalism and trans-national, pro-Yugoslav anti-fascism. The complexity of the war context in Yugoslavia was enhanced by the high number of actors and warring parties and the relationships they had among each other. The beginning of the war in April 1941 saw the formation of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) by the Nazis, with the involvement of returned exiled Croatian fascists in Italy; the breaking of the royal army into guerilla units; and the establishment of the partisan liberation

⁹¹ Marko Attila Hoare, *The History of Bosnia: from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Saqi, 2007).

ZAVNOBiH and AVNOJ were the highest governing organs of the anti-fascist movements in Bosnia and Yugoslavia respectively.

anti-fascist movement and army.⁹² The partisan resistance movement provided the only supranational, all-Yugoslav platform which aimed to unite representatives and anti-fascists from all of the Yugoslav 'tribes'. As Dennison Rusinow observes,

"That this rebirth of the Yugoslav idea was not merely widely accepted but a powerful recruiting slogan for the Partisan armies is explained by the course of the war itself [...] the lesson seemed to be that if the Yugoslav peoples did not hang together they would end by hanging each other in a paroxysm of mutual genocide. The force of this lesson generated a widespread propensity to try again a new formula."⁹³

Although Macedonia entered post-WW2 socialist Yugoslavia as an equal partner in the federation and for the first time in its history it was recognized as a separate political, national and cultural entity, it was *de facto* a "junior partner."⁹⁴ Nevertheless, being one of the constituent Yugoslav nations, it went through processes which finalized its nation-building process: the codification of the alphabet and the language which was followed by the establishment of the state university, Macedonian television and radio services, an Academy of Sciences and Arts, theaters, opera and ballet ensembles, publishing houses, etc. With an upward economic progress and improved life standard, with illiteracy rates dropping from 75% in 1939 to 35.7% in 1953 and 10.9% in 1981⁹⁵ and a relatively free realm of mobility and cultural expression (provided one did not

⁹² Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995).

⁹³ Dennison Rusinow, *Yugoslavia: oblique insights and observations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 302.

⁹⁴ Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2008), 235.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 252.

question or oppose Tito's and Yugoslavia's *raison d'être*), Macedonia had every reason to appreciate its Yugoslav years and view the federation as a veritable safe haven. True, there were no Macedonians in the inner circle around Tito, yet many participated in the highest milieus of the federal governing bodies. Thus, Kiro Gligorov, the first president of independent Macedonia after 1991, federal Secretary (Minister) of Finance from 1962-1967 and President of the Yugoslav federal Assembly was among the designers of the historical 1965 economical reform (the only one before that of Ante Marković in 1989) which wanted to make the Yugoslav *dinar* convertible and to liberalize the market;⁹⁶ while Stojan Andov, the spokesperson of the first post-Yugoslav Macedonian Parliament was the head of the Yugoslav negotiating team with the European Communities in the second half of the 1970s and Yugoslavia's last ambassador to Iraq.⁹⁷

Thus, in particular "the newly enfranchised groups" such as the Macedonians, the Bosnian Muslims and even the Albanians "found their opportunities for access to the system's rewards enhanced."⁹⁸ When in the spring of 1967 the Center for Public Opinion Research in a survey asked respondents: "In general, would you say that you are very satisfied, mainly satisfied, or unsatisfied with your family's prospects for the future?", 77% or more in every republic and province except Slovenia (where the percentage was 61%)

⁹⁶ Darko Hudelist, "Тито сакаше да воведи капитализам - интервју Киро Глигоров" / "Tito wanted to introduce capitalism - interview with Kiro Gligorov", *Globus Magazin* 104 (April 2009): 72-77.

⁹⁷ Personal interview with Stojan Andov (April 2009).

Mr. Andov asserted that Yugoslavia's membership in the EC was hampered by ideological differences, namely by high Yugoslav functionaries who genuinely upheld the ideology of non-alignment. Entering the European structures they believed would represent a betrayal to Yugoslavia's particular path and ideology.

⁹⁸ Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: denial of a nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 146.

answered that they were 'satisfied'.⁹⁹ Hence, upward progress until the 1970s and an improved quality of life worked to strengthen the loyalty to the state.

For the Bosniaks, the creation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a separate federal unit and a "multinational conglomerate"¹⁰⁰ with no Croat or Serb predominance represented indeed some kind of achievement. Yet, their distinct nationhood and identity would remain an open question for the following two decades: categorized as "indeterminate Muslims" in the census of 1948, "indeterminate Yugoslavs" in 1953, it will be only in 1961 that they would be referred to as "Muslims in the ethnic sense".¹⁰¹ In the last federal census of 1981 Muslims would be listed as a nation. The period after 1968 is believed to be a somewhat Bosnian "national renaissance"¹⁰² in that Sarajevo became a veritable cultural center with flourishing music, literary, theater scenes, which culminated with the organization of the 1984 Winter Olympics. Moreover, experiencing a rapid urbanization and improvement of infrastructure and quality of life, the Bosnian society demonstrated such an enthusiasm and "enormous popular response"¹⁰³ that the 1968 National Roads Loan project was so successful and only in few years 3000km of asphalt roads were built. As Yugoslavia's center of heavy industry and weapons production, as well as abounding in natural resources¹⁰⁴, Bosnia could feel all the benefits Macedonia likewise profited from. Unlike the other republics (with the exception of Kosovo) and beside the fact that

⁹⁹ Steven L. Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia: political decision making since 1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 49-50.

¹⁰⁰ Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: denial of a nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 144.

¹⁰¹ John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 335.

¹⁰² Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: a cultural history* (London: Saqi Books, 2001), 181.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 182.

¹⁰⁴ Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: denial of a nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

they remained among the lesser developed regions, these two for the first time in their histories saw big investments on their soil, remote villages connected with roads, electrification and relative welfare and security. With the added prestige Yugoslavia enjoyed abroad, it was consequently logical that Macedonia and Bosnia had appreciated more their 'Yugoslav renaissances' than Croatia or Slovenia might have done.

Chapter 3: Democratic Yugoslavism? - Anti-Nationalist, Pro-Democratic and Reform Voices from Above

We too are Europe, but in our own way.

Milovan Djilas

Yugoslavia, especially during the 1960s and 1970s seemed to be a successful country and model, developing a home-grown type of socialism, inspiring leftists in the West and dissidents in the East and about to celebrate its moral victory as the Cold War was nearing its end in 1989.¹⁰⁵ The 1974 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* noted: "Although there are likely to be difficult years ahead, politically and economically, the Yugoslav system is so deeply rooted, and the survival of a strong, independent, nonaligned Yugoslavia is so vital to the maintenance of European stability, that the country will undoubtedly survive the shock of Tito's departure."¹⁰⁶ However, what followed only fifteen years later in terms of deep political, economic crisis, the dissolution and in particular the outcome in a form of a violent conflict not only profoundly contradicted any previous judgments and estimates of the above kind, but it also came at a great shock to the majority of Yugoslav citizens, even to the political elites, as well as to the international community.¹⁰⁷ As Raif Dizdarević, the Yugoslav President (of

¹⁰⁵ Dejan Jović, *Jugoslavija - država koja je odumrla / Yugoslavia - the Country that Withered Away* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: the ending of Yugoslavia*. (London: Vintage Books, 1992), 93.

¹⁰⁷ "Despite the nationalist tensions that had spiraled since 1987, a majority of the populations in all republics envisioned the continuation of Yugoslavia as a single state, even as many of them wished for greater independence of their own republics." (Hayden, 2000). Furthermore, the Yugoslav federal presidency was conducting regular negotiations with the EC representatives on the Yugoslav association until the fall of 1991. Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided - the Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts* (The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 64.

the collective presidency) in 1988-89 writes, "it is necessary that we observe the events, phenomena and processes from the point of view of that time. Who could have possibly imagined then that all those tragic events from 3-4 years later would really take place?"¹⁰⁸

This chapter examines the alternatives which on the one hand denounced the ultra-nationalist discourses and the violent means of solving the conflicts, and on the other tried to initiate profound reforms in the political and the economic spheres which would eventually transform Yugoslavia into a democratic state and an eligible state-candidate for full membership in the EC/EU. The reform processes which also aimed at the preservation of the federation, albeit in a different form, took place at the level of the political elites (in the federal circles, and also on the lower republican level as will be discussed below), but also on an intellectual and popular level, more specifically in the circles of the United Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI) and the media circles concentrated around the only TV channel of pan-Yugoslav/supra-republican character - YUTEL. All these initiatives and constructive efforts eventually failed and could not prevent the unwanted outcome despite of the great support the policies of the federal government headed by Ante Marković enjoyed with the international

Dejan Jović, *Jugoslavija - država koja je odumrla / Yugoslavia - the Country that Withered Away* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2003).

Omer Karabeg, "Vasil Tupurkovski: Raspad je bio neminovan, ali ne i rat/The dissolution was unavoidable, but not the war - Interview," *Radio Free Europe*,

<http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/article/1045340.html> (accessed March 25, 2009).

¹⁰⁸ Raif Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita do smrti Jugoslavije - Svjedočenja/From the Death of Tito to the Death of Yugoslavia* (Sarajevo: Oko, 1999), 436.

community.¹⁰⁹ Political conflicts were translated into ethnic conflicts¹¹⁰ as ethnic affiliation came to be a decisive factor among republican elites. Yet, in order to fully understand and grasp the essence of the developments which determined the Yugoslav dissolution, it is of an utmost importance for one to take into consideration these particular streams of action and thought which ran counter to the ultra-nationalist euphoria and the media discourses of hate-speech, violence and militarism¹¹¹.

3.1. The Battle of the “Last Yugoslav”

Ethnic and social equality was not only something around which Yugoslavia tried to build its image at home and abroad, but it was also explicitly embedded into its last federal constitution from 1974, which guaranteed the right to work and the right to housing, as well as the right to education in the mother tongue for all nations and nationalities on the entire territory of Yugoslavia.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ “As Yugoslavia began to pull apart late in 1990 and clearly in 1991, almost every foreign leader from George Bush through Mikhail Gorbachev to Pope John Paul II indicated his support for Marković’s government.”

Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 240

¹¹⁰ Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 123.

¹¹¹ In a general atmosphere of polarization and biased reporting, the printed media in Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, alongside YUTEL and few other newspapers in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia pursued an objective and critical coverage of the developments, the nationalist euphoria and the incompetence of the republics’ political leaderships. The political crisis was also approached with a great dose of humor and sarcasm conveying this criticism. See Annex 1.

¹¹² *Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije - Stručno objašnjenje/The Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Expert interpretation* (Belgrade: Institute for Political Studies, 1975).

Article 170 guaranteed the right to freedom of expression of one’s national identity, culture and language, but at the same time provided that the citizens are NOT obliged to declare a belonging to a nation. The same article criminalized any act of national inequality, national, racial or religious hatred and intolerance.

However, the point which is most often emphasized is the further decentralization the Constitution established, whereas it “defined republics as nation-states of constituent nations [...] Except for international independence and international legal responsibility, republics were given all the attributes of statehood.”¹¹³ Thus, Article 3 of the Yugoslav Constitution defined the socialist republic (the federal unit) as “a **state** based on sovereignty of nations” and “a socialist self-managing democratic community”.¹¹⁴ Analysts and scholars also point out the complexities the new constitution institutionalized as part of the political and the economic system, since in addition to the amendments of 1971, the last constitution introduced a complicated system of delegates and consultations at all levels of government.¹¹⁵ Decision-making was rendered more difficult and burdened with procedural requirements, since a kind of minority veto was given to all federal units (including the two autonomous provinces within Serbia) in order to ensure their equality¹¹⁶; while for the federal government it was possible “only after a

¹¹³ This included “constitutions that determined their political systems, coats of arms, national anthems, national official languages, public holidays, and specific educational systems and programmes.”

Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 118.

¹¹⁴ *Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije - Stručno objašnjenje/The Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Expert interpretation* (Belgrade: Institute for Political Studies, 1975), 43.

Article 4 defined the autonomous province as “an autonomous socialist self-managing democratic social-political community”.

¹¹⁵ The Law on Associated Labor divided all economic enterprises, even hospitals and charitable organizations into the so-called “Basic Organizations of Associated Labor.” Edvard Kardelj, one of the principal architects of the 1974 constitution termed the new system “pluralism of self-managing interests.”

Stokes, Gale. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 225.

¹¹⁶ Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from*

lengthy series of steps” that it could “override the objections of a republic or an autonomous region to a particular piece of legislation, and then only when it was declared vital to the interest of the entire federation.”¹¹⁷ An intelligent coinage was provided by political scientist Slobodan Samardžić in 1990 which referred to the system as “combative federalism”.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Article 249 of the Constitution provided for a somewhat double/sub-national or republican citizenship, something which the majority of Yugoslavs were not aware of and which would later have legal and practical consequences with the dissolution of the state.¹¹⁹ All of the above-mentioned would later have significant implications, especially from December 1988 onwards, the year when the federal government lost the vote of confidence in the federal assembly and resigned for the first time in Yugoslav history.

In March 1989 the mandate to form a government was handed over to Ante Marković, the last Yugoslav Prime-Minister, a Croat and a committed Yugoslav with a vision for a democratic, prosperous and European Yugoslavia.¹²⁰

East to West edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

¹¹⁷ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 226.

¹¹⁸ Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided - the Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts* (The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 30.

¹¹⁹ “Every citizen of the member Republic at the same time shall be citizen of the Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Citizens of a member Republic on the territory of another member Republic have the same rights and obligations as the citizens of that Republic.” *Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije - Stručno objašnjenje/The Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia - Expert interpretation* (Belgrade: Institute for Political Studies, 1975).

¹²⁰ “In his own words, Marković stood for ‘an undivided Yugoslavia with a market economy, political pluralism, democratic rights and freedoms for all citizens.’ This was music to Western ears and to Yugoslavia’s own cosmopolitan elite, though not to the primitive republican governments, especially in Serbia, which rightly foresaw their control over their economies being undermined by the Marković reform programme.”

Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: the ending of Yugoslavia* (London: Vintage Books, 1992), 105.

He was a President of the Presidency of Croatia, director of one of Yugoslavia's largest and most successful companies "Rade Končar" and one of the leaders of the Yugoslav Bank for Economic Cooperation.

At the time of his election, president of the Yugoslav collective presidency was Raif Dizdarević, who in 1988 ended his four year mandate as a federal Secretary (Minister) of Foreign Affairs. In his memoirs he recalls in detail the election of Marković, which was very uncertain, as the Presidency preferred either Slovene Milan Kučan or Slobodan Milošević, in particular the latter. The main reason was that by leaving the republican leadership and assuming a function in the federation the negative trends in Serbia would be hampered and it was Dizdarević's deep personal conviction that this "would stop the offensive from the top of Serbia which was destroying the country"¹²¹ (meaning Yugoslavia). However, both Serbia and Slovenia declined the proposals of Kučan and Milošević and eventually, between Borisav Jović and Ante Marković the Presidency decided in favor of the latter who accepted the mandate.¹²² His main policy determinant was the introduction of a "(completely) new type of socialism", of which the profound economic reforms were only the first part of a comprehensive reform program.¹²³ Firstly aiming at eliminating "excessive

¹²¹ Raif Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita do smrti Jugoslavije - Svjedočenja/From the Death of Tito to the Death of Yugoslavia* (Sarajevo: Oko, 1999), 321.

¹²² Ibid.

The argument against Marković's election was that for 24 years there hasn't been a president of the federal government from Serbia, so Jović stood better chances in terms of procedure and political correctness. However, he was personally not very motivated to assume the post and Marković was by far considered as the right person to be appointed at that particular period of economic and political crisis.

¹²³ Milan Gavrović, "Ante Marković: kako bih ja rešio ovu krizu/How I would solve this crisis - interview" *Liderpress*, <http://www.liderpress.hr/Default.aspx?sid=67490> (accessed March 10, 2009).

normativism”, Marković formed a smaller cabinet consisting of 19 instead of 29 members “including several younger and highly qualified officials” and he announced cutting the size of the federal bureaucracy from 14 000 to 10 000.¹²⁴ It seemed right for him to perceive the replacement of an inefficient and incompetent ruling and administrative elite with a younger, able and professional team as the absolute priority. The large team of experts working on the economic reforms included professors, economists and scientists from all the Yugoslav republics.¹²⁵ His second priority was to embark on was profound economic reforms for which he would be applauded abroad and repudiated at home.

In an international context where the US presidential race was underway at the same time as the EC was negotiating its further integration (especially during 1991 when the Yugoslav crisis reached its climax), “from the foreign point of view, Marković was a miracle man, clearly the hope of the future for Yugoslavia.”¹²⁶ His “far-reaching economic *perestroika*”¹²⁷ included many reforms which were initially perceived as painful and accepted with a lot of reservations, but proved highly effective in the following year of 1990. In order to illustrate and

Cohen, Lenard J. *Broken Bonds: the disintegration of Yugoslavia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 66.

¹²⁴ His Vice-President was the Slovene Živko Pregelj, who maintained that economic reforms must take precedence since “we agree more on the country’s economic matters than on how to harmonize political developments.”

Ibid, 67.

¹²⁵ Kiro Gligorov, *Македонија е сè што имаме/Macedonia is all we have* (Skopje: Kultura, 2002).

Mr. Gligorov was also on the team, personally invited by Marković. Among other functions, he was a federal secretary/minister of finance, member of the Presidency and President of the federal Assembly.

¹²⁶ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 240.

¹²⁷ Michael Palairat, “The Inter-Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008), 233.

obtain an impression of the extent of deterioration of the communication inside the federation, one should cite the way in which Marković managed to get approval for his economic reform program. Namely, blocked by the Serbian and the Montenegrin leaderships, the proposed package (which also put an end to state subsidies to unprofitable companies, most of which were based in Serbia) passed because it had sufficient support from the other federal republics, but in particular because it was approved in the federal assembly under the “urgent measures” procedure which required only a 2/3 vote rather than a consensus.¹²⁸ Certain deputies were given the task to topple down the reform program, but when the Prime Minister reported to the federal Assembly, “putting forward all the basic elements of the programme, and I announced that the currency would become convertible and showed them the new convertible currency, which no one knew had been printed [...] At that moment, there was such thunderous applause, such ovations in the Assembly, that no one could put forward any objections.”¹²⁹ Thus, among other things, the reform program made the Yugoslav currency - the (new) *dinar* convertible, set at seven to the deutschmark, something which is still evoked with fondness among former Yugoslavs, as the hallmark of the most prosperous year ‘before the storm’. It furthermore introduced changes to the budget and set restrictive monetary policies which

¹²⁸ Lenard J Cohen, *Broken Bonds: the disintegration of Yugoslavia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

¹²⁹ “Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

froze the wages for six months and freed all prices.¹³⁰ As it was mentioned above, this caused impressive and unexpected results as the inflation rate drastically dropped “and this was the first time in any socialist country that inflation had been reduced to zero.”¹³¹ Furthermore, hard currency reserves of approximately 11 billion dollars were created, larger than those of many European countries, the country’s foreign debt declined from 21.5 billion to 12.2 billion dollars and 65 000 private companies were created during the first year.¹³² The implementation of the reforms was conducted in coordination and after extensive consultations with international actors. Marković’s visit to Washington and with the IMF director obtained him outright support, while the federal government invited Jeffrey Sachs to provide an advice on the envisaged reforms.¹³³

The 14th (and last) Congress of the League of Communist of Yugoslavia (LCY or SKJ) took place from 20-22nd January 1990 in Belgrade. Curiously enough, the last President of the League was Macedonian Milan Pančevski. As the Slovene (and later the Croat) delegation left the Congress after all their

¹³⁰ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

¹³¹ “Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

¹³² “Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

31 Milan Gavrović, “Ante Marković: kako bih ja rešio ovu krizu,” *Liderpress*, <http://www.liderpress.hr/Default.aspx?sid=67490> (accessed March 10, 2009).

Michael Palaret, “The Inter-Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008).

Kiro Gligorov, *Македонија е сè што имаме/Macedonia is all we have* (Skopje: Kultura, 2002).

proposed amendments were refused and blocked, the secret vote for a new leadership never took place and the LCY ceased to exist.¹³⁴ The Prime Minister believed and voiced his opinion that Yugoslavia can and will continue to exist even without the LCY.

In the spring of 1990, once the reforms started taking effect, the Prime Minister was by far the most popular politician in Yugoslavia, above the Slovenian, the Croat and the Serb republican presidents, with polls showing percentages of support ranging from 83% in Croatia to 93% in Bosnia.¹³⁵ “Markovic’s popularity grew to such an extent that his visits to the ordinary people were reminiscent of those made during Tito’s era.”¹³⁶ (even his most recent visit to Belgrade in April 2009 was said to have caused “general fascination and collective attack of serious nostalgia”¹³⁷). Therefore, the republican leaderships were right to perceive a threat in the figure of Marković and in the federal government for their growing nationalist and mutually hostile policies. Even at a much earlier occasion, at a session of the Party’s central committee, Marković complained “that most reform efforts initiated by the federal government had ‘either been stopped or slowed down’ by regional officials, and he raised the

¹³⁴ See Annex2.

¹³⁵ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 128.

“Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

¹³⁶ Neven Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: the end of a legacy* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 139.

¹³⁷ Jovana Gligorijevic, “Beograd je balkanski Njujork - intervju Milenko Jergovic, pisac” / “Belgrade is the Balkan New York - interview with Milenko Jergovic, writer”, *Vreme* 959 (May 2009) <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=865297> (accessed 24 May, 2009).

issue of whether Yugoslav political leaders genuinely desired a ‘new system.’”¹³⁸

In a “panicky fear from Ante Marković”, the republican leaders have achieved the highest degree of unanimity only in their strategy directed against the federal government.¹³⁹ He was demonized both in Serbia and Croatia, as the Croat side accused him of being a centrist communist and pro-Serb, Serbs labeled him “Ustasha” and a foreign agent.¹⁴⁰ The federal government also envisioned constitutional reforms which would allow for federal elections to be held, but in this case it was prevented by both Serbia and Slovenia.¹⁴¹ It was precisely from the side of the Serbian political leadership that the most serious blow for the reform process would come at the close of 1990, something which would also enrage the already discontent Slovenes. Namely, since the percentage of enterprise/corporate losses was the highest in narrower Serbia and the social dissatisfaction was growing before the elections, Milošević requested a primary emission credit of 8 000 million dinars (1 100 million marks) which Marković refused.¹⁴² By abusing the weak mechanisms of control the National Bank of

¹³⁸ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 70.

“Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

¹³⁹ Erol Rizaov, “Паничен страв од Анте Марковиќ”/“Panicky Fear from Ante Marković”, *Nova Makedonija*, 30 March, 1991.

¹⁴⁰ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993),

¹⁴¹ “Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

¹⁴² “Yugoslavia’s inflation regime awarded enterprises in narrower Serbia a massive volume of transfers at the expense mainly of Slovenia and Macedonia.”

Michael Palaret, “The Inter-Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008), 232.

Yugoslavia exercised over the republican National banks, Milošević arranged with the National Bank of Serbia to create secretly credits of 18.2 billion dinars, which was half of the amount available for the increase in money supply scheduled for 1991, which Marković termed “a daylight robbery, pure and simple.”¹⁴³ Once the outright theft came to the knowledge of Marković through a secret document sent anonymously and later reached the press, the Slovenes were infuriated by the act of what they called Serbia’s “coarse and unheard of attack on the monetary system”, while this caused the US to withdraw the previously agreed \$3.6 billion in credits.¹⁴⁴

Although eventually under pressure the National Bank of Serbia returned part of the sum (around 1.5 billion deutschmarks were never returned), the act not only undermined Yugoslavia’s fragile monetary system, but more importantly it further distanced the republics and discredited the federal government and the hard work, time and resources invested in its reform program. Although towards the end of June the political developments were approaching an unsuccessful conclusion (as Slovenia had announced the declaration of independence for the

¹⁴³ The table proposed by Palairat on the 1990 ‘grey emissions’ clearly shows Serbia on the top of the list with 34 400 million dinars, but also Slovenia at 1000 million and Croatia at 1700 million. Only Macedonia and Bosnia did not partake in the reckless plunder of the federal assets. Furthermore, Marković himself witnesses in front of the ICTY that for a certain time in 1991 after Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia took decisions not to pay in the federal budget anymore, it was only Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina which did.

Michael Palairat, “The Inter-Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008).

“Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

¹⁴⁴ Michael Palairat, “The Inter-Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008), 243.

end of June), the federal Secretary (Minister) of Justice Dr. Vlado Kambovski led the Yugoslav delegation at the conference of the European Ministers of Justice in Ottawa, where he was promised Canadian legal help in reforming the Yugoslav legal system.¹⁴⁵ In June 1991, Ante Marković delivered a “dramatic address” to the Federal Assembly and the Yugoslav public, saying that the only possible and acceptable option is an agreed upon and democratic dissolution (with no illegitimate and illegal unilateral acts) which would lead to a new Yugoslavia as a union of independent republics.¹⁴⁶ The Prime Minister also gave speeches at the Parliaments of Slovenia and Croatia (and was denied the chance to do the same in the Serbian Parliament), in a last effort to dissuade the two republics from taking radical steps: “This is the first and the last time I am speaking as a Croat”, Marković said in front of the Croatian parliamentarians.¹⁴⁷ “I am not the same kind of Croat that you are because you hate Serbs and others because you are Croats [...] Keep your hands off Bosnia and Herzegovina.”¹⁴⁸

Moreover, until as late as September 1991 the federal presidency was conducting negotiation talks with the EC in Brussels.¹⁴⁹ The US pursued its support for the federal government well into 1991, as US Secretary of State James Baker visited Belgrade in June and extended support to Marković for the

¹⁴⁵ “Правна помош за Југославија”/“Legal help for Yugoslavia”, *Nova Makedonija*, 19 June, 1991.

¹⁴⁶ “Нема да дозволиме разбивање на Југославија”/“We won’t allow a destruction of Yugoslavia”, *Nova Makedonija*, 22 June, 1991. 1-2.

¹⁴⁷ “Case Slobodan Milošević - transcript 23rd October 2003 - testimony of witness Ante Markovic”, *International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/031023ED.htm (accessed on 16 May, 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Omer Karabeg, “Vasil Tupurkovski: Raspad je bio neminovan, ali ne i rat/The dissolution was unavoidable, but not the war - Interview,” *Radio Free Europe*, <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/article/1045340.html> (accessed March 25, 2009).

preservation of Yugoslavia within its present borders, and Marković himself, in fear for his safety, during his last months in office in Belgrade (before he resigned on 20th December 1991) was guarded by US marines lent by the US ambassador.¹⁵⁰

Yet, the voices which were calling for reason and patience were overpowered by a nationalist paranoia and unwillingness for any type of compromise. As Gale Stokes rightly notes, “many observers in the West believed that, despite the political skirmishing, economic rationality eventually would bring Yugoslavs to their senses.”¹⁵¹ It did not. It is indeed arguable that the economic reform was a rather belated attempt and needed the lacking stable political atmosphere for a successful implementation. Also, Marković’s overall program had a strong economic, but lacked a clear political platform. Yet, it has to be recognized as a serious, viable and pragmatic project. One can never penetrate into the deeper, personal motives of the relevant actors and thus it would not be possible to examine the genuineness or the real intent of past acts and moves. Yet, judging by the actions and the only personal public statement Marković has since given as a witness in the ICTY case against Milošević, his were constructive and pragmatic efforts to primarily stabilize the state and create an environment where all-encompassing reforms and democratization could take place. The downfall of Marković and the federal government (as well as that of

¹⁵⁰ Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: the ending of Yugoslavia* (London: Vintage Books, 1992).

¹⁵¹ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 240.

“These tough economic issues would have been difficult to arbitrate even in an ethnically homogeneous environment [...] All sides perceived controversies over economic efficiency, investment allocation, and convertible currency rules **in ethnic terms**. Therefore the arguments were always more intense than they otherwise might have been.” Ibid. 224.

the federal collective presidency) and the brutal collapse of Yugoslavia were thus largely due to regional political elites whose conflicts primarily fed on one another; elites that did not have the competence or the willingness to cooperate and, at least nominally if not wholeheartedly framed everything into combative and irreconcilable ethnic, historical, mythical and/or religious terms. Regrettably, there was always a loud mob to support their demagoguery.

3.2. The Envisaged Union of Myriad Faces - What Kind of a New Yugoslavia?

The late 1980s brought to life the strong civil society movements in Slovenia which stood for democratization of Yugoslavia, improvement of the country's human rights record, abolishment of the mandatory military service, removing of the controversial "verbal delict" Article 133 of the Yugoslav penal Code, and so forth. It was also in Slovenia that the first concrete proposals for a political reorganization and transformation of the Yugoslav federation took shape among the intellectual and the political circles. Thus, when the crisis had already spread to all the levels of society and the situation was critical and asking for comprehensive reform, many young intellectuals voiced their views and propositions for the future (re)organization of the Yugoslav (con)federation through the established Slovenian scientific journal *Teorija in Praksa* (Theory and Practice). Thus, the issue of December 1990 published already the second set of

articles on “The Constitutional Changes and the Reforming of Yugoslavia”, as well as a set of articles on “The Crisis in Yugoslavia – Ways Out”.¹⁵²

In the political realm, at the 11th Congress of the Slovenian League of Communists, the proposal for an asymmetrical federation was adopted, and it was added that “this proposal does not undermine the functions of the federation such as international relations, defense against foreign aggression, and those functions that secure Yugoslavia as a common economic space.”¹⁵³ When put to a vote in front of the eight-member federal presidency, the proposal for an asymmetrical confederation was rejected by a majority of six votes to two,¹⁵⁴ after which the Slovenian and the Croatian political leaderships modified it into a proposal for Yugoslavia to be transformed into a community of independent states on the model of the EC.¹⁵⁵ It is debatable if, as some authors such as Dejan Jović argue, the proposal was insincere and unserious, serving only as an alibi for the Croatian and the Slovenian leaderships, whose sole aim was to convince the public and the international community that it is Serbia, not they who want to destabilize Yugoslavia. The fact remains that while the two northern republics were pushing for further decentralization and confederalization, Serbia

¹⁵² *Teorija in Praksa – Revija za Družbena vprašanja. (Theory and Practice – Journal for Social Issues)*. Year XXVI, 12, pp.1417-1664 (Ljubljana: Faculty of Sociology, Political Science and Journalism, Ljubljana University).

¹⁵³ Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 125.

¹⁵⁴ Dejan Jović, “The Slovenian-Croatian Federal Proposal: a Tactical Move or an Ultimate Solution?” in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration* edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragovic-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008).

¹⁵⁵ Mitja Žagar, “The Collapse of the Yugoslav Federation and the Viability of Asymmetrical Federalism” in *The Changing Faces of federalism: Institutional reconfiguration in Europe from East to West* edited by Sergio Ortino, Mitja Žagar and Vojtech Mastny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

and Montenegro were reform-resistant and strongly opposed to anything less than a centralized federation, while Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina tried to balance between the two, with their own, albeit belated, concrete proposal.

This prominent gap between the visions for the future of the country stemmed from well before the socialist federation was established. The Serb-Croat axis and the disparate political stands on the organization of the Yugoslav Kingdom before WW2 were both then and almost seventy years later the determining *casus belli*. From the very first days of the Yugoslav idea, as Gale Stokes observes, “the orientation of Serbian and Croatian Yugoslavists differed, the latter thinking in broad cultural terms and the former thinking in practical terms of a state under Serbian leadership.”¹⁵⁶

By the end of 1990, following the above-mentioned last Congress of the Communist League of Yugoslavia, each of the Yugoslav republics held internal parliamentary elections (while Slovenia held its referendum on independence on 23rd December 1991). Some observers and authors point to this as one of the crucial facts in the process of dissolution, as federal elections should have preceded or immediately followed the republican ones. The Party of Prime Minister Marković, the “Alliance of Reformists Forces of Yugoslavia” also ran, but hoping that its real chance would come at the federal elections. The only pan-Yugoslav non-ethnic political option won considerable number of votes in Macedonia and Bosnia (in Croatia its registration was hampered on purpose) -

¹⁵⁶ Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). 219.

19 seats in Macedonia and 13 in Bosnia.¹⁵⁷ As Robert Hayden rightly observes, “had such elections been held, it is possible that Yugoslavia would have seen an electoral pattern similar to that of India, with local nationalists victorious at the local (republican or state level), but a federally oriented party winning at the center.”¹⁵⁸ Although the reformed communists did not win the elections in any of the republics except for Serbia, the electoral campaigns saw different voices. In his speech at the first congress of the Party for Democratic Action in December 1991, Bosnian President Izetbegović raised the problematic issue of self-determination in ethnic terms once it comes to Bosnia-Herzegovina:

“The real question in Bosnia is not whether and how to achieve self-determination for the nations, but how the mixture of these nations is to exercise this right [...] Why, then, destroy something which has been the result of historical circumstances and has functioned well, and moreover represents a humane, democratic and European solution?”¹⁵⁹

In March 1991 the presidents of all the Yugoslav republics began regular tête-à-tête meetings in the former holiday residencies of late President Tito - the so-called presidential summits. While the summit in Split, Croatia in March 1991 took place “in a congenial and constructive atmosphere and with preparedness for open and calm discussion of the crucial questions”¹⁶⁰, already in April at the summit in Brdo in Slovenia the two opposite visions came to the fore (a unitary

¹⁵⁷ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 121-122.

¹⁵⁸ Robert M. Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided - the Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts* (The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 28.

¹⁵⁹ Alija Izetbegović, *Sjećanja - autobiografski zapis/Memoirs - an autobiographical essay* (Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 2001), 103.

¹⁶⁰ Milan Banov, “Конструктивни разговори за отворените прашања” / “Constructive talks on the open questions”, *Nova Makedonija*, 29 March 1991. 1.

state vs. a union of independent states), which crystallized even more at the summit in Ohrid.

As Macedonian President at the time Kiro Gligorov and host of the Ohrid Summit recalls in his memoirs, the atmosphere during the talks which took place behind closed doors was quite tense, as the same irreconcilable attitudes were being repeated and he could also notice the polarization of the media from the different republics and therefore the biased way of informing the Yugoslav public.¹⁶¹

As it was mentioned above, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina held the mediating positions and most prominently lobbied and advocated the preservation of Yugoslavia in a new form. Certainly this position had a pragmatic and practical dimension, since the two republics were among the less developed regions of Yugoslavia and being numerically and economically inferior, they had an interest in advocating and securing a position of an equal partner in a larger political entity. Bosnia-Herzegovina and President Alija Izetbegović were in the even more complicated position of having to reconcile the diverse voices and interests of the Bosnian citizens - Bosniaks/Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others. “Our views were the closest to the Macedonian”, recalls Izetbegović in his memoirs. Talking about the meeting with the Macedonian delegation on 29th January 1991, he mentions that with Gligorov they both “advocated the preservation of Yugoslavia, but significantly changed/reformed.”¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Kiro Gligorov, *Македонија е сè што имаме/Macedonia is all we have* (Skopje: Kultura, 2002).

¹⁶² Alija Izetbegović, *Sjećanja - autobiografski zapis/Memoirs - an autobiographical essay* (Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 2001), 91.

As it was mentioned above, by June 1991 the political situation in Yugoslavia had deteriorated, with the announced secession of Slovenia for 25th June, the conflicts with the Serb minority in Croatia, the illegal arming of paramilitary units in Croatia and Bosnia and the already publicized talks between Croat president Tudjman and Milošević on the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina. As a last attempt to prevent the worst-case scenario, on 6th June 1991 in Sarajevo, Bosnian and Macedonian Presidents Izetbegović and Gligorov put forward a so-called “Platform for the future of the Yugoslav community.”¹⁶³ Janez Drnovšek, the Slovene representative publicly upheld the Platform, while even the advisor of Milošević said it was a step forward; the proposal was outright refused by Tudjman.¹⁶⁴ A more optimistic view of the talks was also reflected in the media and the press, which commented on the general agreement of the leaders that the Platform represented a good basis for further talks, in that even Tudjman publicly said it is an acceptable document.¹⁶⁵ The Platform contained six parts referring to: 1) fundamental and basic civic rights, 2) the common economic interests, 3) international/legal status and foreign policy, 4) defense, 5) structure and procedures of decision-making and 6) guarantees for the implementation of the agreement. More precisely, it proposed a formation of a Union or a Community of Yugoslav States, which would abide by all the European mechanisms for human rights protection and where only the territorial

¹⁶³ “Platform for the future of the Yugoslav community”. *Документи за Република Македонија 1990-2005/Documents on the Republic of Macedonia 1990-2005* (Skopje: Faculty of Law Iustinian I, 2008). 137.

¹⁶⁴ Alija Izetbegović, *Sjećanja - autobiografski zapis/Memoirs - an autobiographical essay* (Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 2001).

¹⁶⁵ A. Sholjakovska, “Поповолна атмосфера во разговорите”/“Improved atmosphere in the talks”, *Nova Makedonija*, 7 June, 1991.

units/republics, NOT the nations or people will have the right to self-determination and secession; a common market functioning by the rules of the EMU (European Monetary Union) and a currency tied to the ECU (European Currency Unit); republics would as well be entitled to pursue their own foreign policies, and apply for membership in the UN although Yugoslavia would retain its membership; professional defense forces whose command staff would proportionally reflect the ethnic balance, while the republics would retain their territorial defense units. The aim of the Platform was “to avoid the extremes and the bloodshed, and to seek a rational way of escaping from the heated atmosphere where threats, weapons and ultimatums dominated, and to replace them by a calm democratic dialogue, rational approach and reasonable compromise.”¹⁶⁶ Similarly, both presidents agreed that neither Bosnia-Herzegovina nor Macedonia would stay in a ‘crippled’ Yugoslavia, i.e. in a Yugoslavia with modified borders and without one of the republics. “This platform could have prevented the war, at the same time assuring that all Yugoslav peoples have their basic interests guaranteed”, writes Izetbegović. “Unfortunately, there was not enough political maturity, nor courage to accept it. The outcome was the war for which everyone paid.”¹⁶⁷

The presidential summit in Sarajevo was the last one, and although the Platform was also presented to the EC representatives - EC President Jacques Delors and Luxemburg Prime-Minister Jacques Santer - the last concrete attempt

¹⁶⁶ Kiro Gligorov, *Македонија е сè што имаме/Macedonia is all we have* (Skopje: Kultura, 2002), 269.

¹⁶⁷ Alija Izetbegovic, *Sjećanja - autobiografski zapis/Memoirs - an autobiographical essay* (Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 2001), 100.

to preserve Yugoslavia and establish a Yugoslav Community on the model of the EC, or to conduct any type of a federal referendum where the Yugoslav citizens could have their say on the future of their state, failed. The EC stated that the Platform was an excellent basis for solving the Yugoslav crisis, while the Bundestag in a project-resolution on Yugoslavia recommended continuation of the negotiations between the republics on the basis of the proposed Platform by Gligorov and Izetbegović.¹⁶⁸ As Lord Carrington, chairman of the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia and former UK foreign secretary said to President Gligorov on the subject of the proposed Platform: “Mr. Gligorov, all that is very well, but it has one major flaw - it is all rational. And the situation in Yugoslavia is not!”¹⁶⁹

At the first session of the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia in The Hague on 7th September 1991, all the presidents of the Yugoslav republics, the members of the Presidency, the federal government and the EC foreign ministers gathered at the negotiating table. At this point in time, although seriously weakened, the Federal Executive Council (the Government) was still in existence and still there were options at the negotiating table. Mr. Gligorov in his speech again reconfirmed the Macedonian position - a peaceful solution of the Yugoslav crisis and reformation of Yugoslavia as a union of independent states¹⁷⁰. The following day Macedonia would hold its plebiscite on independence. The Arbitration Commission of the Conference (better known as the Badinter

¹⁶⁸ Kiro Gligorov, *Македонија е сè што имаме/Macedonia is all we have* (Skopje: Kultura, 2002).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 271.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Commission) set up to assist with the legal matters related to the conference would later issue fifteen opinions on the most important legal aspects arising from the dissolution and in the Opinion No. 8 (dated 4th July 1992) would eventually proclaim that SFR Yugoslavia no longer exists¹⁷¹.

3.3. The Eight Supreme Commanders - The Presidency and the Army

It was widely accepted in Yugoslavia that, beside the mixed marriages, those who felt and declared Yugoslav and the cultural life (music, cinematography and sports), there were few truly Yugoslav things or undisputed symbols of Yugoslav unity: Tito, the League of Communists, and the Army, as one of the famous paroles read: *Tito-Partija-Omladina-Armija (Tito-the Party-the Youth-the Army)*. One would be also right to add here the federal, as opposed to the local, republican institutions: the collective presidency (or Supreme Council) which also acted as the supreme commander with the authority to issue orders to the Yugoslav Army; the federal Parliament with its two chambers; and the already mentioned Federal Executive Council (or the Government). However, all of these bodies also functioned and were composed on an ethnic principle, following the proportional representation of all republics and provinces according to procedures established by the last 1974 constitution. At the end of the 1980s, and in particular after the abolishment of the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina by the Serbian political leadership, the members of the Presidency no longer

¹⁷¹ "Opinion No. 8 of the Arbitration Commission of the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia" in *Yugoslavia through Documents: from Its Creation to Its Dissolution* edited by Trifunovska Snezana (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1994).

strove to represent Yugoslav, but narrower ethnic principles and interests. Exceptions to this pattern were the Macedonian and the Bosnian members of the last Presidency: Vasil Tupurkovski and Bogić Bogičević. Their positions were neither supportive of the Serbian camp (which encompassed the Serb, Montenegrin, Kosovo and Vojvodina members), nor of the Slovenian-Croat one. Moreover, because of their neutral positions and status, the Presidency appointed the two of them as negotiators/arbiters during the armed conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia.¹⁷² Their effort, help and involvement allowed for the successful exchange of many captured soldiers from all sides.¹⁷³

Although the Yugoslav Army is not the focus of this work *per se*, it is important to underline its crucial role during the process of the Yugoslav dissolution. Viewed as the last strong, truly Yugoslav institution capable of saving Yugoslavia in an atmosphere where the entire federal institutional framework started collapsing, many Yugoslavs expected, feared and some secretly hoped that the Army would eventually step in. As the supreme guardian of the constitutional order and the integrity of the state, the Army was indeed on the verge of *coup d'état*, under the pressure primarily of the Serbian leadership.¹⁷⁴ At the famous Presidency meeting with the Army command on 12th March 1991, Bogić Bogičević's now historical decision to vote NO on the proposal to announce a situation of emergency on the entire territory of Yugoslavia

¹⁷² Personal interviews with Vasil Tupurkovski and Bogić Bogicević (April 2009).

“Тупурковски и Богичевиќ на разговори во Загреб”/“Tupurkovski and Bogicevic at Talks in Zagreb”, *Nova Makedonija*, 3 April, 1991. 1.

¹⁷³ Personal interview with Vasil Tupurkovski (April 2009).

¹⁷⁴ Olivera Jovičević, “Upitnik”/“Questionmark” (Interview with General Veljko Kadijević, last federal Secretary of Defense), *Radio Television Serbia*, 2007.

prevented a *de facto* civil war, which anyway erupted several months later in Croatia and the following year in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite being Serb by origin, Bogićević chose to vote against military solutions to the Yugoslav crisis, in favor of political dialogue and peaceful solution, claiming that no one was attacking Yugoslavia from the outside obligating the Army to step in.¹⁷⁵ Although the Serbian leadership expected him to follow his ethnic line of reasoning and as a Serb by origin to support their plans for Yugoslavia, Bogićević did not follow the nationalist and militarist framework which started spreading to all pores of public life in Yugoslavia: “I have always understood nationality and faith as personal matters of each individual. My Serb nationality is not my profession, and it has never been [...] Approving of what the political-nationalist aggressors were doing at the time would have been an equivalent to a moral suicide.”¹⁷⁶

But, it was not only the Macedonian, the Bosnian, the Croat and the Slovene members of the Presidency who were against the military scenario and the emergency situation. The Army leadership was also divided and the pro-Yugoslav generals, among them Secretary of Defense general Veljko Kadijević (himself of a mixed Croat-Serb marriage) did not support the idea of the Yugoslav Army waging a war against its own citizens.¹⁷⁷ That is why (in addition to other pragmatic considerations, as foreign assistance) the Army decided not to support the Serbian initiative for *coup d'état*.

¹⁷⁵ “Rat je bio planiran”/“The War was Planned”, interview with Bogić Bogićević, in *Beznađe zla - intervjui / The Hopelessness of Evil - Interviews* edited by Dr. Fadil Ademović (Sarajevo: International Center for Peace, 1997).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 31/42.

¹⁷⁷ Olivera Jovičević, “Upitnik”/“Questionmark” (Interview with General Veljko Kadijević), *Radio Television Serbia*, 2007.

Another illustrative and prominent example of an anti-nationalist, Yugoslav-minded action within the Army before the official dissolution of the state is the case of Dragoljub Bocinov, Macedonian by origin, Admiral of the Yugoslav Navy at the outbreak of the war, commander of the military naval base in Split, Croatia and chief of staff of the naval Academy. After he received an order from the military command in Belgrade to bomb the city and the Split military naval base, he refused to abide by the decision, under the pretext that he was trained to build and protect Yugoslavia, not to destroy it.¹⁷⁸ Next he was arrested and transferred with a helicopter to the military prison in Niš, Serbia. After undergoing a torture and imprisonment for almost a year and upon an intervention from the Macedonian government, he was transferred to Macedonia at the beginning of 1993, where he assumed the position of Head of the General Staff of the Macedonian Army in April of that year.¹⁷⁹

When the conflict in Slovenia erupted between the Yugoslav Army and the forces of the Slovene territorial defense after the proclamation of independence in June 1991, the EC (the so-called ministerial troika¹⁸⁰) met with the republican and the federal leaderships on the Croatian island of Brioni. The final “Common declaration for peaceful solution of the Yugoslav crisis” from 7th July 1991¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Personal interview with Simo Spaskovski, Chief of cabinet of Admiral Bocinov while on the position of Head of the General Staff of the Macedonian Army 1993-1996.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Stipe Mesić in his memoir on the dissolution recalls the firm support of the EC for the preservation of Yugoslavia's current inside and outside borders, with common currency, foreign policy and defense system. The same fact is reasserted in the memoirs of Kiro Gligorov and explicitly visible from the press from the first half of 1991.

Stipe Mesić, *The Demise of Yugoslavia: a political memoir* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004).

¹⁸¹ “Common (Brioni) declaration for peaceful solution of the Yugoslav crisis” in *Документи за Република Македонија 1990-2005/Documents on the Republic of Macedonia 1990-2005* (Skopje: Faculty of Law Iustinian I, 2008).

established that the collective presidency must retain and continue to pursue its political and constitutional role and duties, while all sides had to refrain from any violent or unilateral acts. All the provisions referring to the customs which will remain a federal matter, the deactivation of the territorial defense units, etc. and the basis for an CSCE (present OSCE) observation mission to Yugoslavia point out to a determination for a constructive approach which aims at the preservation of the country. However, with the escalation of the conflict in Croatia, the Croat President Tudjman and the Yugoslav President of the Presidency Mesić (a Croat) refused to sign the Ohrid declaration at the extended Federal Presidency meeting with the republics' presidents of 22-23rd July 1991 in Macedonia since the other participants at the meeting did not accept their demand for an immediate withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army to its barracks.¹⁸²

It is important to recognize the responsibility of the individual actors in the entire process, as there were no invisible historical forces at work or foreign conspiracies which plotted against Yugoslavia. To pursue the argument that the violent dissolution was an inevitable act would mean pursuing an unjust, uninformed and profoundly misplaced position. The concluding words of Raif Dizdarević in his memoirs offer an accurate summary of the sense of regret over the tragic dissolution sometimes referred to as *jugonostalgija*: “Of course it is not about being nostalgic that Yugoslavia was not defended or preserved the way it

¹⁸² “Охридска изјава за надминување на кризата во поранешна СФРЈ” / “Ohrid declaration for the overcoming of the crisis in former SFRY” in *Документи за Република Македонија 1990-2005/Documents on the Republic of Macedonia 1990-2005* (Skopje: Faculty of Law Iustinian I, 2008).

was before the dissolution. It is about a nostalgia which has to do with a historical, moral and ethical responsibility that we did not preserve all the great values and achievements from that period of equality, human, civic and national dignity; that Yugoslavia was not reformed to the benefit of all; that we didn't advance and enrich the inner relations which would have ensured prosperity for all..."¹⁸³ Izetbegović seems to agree with this view in that he notes in his memoirs that "the fate of Yugoslavia and its dissolution were not unavoidable, while the break-up itself could have happened in an entirely different way. What happened was determined by the personalities of Milošević and Tudjman, and they were in no way a historical given (nužnost)."¹⁸⁴ It is undeniable that the presence of only one of the factors which led to the dissolution would not have been enough to give a serious blow to the country. It was precisely the fatal combination of many factors, internal and external which (sometimes unintentionally) played against and in favor of each other, the interaction of nationalisms and individuals which fed on each other and mutually reinforced and provoked each other's actions - all of those ultimately destroyed the possibility of any peaceful solution.

¹⁸³ Raif Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita do smrti Jugoslavije - Svjedočenja/From the Death of Tito to the Death of Yugoslavia* (Sarajevo: Oko, 1999), 435.

¹⁸⁴ Alija Izetbegovic, *Sjećanja - autobiografski zapis/Memoirs - an autobiographical essay* (Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 2001), 90.

Chapter 4: “Ovo je zemlja za nas”¹⁸⁵/”This is a country for us” -the pro-Yugoslav Non-Political Front

*How many years of blood and confusion
would it have cost us to learn
the very rudiments of political science!*
- Thomas Macaulay

Although throughout history the supposed voluntarism of the masses has been used as a way of legitimization of the actions of the political elites, rarely the entire demos was allowed to voice its will and demands or to have a true say in what eventually would end up as an elite-driven process. In the case of Yugoslavia, it has been usually pointed out to the large crowds of ordinary Croats and Serbs which wholeheartedly supported Milošević and Tudjman and applauded the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Yet, this would only represent a biased and superficial interpretation of the events. In fact, the Yugoslav ‘demos’ which overwhelmingly voted in the independence referenda voted also in favor of a future alliance or union of independent Yugoslav states. Namely, the referenda questions in Croatia and Macedonia had this option explicitly embedded: the referendum question in Macedonia was thus formulated: “Are you for a sovereign and independent Macedonia with the right to join a future alliance of independent Yugoslav states?”¹⁸⁶; the Slovenian political leadership had the confederation option clearly put forward throughout the dissolution process; while by the time

¹⁸⁵ A song by the rock band EKV, also performed at the “YUTEL for Peace” rally in Sarajevo in July 1991.

¹⁸⁶ “Одлука за распишување на референдум во Република Македонија, Скопје, 6 август 1991” / “Decision for holding of a referendum in Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 6 August 1991 in *Документи за Република Македонија 1990-2005/Documents on the Republic of Macedonia 1990-2005* (Skopje: Faculty of Law Iustinian I, 2008), 152.

the independence referendum in Bosnia-Herzegovina came in February/March 1992 it no longer made sense to advocate any kind of Yugoslavia. Yet, those who voted “yes” were in fact voting for “a sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, a state of equal citizens, the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina - Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and members of other nations - living in it.”¹⁸⁷ The majority of Yugoslavs never envisioned a total polarization, armed conflicts and genocide and absolute termination of all contacts as a solution to the political and economic crisis. A federal referendum on the fate of the country, like in the Czechoslovak case, was never held. In both cases, the dissolution was an elite-driven process which did not care much about taking into account the popular will in case it contradicted an already agreed agenda. In this sense, the meeting Tudjman-Milošević on the division of Bosnia in March 1991 is now a well-known fact. Taking into account the essential fact that it was not only the political elites which could, had a right to and did voice their visions which led to unfortunate ends, this chapter will analyze the positions of those who lacked the actual power to implement: the intellectuals, the artists (in particular the progressive Yugoslav musical rock scene) and the ordinary citizens, among which the youth.

4.1. The Voices of the Intellectuals: UJDI

The Yugoslav democratically, anti-nationalist and reform-minded intellectuals united in the “Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative” (UJDI)

¹⁸⁷ “The Referendum on Independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina February 29-March 1, 1992”, *Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe* <http://www.csce.gov> (accessed on 20 May, 2009).

which held its first meeting in January 1989.¹⁸⁸ It was legally registered on 17th April 1989 in then Titograd, today's Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, with the Republic's Secretariat for Internal Affairs as an association of citizens for the advancement of democratic processes.¹⁸⁹ The Association (hereafter UJDI) had branches in all the republics, while the seat and the official address were situated in Zagreb, Croatia. Likewise, the printing of the UJDI newsletter *Republika* took place in Zagreb. The members of the initiative's Council were well-known intellectuals, professors and writers from Prishtina and Belgrade, to Ljubljana, Skopje, Sarajevo and Zagreb. Branko Horvat (Croatian intellectual and renowned economist, the 'spiritual father' of UJDI)¹⁹⁰, Nebojša Popov, Žarko Puhovski, Vesna Pešić, Gajo Sekulić, Abdulah Sidran, Koča Popović, Dubravka Ugrešić, Mirjana Ule, Tibor Varadi, Ljubomir Cuculovski, were some of the names of eminent Yugoslav philosophers, lawyers, professors, liberals, writers who were active in UJDI and some of whom would preserve their roles of prominent civic, anti-war and human rights activists and opposition leaders in the post-Yugoslav context. On 8th January 1990 the registered number of members of UJDI was 1002.¹⁹¹ Although a significant number of the UJDI activists were members of the Yugoslav League of Communists, they were led by the principle that they have

¹⁸⁸ Branko Horvat, "The Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative" in *Yugoslavism - Histories of a Failed Idea* edited by Dejan Djokic (London: Hurst & Company, 2003), 298.

¹⁸⁹ *Republika* (Newsletter of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative), Vol. 1, No 3 (July 1989).

¹⁹⁰ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999).

Branko Horvat, author of *The Political Economy of Socialism* published in English in 1982, was advocating market socialism and was equally critical of the negative economic practices in socialist Yugoslavia as of those in post-communist Croatia during the rule of Tudjman. He was also nominated for the Nobel Prize for Economy.

¹⁹¹ "Godišna skupština Udruženja za jugoslavensku demokratsku inicijativu" / "Annual assembly of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative" - original document/correspondence, dated 8 January 1990. Personal archive of Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI-Skopje.

no moral or any other right to prevent a social democrat, a liberal or any other person with different political views to voice them or to be a member of a party, the same way they, as communists, had a right to do so.¹⁹²

Beside its political engagement, UJDI never became, neither strove to become a political party (although there was such a proposal from the Belgrade branch led by Nebojša Popov, once the situation began deteriorating after 1990, claiming that UJDI would be more effective and useful if it registers as a political party).¹⁹³ “We are not an alternative movement. To have an alternative means to have at least two possible solutions. For Yugoslavia there is no alternative to any other solution but radical democratization.”¹⁹⁴ In their Manifesto, the Initiative outlines the reason for their establishment in the inexistence of any movement or initiative which is both Yugoslav and democratic; they propose a concrete program of political reorganization of the state into a democratic federation and emphasize the “limitations of seeing Yugoslavia simply through national divisions.”¹⁹⁵ In an atmosphere where the opposition Yugoslav/democratic vs. anti-Yugoslav/nationalist was becoming especially prominent, UJDI did not fail to raise the matter: “To those who were brought up in the warrior’s and epic tradition, such views [democratic alternative] might appear soft [...] [The language of] violence and destruction must be replaced by deep principles and persistence.”¹⁹⁶ Because of their position and stands which criticized and went

¹⁹² Personal interview with Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje (April, 2009).

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Branko Horvat, “The Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative” in *Yugoslavism - Histories of a Failed Idea* edited by Dejan Djokic (London: Hurst & Company, 2003), 298.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 301.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 299.

beyond the mainstream nationalist political ideologies, like in the case of Ante Marković, UJDI was publicly stigmatized and attacked: in Croatia and Slovenia they were regarded as Yugoslav or Serb unitarists (arguing that the initial “U” in the acronym stands for that), while certain political circles in Serbia accused them of being Croat *Ustashas*, again finding base in the initial letter.¹⁹⁷ In the second half of 1990, Ante Marković asked for a meeting with the UJDI leadership and during the four-hour meeting he underlined the gravity of the overall situation in Yugoslavia (in particular in Bosnia-Herzegovina) and asked for the support of UJDI for his Party of Reform Forces. UJDI declined any potential coalition, but in principle extended support for Marković’s program. However, the main remark UJDI had and conveyed to Marković was that his party, being the only one which has a real economic policy and program, did not have a clear political platform for the future arrangement of Yugoslavia (nor a clear vision on the future status of Kosovo).¹⁹⁸

Nebojša Popov, one of the leaders of UJDI, recalls that “reacting to early armed conflicts, in spring 1991, we founded the Yugoslav Pre-Parliament, which gathered the emerging anti-war parties and groups, but it really could not muster enough strength to stop the devastating storm.”¹⁹⁹ The initial activities of UJDI were centered on the reform of the legal and the political system of socialist Yugoslavia. The above-mentioned Yugoslav Pre-Parliament was actually envisioned as a possible mechanism of achieving this major change, i.e.

¹⁹⁷ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999).

¹⁹⁸ Personal interview with Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje (April, 2009).

¹⁹⁹ Nebojša Popov, “Destruction and Defense of Life - in Whose Name?” in *Not in My Name* edited by Mirjana Vojvodic (Niš: Center for Civic Initiative, 2008), 26.

adopting a new federal constitution which would set the country on an entirely new legal and political basis: "UJDI, following its Manifesto, is arguing for initially approving one amendment to the present constitution which would allow the establishment of the Constitutive Parliament, and secondly, for a new electoral law based on which the elections for the Constitutive Parliament would be conducted."²⁰⁰ The change of the constitution and the adoption of a new one would have been confirmed at a federal referendum by the majority of Yugoslav citizens and the majority of federal units. "THE CENTER OF LEGITIMACY SHOULD BE SHIFTED FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. The main and most acceptable source of legitimacy would be a SUCCESSFUL and DEMOCRATIC solution for the basic problems of the individual and the common existence [...] If our goal is democracy, then only democratic means suit such an aim."²⁰¹ However, the political aspect was not the only one which dominated the debates and activities of UJDI. The reflections on the economical aspects were centered on the assumption that a real political pluralism is impossible without ownership/property pluralism.²⁰² The fact that these reflections and proposals came already in the first half of 1989, almost at the same time as the economic reform program of Ante Marković, reveals the existence of a widespread awareness in the intellectual (and the political) circles that something imperatively had to be changed, both nominally and structurally.

²⁰⁰ "Kojim putem do novog ustava?" / "Which Way to a New Constitution?", *Republika* (Newsletter of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative), 1, No 3 (July 1989): 5.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Personal interview with Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje (April, 2009).

At the second session of the Council of UJDI held in Sarajevo on 19th January 1990 at the Faculty of Political Science, one of the discussion points was the above-mentioned draft electoral law and Constitution. A notion and concept UJDI was insisting on was that of the “citizen” and it constantly warned of the danger of merely replacing the collectivity of the socialist working class with that of the nation/ethnic or religious group; that this collectivist spirit being blind for the individual would undeniably lead to a new kind of totalitarianism.²⁰³ UJDI envisioned Yugoslavia as a country “as well as of its citizens”, not only of its constituent nations and nationalities.²⁰⁴ As the President of the Macedonian branch of UJDI and Professor of philosophy Ljubomir Cuculovski argued in an interview in November 1989,

“So far it has been insisted upon abstract categories - in our Yugoslav case, the nations. This led to our communicating less and less as a man/human to another man/human, but more and more as a Macedonian with a Croat, Croat with a Slovene... We are still not familiar with the category of *people*, not in the sense of *ethnos*, but in the sense of *demos* [...] Thus, if we strive to constitute political subjects, that is citizens, who look beyond their national boundaries, we will avoid the danger of exclusive national parties...”²⁰⁵

Likewise, the draft electoral law which was supposed to establish the constitutive Yugoslav Pre-Parliament explicitly underlined that “political parties based on a nation instead of on a political platform represent retrogression in political life and, in the Yugoslav context, a source of dangerous irrational

²⁰³ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999).

²⁰⁴ Personal interview with Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje (April, 2009).

²⁰⁵ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999), 118.

conflicts.”²⁰⁶ Furthermore, the draft law stipulated that the republics’ constitutions are to be adopted in referenda by a qualified majority vote, while the federal constitution with a consensus, i.e. by a qualified majority vote in each of the federal units.²⁰⁷ This was believed to ensure the longevity and the credibility of the constitutions.

No matter how supportive of the civic principle, UJDI was aware that the Yugoslav context cannot afford to totally ignore the national principle which was one of the core pillars of the federation. Thus, they were envisioning a bicameral federal Parliament consisting of a Federal Chamber, or a Chamber of Citizens (based on the principle of the sovereignty of citizens, whose members would be elected at all-Yugoslav federal elections) and a Chamber of the federal units (based on the principle of the sovereignty of the nations/federal units, with members elected on local/republican elections).²⁰⁸ Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski (who compared UJDI to the Fabian Society in England) argued at that time in interviews given for magazines and newspapers in Slovenia, Serbia and Macedonia that the Yugoslav society is in a pre-political condition/state, as the people vote for national and not for political options and parties are formed in such a way where first the narrow leadership core is established and afterwards

²⁰⁶ “Osnovne odredbe izbornog zakona” / “Basic principles of the electoral law”, document/annex to the second session of the UJDI Council, 19 January 1990. Personal archive of Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999).

“Kojim putem do novog ustava?” / “Which Way to a New Constitution?”, *Republika* (Newsletter of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative), 1, No 3 (July 1989): 5.

there is a search and hunt for members.²⁰⁹ Therefore, the first free elections in Yugoslavia in 1990 would have been “zero-elections”, while the actual first elections would have come after them, with people voting for political and not for ethnic options.²¹⁰

In the context of Macedonia, the UJDI branch organized two public conferences/discussions and issued statements which were also relevant for the narrower Macedonian political sphere. On 20th September 1990, UJDI-Skopje voiced its stand on the interethnic relations in the republic, opposing some of the proposals for the outlawing of the Party for Democratic Prosperity of the Albanian minority and underlying that no already approved minority rights can be revoked. “The answer to the challenge we are facing today can only be a democratic Macedonia where rules political, national and religious tolerance.”²¹¹

Curiously enough, UJDI had the most widespread support and largest number of members in Bosnia-Herzegovina.²¹² Another crucial element which was specific for UJDI in Bosnia-Herzegovina was that only in this republic the UJDI branches eventually entered the political arena. In June 1990, the Executive Council of UJDI discussed the option of the Bosnian branches running at the upcoming elections because of the specific situation in Bosnia and the growing polarization and ethnicization of politics. Thus, the Bosnian branches of

²⁰⁹ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999).

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ “Соопштение, 20.09.1990” / “Announcement, 20.09.1990”. Personal archive of Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI-Skopje.

It is important to note that Macedonia from the beginning of 1991 was not immune to nationalist discourse either: the newly emerged right-wing VMRO insisted on a radical termination of all ties with Yugoslavia, while Albanian nationalism was emphasized and attacked in Parliament and media.

²¹² Personal interview with Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje (April, 2009).

UJDI, along with the Social-democratic Union of B&H, the SSO - Democratic Union of B&H (future Liberal Party of B&H) and the Democratic Party formed the so-called Democratic Forum of Bosnia-Herzegovina.²¹³ The question why the nationalist parties won the 1990 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina despite the great popular support which existed for Ante Marković's party and the Yugoslav option²¹⁴ is a complex one and would require a shift of focus which is not part of this work. However, it has to be noted that despite the social, intellectual and political significance of the ideas and activities of UJDI, they eventually failed in their endeavor primarily because they decided to stay out of the political arena and thus preserved an elitist and detached outlook which could not reach the wider Yugoslav public. A more engaged, unified approach which would have increased their visibility might have earned them a bigger support. This is not to say however that a great part of the responsibility does not lie with the electorate which could not detach itself from the inherited need for a charismatic, strong leader who does not speak the complicated language of the intellectuals.

Some of the UJDI members were also among the founders of the European Movement (EM) Yugoslavia²¹⁵. At a big ceremony at the Hyatt Hotel in Belgrade in March 1991, in the presence of Ante Marković, the federal Vice-Prime Minister Pregl, foreign ambassadors and around one hundred participants/members, they elected Belgrade lawyer Srdja Popović as a President of EM Yugoslavia, while UJDI members such as Shkelzen Maliqi from

²¹³ Ljubomir Cuculovski, *Сведоштва и коментари / Testimonies and Comments* (Skopje: Kulura, 1999).

²¹⁴ Neven Andjelic, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: the end of a legacy* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

²¹⁵ Founded in 1948 in The Hague, with Winston Churchill being one of its honorary presidents.

Kosovo were among the elected Vice-Presidents.²¹⁶ The Dutch ambassador addressed the assembly, while the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs Budimir Lončar underlined the actual and the symbolic value of EM - Yugoslavia. In an interview for the Macedonian daily newspaper *Nova Makedonija*, the President of EM - Yugoslavia Popović concluded:

“We are dismantling the country we live in. All of us. From different parts and in different ways, but we still haven’t completed this enterprise [...] There is a feeling among the people, at least here in Belgrade, that the militant nationalistic projects have no future. The people are fed up. Every day someone hits their head, or their stomach, this TV is no longer possible to watch, those newspapers are impossible to read, those quarrels are impossible to listen. Even killings began. It’s already an established practice that once a week someone has to die because of that nonsense. And I really think that the people have had enough of it. At the beginning maybe it was a little fun because all of that was forbidden for a long time, but now we realize the actual cost of it.”²¹⁷

Srdja Popović, who also worked as a human rights lawyer defending political dissidents like Čosić or Tudjman, in 1994 was in exile, embittered with his former clients’ use and abuse of nationalism and power. “In Yugoslavia I never advocated a political program except the broad ones of modernization, democratization, and ties with the European Community [...] I was against secessionism from the very beginning. I thought that Yugoslavia was an idea that made sense.”²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Tanjug, “Вклучување во европските процеси и интеграции” / “Inclusion in the European processes and integrations”, *Nova Makedonija*, 27 March, 1991.

²¹⁷ Mironski, “Разорнување на државата” / “Dismantling of the state”, *Nova Makedonija*, 23 June, 1991.

²¹⁸ Slobodan Drakulić, “Srdja Popovic: an exiled Yugoslav speaks”, *Peace Magazine*, March/April 1994 <http://archive.peacemagazine.org/v10n2p08.htm> (accessed on 22 May, 2009).

4.2. “Rock for Peace” - the Role and Responses of the Yugoslav Rock Scene

A famous song (by the prominent Yugoslav/Croatian band *Prljavo kazalište/Dirty Theater*) from the period of the 1980s Yugoslav “new wave” had the following verse:

Jas sam odrastao uz ratne filmove u boji
Uz narodne pjesme pune boli
Jas sam stvarno sretno dijete
*Jas sam stvarno sretno dijete...*²¹⁹

I grew up with color partisan films
With folk songs full of pain
I'm a really happy child
I'm a really happy child...

The first two lines perfectly portray two dominant levels of identification, grouping and self-perception in Yugoslav history, i.e.: the first ideological level of an over-arching, supranational identity (the growing up with partisan movies which gave a heroic, even mythical representation of the liberation battles of WW2) and the second sub-ideological level of a national identity (the ethno-folk full of stories of past injustices and grievances). This really-existing double loyalty to the narrower ethnic/religious identity and the wider Yugoslav one had its manifestation in all spheres of life, likewise in music. The climax of what would later become a conflict of these two loyalties came during the years of the dissolution of the multinational federation. A lot has been written on the specific and more liberal Yugoslav type of communism. The country which from the

²¹⁹ Free translation by Ljubica Spaskovska. *Prljavo kazalište*, “Sretno dijete”. *Novi Val Osamdesetih* (CD). Belgade: City Records, 2005.

1960s onwards experienced several waves of liberalization and whose capital in the mid-1960s was “the only Communist capital with a parking problem”²²⁰ had as well a flourishing rock and roll, punk and new wave scene, which at the end of the 1980s responded in its own way to the all-encompassing crisis.

A 1984 Radio Free Europe report entitled “Rock n’ Roll is Here to Stay in Communist Europe” noted that “hundreds of thousands of Czechoslovaks flock to musically wide-open Yugoslavia for their vacations”, whereas in the Yugoslav capital “television shows the latest videos and local groups go by names like Dorian Grey, Film, Video Sex and Electric Orgasm.”²²¹ In 1981, *New Musical Express*, a UK music magazine, rated Electric Orgasm as one of the finest bands in Europe and listed Belgrade’s club of the art students *Akademija* as one of the best European music clubs.²²² However, 1987 brought Slobodan Milošević on the political scene, while the year after, White Button released their last album where they sang:

»When the war starts,
What we gonna do,
You and me my baby?
Will we cover ourselves in a blanket
And kiss each other 'til it's over?«

As on many occasion thus far, the musicians and bands were the first to speak out and point out or criticize serious flaws, malpractices or negative

²²⁰ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 139.

²²¹ *Open Society Archives, Budapest*: Yugoslav Subject Files I. HU OSA 300-10-2. 496 (Youth).

²²² Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

phenomena in Yugoslav society. But yet again, they were not powerful enough to influence or change them.

One can claim that the progressive Yugoslav rock bands which did not hesitate to create songs with political and engaged messages before, even mainstream White Button included, certainly wanted a different Yugoslavia, but a Yugoslavia nevertheless. As Eric Gordy rightly notes, “with a rural- and regional-oriented nationalist elite taking the place of an urban-oriented communist elite, peasants and ‘urban-peasants’ colonized the cultural space that rock and roll youth once dominated.”²²³ In this sense, the rock scene had a real interest in protesting this threat, the rise of nationalism and the ‘offensive’ of the province on the cities which stood for cosmopolitanism, culture and neglect of the ethnic and the epic.

The beginning of the violence and the break up brought along the dissolution of White Button, of legendary Azra (whose self-exiled leader Johnny Štulić refuses any type of contact with ex-Yugoslav media), and the split of Smoking Forbidden which now has a Belgrade and a Sarajevo branch, among others. The market irretrievably shrank and circulation of bands and musicians across republican borders would not be resumed until years later, once the hostilities would die down in 1995.

In the midst of the nationalist euphoria and symbolic stigmatizations of the *Other*, the rock scene initiated and organized several peace, or ‘Rock for Peace’ concerts and manifestations where they voiced their protest against the current

²²³ Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 114.

developments in Yugoslavia. Most of them took part during 1991, the last year of the existence of the federation, when sporadic incidents already were occurring by the spring and the worst scenario was materializing. “Rimtutituki” was a Belgrade-based association of several rock bands (Electric Orgasm, Partibrejkers and EKV) which was also an anti-war initiative, organizing several peace concerts, the largest one in April 1992 gathering some 50 000 people²²⁴. The 1992 anti-war demonstrations took place under the motto “Don’t count on us” (an allusion to an older song by Djordje Balašević “Count on us”). They also recorded the anti-war song “Listen here (peace, brother, peace)” and clearly related the above-mentioned threat posed by the nationalist ideology and the militarism it propagated.²²⁵ It is usually pointed out that around 200 000 young people either were in hiding or left Serbia in order to avoid the military mobilization for the wars in Croatia and Bosnia.²²⁶

In August 1991, Zaječar, the host town of the famous *Gitarijada* gathered bands from all over Yugoslavia playing in front of a crowd of 20 000. There followed similar peace concerts featuring the most well-known Yugoslav rock

²²⁴ Sabrina Ramet, “Shake, Rattle and Self-Management: Making the Scene in Yugoslavia” in *Rocking the State: rock music and politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* edited by Sabrina Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

²²⁵ Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

²²⁶ At a closed session of the Serbian Parliament in September 1991 it was noted that the response from reservists in Serbia is 50%, while in Belgrade it's only 15%. At the end of 1991, 50 000 people signed a petition for peace asking for a referendum to be held on the question of the country going to war.

Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War - from Tyranny to Tragedy* (London: Routledge, 2003).

bands and other artists in Dubrovnik and Pula in Croatia and in Ljubljana-Slovenia as late as October 1991.²²⁷

In Macedonia a manifestation/concert entitled “Peace in the World-Peace in Our Country” was held in March 1991 in the large hall of the National Theatre which at this occasion was absolutely crowded.²²⁸ UN Secretary General Perez de Coilar sent a message of greeting and support to the manifestation, while the general message conveyed was that “this modest act is dedicated to our ideal of a peaceful coexistence between Macedonians and Albanians, Serbs and Albanians, Slovenes and Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics, of everyone in our country.”²²⁹ Performing at the gathering were famous Bosnian-Serb singer Zdravko Čolić, Croat singer Tereza Kesovija, White Button leader Goran Bregović, Bread and Salt leader Vlatko Stefanovski; famous film and theatre directors who held speeches; poets and writers - one of them Izet Karajlić from Sarajevo; journalists - among which Laszlo Tot from Novi Sad; well-known actors, opera singers and ballet dancers. It was certainly more than just a rock concert for peace.

However, the most significant manifestation of this type where the rock scene was also prominently present was held in Sarajevo. The initiative “YUTEL for Peace” on the rainy day of 28th July 1991 gathered around 70 000 people from all over Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, at a big event with the participation of the most prominent Yugoslav musicians, artists (most prominently

²²⁷ Sabrina Ramet, “Shake, Rattle and Self-Management: Making the Scene in Yugoslavia” in *Rocking the State: rock music and politics in Eastern Europe and Russia* edited by Sabrina Ramet (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

²²⁸ Jasmina Mironska, “Lend a Hand - Announce Peace”, *Nova Makedonija*, 4 March 1991, 1.

²²⁹ Ibid.

actor Rade Šerbedžija), students (“The Student League for Peace in Yugoslavia”), civil society activists, politicians (Macedonian representative to the federal Presidency Vasil Tupurkovski), youth, workers, miners, etc. It was noted that *Zetra*, the Sarajevo Olympic Sports Hall has never been so overcrowded and that this was “the biggest such rally in Yugoslav history.”²³⁰ With Yugoslav flags, slogans from the audience and statements such as “This is a war of Yugoslavs against Yugoslavs”, “Chase out politics from our homes”, “Ne daj se, Jugo” (Don’t surrender, Yugoslavia!) and denouncing the “epidemic of nationalism”, the gathering was supposed to have its continuation on 3rd October 1991, and revealed the popular enthusiasm for the common state and the radical dissatisfaction with the current nationalist power-games. Performing rock and pop bands and musicians included EKV singing their famous song “This is a country for us”, Goran Bregović, Bajaga and Instructors, Blue Orchestra, Red Apple, Indexi, Regina, Dino Merlin, Hari Mata Hari, the leader of Smoking Forbidden Nele Karajlić and others. For a moment, it seemed credible that music, art and the voices of the thousands of ordinary Yugoslavs can be more powerful and can restore common sense. As Goran Milić, the YUTEL Editor-in-Chief recalls, “We were in the heart of Bosnia and there was such an antiwar sentiment that one day we received an appeal for peace signed by one million Bosnian children. They brought it to Yutel, believing naively but honestly that TV could prevent the war. That was the feeling of the majority of Bosnians...”²³¹

²³⁰ Mark Thompson, *Forging War: the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19 - International Centre Against Censorship, 1994).

²³¹ Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2003), 70.

Yugoslavia with its 22 million inhabitants represented a solid market for rock bands, the most famous among which regularly did two-month tours of the country, or were selling as many as 500 000 copies of some of their albums.²³² Most of them both emotionally and pragmatically advocated peace and preservation of Yugoslavia and initiated or supported with their performances many anti-war and anti-nationalist concerts and initiatives, both before and during the wars. That is why, it seems, musicians were the first to cross borders and to be welcomed back 'in the enemy's camp' once the hostilities ended. Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav rock and roll, punk and all their variations thus remained to be synonymous with cosmopolitanism, anti-nationalism, progressivism, urban culture, and in some cases Yugo-nostalgia. Or, Yugo-futurism, as some would like to say.²³³

4.3. “Good evening, Yugoslavia!” - YUTEL in the Divided Media Space

“There have been many individuals to stress that, in this mindless time, the journalist's pen or camera were often equally effective as a gun or a pistol.”²³⁴

Post festum, there have been many voices arguing that a great portion of the responsibility for the tragic outcome of the Yugoslav dissolution lies with the media. The Yugoslav media space was traditionally “federalized” and highly decentralized, as every republic and autonomous region had its own radio and

²³² Eric Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Nationalism and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

²³³ Enis Hilmi, “The Futurism of the German Yugo-nostalgic” - interview with Rüdiger Rossig. *Globus Magazine* 104 (April 2009): 56.

²³⁴ Drago Hedl, “Media Manipulations Have Remained Unpunished”, in *Not in My Name* edited by Mirjana Vojvodic (Nis: Center for Civic Initiative, 2008), 114.

television broadcasting company, all of which were under the umbrella public service JRT (*Jugoslovenska Radio Televizija*): RTV Skopje, RTV Sarajevo, RTV Pristina, etc. Thus, when the political crisis was about to reach its climax, the printed media along with the local radio and television companies fell prey to the local political elites.

The results presented by the research done on the two daily newspapers *Borba*²³⁵ and *Politika* between January 1987 and December 1990 provide an illustrative insight into the real symbolic and ideological battlegrounds set up by the Yugoslav media (in this case those in Serbia):

- Key symbols: freedom, dignity, liberation, people, homeland, justice.
 - Slogans: Serbia in one, not in three parts
- Metaphors: Serbian cradle, holy bones, Tantalus' sufferings, unitarist alchemy
 - Neologisms: Serbophobia, ustashoid, genocidal, ustashism
 - Traditionalisms: hearth, home, fatherland, bravery
 - Neo-traditionalisms: ustashi,, sahovnica²³⁶, NDH
 - Stereotypes: perfidious Shiptars²³⁷, genocidal Croats²³⁸

This is not to say that the stigmatizing discourses and hate-speech were only present in Serbia. The Croatian media reached the same level of political control and stigmatization of the *Other*. The Macedonian daily *Nova Makedonija* in March 1991 published the main epithets, coinages and expressions which both the Croatian and the Serbian media used to portray Milošević and Tudjman:

²³⁵ "The forced training in the art of spitting at one's enemies was resisted with the greatest degree of stubbornness by the state daily *Borba*, and sections of some broadcast media (Radio Belgrade). The Editor-in-Chief of *Borba* paid the highest price of all for his two-year battle to preserve the paper's independent policy - he died in 1989, just 49 years old, and can be considered the first victim of a war which was yet to come."

Stjepan Gredelj "The Media's Role in Producing Conflict" *The War Started at Maksimir: Hate Speech in the Media*, edited by Svetlana Slapsak (Belgrade: Media Center, 1997), 200.

²³⁶ checkerboard, referring to the Croat flag

²³⁷ pejorative for Albanians

²³⁸ Stjepan Gredelj "The Media's Role in Producing Conflict" *The War Started at Maksimir: Hate Speech in the Media* edited by Svetlana Slapsak (Belgrade: Media Center, 1997).

- The Croat media on Milošević: Stalinist; an illegitimate child of Saddam; enflames the hysteria; bank robber; authoritarian populist; destroyer of AVNOJ Yugoslavia; initiator of Srboslavia.
- The Serb media on Milošević: representative of the entire Serb people; the man who restored dignity to the Serbian people; modern politician; democratically oriented person.
- The Croat media on Tadjman: wise, dignified; his missions land importance to the Croat political ideas; each of his appearances has political, psychological and even economical importance.
- The Serb media on Tadjman: inheritor of Ante Pavelić; newly enthroned Croat *ban*; dreams of an *Ustasha* NDH; elected by the West and the Catholic Church; even Hitler came to power through multiparty elections.²³⁹

Consequently, the (ab)use of the media during the Yugoslav political and social crisis went to such an extent that “people, groups and entire nations were labeled traitors and foreign hirelings.”²⁴⁰ At this early stage, however, the different ethnic media can be said to have started a war over the hearts and the minds of the Yugoslav citizens, and the written media were no exception: “On the other hand, qualifications such as: great, historical, majestic, imposing, important (most important), decisive, crucial, etc. became indispensable elements for any text if it

²³⁹ “Milosevic; Tadjman”, *Nova Makedonija*, 23 March, 1991.

²⁴⁰ Stjepan Gredelj, “The Media’s Role in Producing Conflict” *The War Started at Maksimir: Hate Speech in the Media* edited by Svetlana Slapsak (Belgrade: Media Center, 1997), 183-185.

was to gain an audience.”²⁴¹ The most often drawn conclusion is that the media propaganda was centered around an explicit struggle to build a new public opinion, to promote new values and attitudes, and to fuel fear from the Other who was a subject to demonization and hate-speech: “The problem was not just in their inaccurate and dangerous interpretation of some events, but also [...] in their stronger and stronger ruthless falsification of reality [...] Serbian politicians, intellectuals, and journalists of those years were paradigmatic ‘instigators of hatred.’”²⁴² Kemal Kurspahić, the prominent *Oslobodjenje* Editor-in-Chief cites a Belgrade colleague telling him “You know, I watch the Hungarian TV Journal every evening: I don’t understand a word, just the pictures, so I am spared my portion of state TV poisoning.”²⁴³

In March 1991 a change in the Law on Information which made the Bosnian Parliament responsible for the appointment of directors and editors in “Radio Television Sarajevo” and the daily *Oslobodjenje* outraged Bosnian journalists and intellectuals.²⁴⁴ This represented a clear attempt to put the media under state control of the then ruling nationalist parties and to undermine any attempt for independent journalism. The journalists, intellectuals, artists and other Sarajevo citizens gathered to protest (around 5000 of them) in front of the Bosnian Parliament building, demanding that the Minister of Information and his

²⁴¹ Velimir Curgus Kazimir, “Noise and Silence” in *The War Started at Maksimir. Hate Speech in the Media* edited by Svetlana Slapsak (Belgrade: Media Center, 1997), 175.

²⁴² Svetlana Lukić, “Responsibility of the Media for Creating war and Peace: the Case of Serbia” in *Not in My Name* edited by Mirjana Vojvodic (Niš: Center for Civic Initiative, 2008). 117.

²⁴³ Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of peace Press, 2003), 60.

²⁴⁴ “Државен удар врз новинарството во БиХ” / “Coup d’état against journalism in B&H”, *Nova Makedonija*, 28 March, 1991.

deputy resign.²⁴⁵ Sarajevo in this context was very specific and one could claim it was the last bastion of anti-war, independent, freedom-minded public and media space.²⁴⁶ Not only that YUTEL was based in Sarajevo, but also TV Sarajevo produced one of the now legendary and immensely popular political satire shows *Top lista nadrealista* (The Top List of Surrealists) which in an intelligent, fun and far-sighted manner ridiculed everyone and everything in the Yugoslav space before the coming storm.

This contextual set-up is important in order to be able to situate and understand the role, importance and the meaning of YUTEL. In the memory of many Yugoslavs, YUTEL is the last connecting thread which was ostensibly trying to defy the warring rhetoric and acts and to somehow glue the already fragmented political, cultural and media space. The first federal television station was initially set up as a project of the federal government which was constantly refused media coverage of its activities by the republican media. In this sense, Yugoslavia was probably the only country in the world where the federal level was absolutely weak and subjugated to the sub-federal units and institutions and where a republican Minister of Information was more powerful than the federal Prime Minister.²⁴⁷ Moreover, set up with high professional standards, primarily

²⁴⁵ “Државен удар врз новинарството во БиХ” / “Coups d’état against journalism in B&H”, *Nova Makedonija*, 28 March, 1991.

²⁴⁶ Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of peace Press, 2003).

²⁴⁷ The Croatian Ministry of Information did not allow YUTEL to be registered in Croatia. Under public pressure and once YUTEL gained widespread support and increased number of viewers, Croatia granted a provisional license at the beginning of 1991. Moreover, as Thompson describes, YUTEL’s work was constantly undermined by the Serbian and the Croatian authorities, in that journalists were harassed both in Belgrade and Zagreb, Croatian journalists were forbidden to work for anyone apart for the state service HTV and both Belgrade and Zagreb would broadcast YUTEL only after midnight.

with the commitment to preserve objectivity and a tendency to “equate Croatian ‘separatism’ with Serbian ‘extremism’”, YUTEL aimed at speeding Yugoslavia’s passage to democracy.²⁴⁸ As Editor-in-Chief Goran Milić recalls, “We believed that Yugoslavia could only survive as a reformed, democratic country, based on equality and a market economy. We agreed that it wasn’t our role to support any of the conflicting nationalist policies. Besides our support for democratic reform, the only agreed upon editorial line was an antiwar position.”²⁴⁹

The main broadcasting centre was based in Sarajevo and YUTEL entered the media space on 23 October 1990. “Good evening, Yugoslavia!” was the greeting which would set off the evening news during the next one year and a half of YUTEL’s existence. Goran Milić, a charismatic, cosmopolitan Belgrade-based Croat, successful journalist and supporter of the Yugoslav idea, was to become the symbol of YUTEL, albeit later disillusioned with and critical of the developments in Serbia. In 1991 he wrote: “The quiet majority of Yugoslavs [...] helplessly observes how the hot-headed and irresponsible national leaders are driving them into a bloody adventure [...] We have not become different men just because the primitive propaganda is pushing us back to 1941; but the people are feeling helpless because one political violence has been replaced with another one.”²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Mark Thompson, *Forging War: the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19 - International Center Against Censorship, 1994).

²⁴⁹ Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of peace Press, 2003), 57-58.

²⁵⁰ Goran Milić, “Вовлекување во крвава авантура” / “Driven into a bloody adventure”, *Nova Makedonija*, 23 March 1991.

As a proof that YUTEL was essentially aiming at editorial independence and did not give any privileged treatment to the federal government, Milić cites the fact that TV Ljubljana soon asked to transmit their program, and YUTEL started showing Slovene stories subtitled in Serbo-Croatian: “Our audience there reached 45 per cent of the TV audience, even though they were recording us and showing us at 11.30 at night. Only Sarajevo and Skopje ever broadcast us alive.”²⁵¹ While the Bosnians had a real interest in opting for the editorial balance of YUTEL and its anti-war discourse with an estimated regular audience there ranging from 60%-80%²⁵², the people in Macedonia, not having any direct involvement or interest in the Croat-Serb conflict, primarily saw YUTEL as a good quality novelty, a change in the traditional ‘one TV and radio per republic’ media space and a platform of reporting and thought which seemed the most logical at a time of rising rivalries, confusions and violence.

But, with a very small staff of only 50 (compared to the dozens of thousands employed by the state media) by the end of 1991 it became virtually impossible for YUTEL to continue its line of balanced reporting. As Milić recalls, “We understood little by little that Yutel was like trying to have a single television station for Hitler, Stalin and Churchill, broadcasting for all three in one language, or in one language with subtitles, putting Himmler on screen, then cutting to Churchill, and then saying ‘And now the football results.’ It was impossible.”²⁵³

²⁵¹ As cited in Mark Thompson, *Forging War: the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19 - International Center Against Censorship, 1994).

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

As in the case of Marković's reforms which arguably would have made a big difference had they come at least several years earlier, one could emphasize the same with regard to YUTEL. Beside its great potential, it was initiated too late. The local political elites and media services were already too powerful and Belgrade and Zagreb did everything to prevent YUTEL from normal functioning. After all, in the memory of many Yugoslavs who lived to witness the dissolution, YUTEL will remain the last 'uninfected' space and sparkle of hope which as late as April 1992 tried to establish some kind of truth and put on a telephone line the former colleagues and present warring parties who unleashed the Sarajevo demons of the Bosnian war.

4.4. They, the People...

The research on ethnic distance done by both foreign and Yugoslav scholars (initially during the 1960s and the 1970s) showed "the existence of a small ethnic distance, much smaller than in numerous other, more developed countries."²⁵⁴ The 1973 research by Rot and Havelka indicated an average acceptance of 5.61 (out of 7), whereas the greatest acceptance was of Slovenes and Macedonians and the least of Bulgarians and Germans.²⁵⁵ In late 1989 and early 1990 an all-Yugoslav sociological research was conducted by the Consortium of Social Research Institutes of Yugoslavia.²⁵⁶ The results showed that the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vojvodina, being the most nationally

²⁵⁴ Bora Kuzmanović, "Social distance towards individual nations (ethnic distance)" in *Society in Crisis - Yugoslavia in the Early '90s*, edited by Mladen Lazić (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1995), 242.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Randy Hodson, Dusko Sekulic and Garth Massey, "National Tolerance in the Former Yugoslavia", *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 99 (1994): 1534-1558.

diverse federal units have the highest levels of tolerance. Urban residency, nationally mixed parentage/marriages and non-religiosity were concluded to be the factors which tend to increase levels of tolerance.²⁵⁷ As per national/ethnic groups, the research showed that the most tolerant groups are Muslims in Bosnia and the Serb and Hungarian minorities in Bosnia, Vojvodina and Croatia. Another indicative social and cultural phenomenon was the “Yugoslav” identity. Between the 1971 and the 1981 federal censuses, the number of individuals who declared Yugoslav identity increased from 273.077 to 1.219.024 (from 1.3% to 5.4%).²⁵⁸ If observed in comparison to the numbers of the other nations and nationalities in the state, the number of the declared Yugoslavs is higher than that of the Montenegrins, almost the same like that of the Macedonians, and only by 2% lower than that of the Slovenes and the Albanians. This clearly shows that from being a purely political, “Yugoslav” was gradually becoming a cultural and a national identity, despite the official contradictory policies of the state and the Party not to promote Yugoslavness as national belonging and to treat the very designation of Yugoslav as “nationally undeclared”. The studies focusing on the notion of Yugoslavism, on the common identity and on the ethnic composition of Yugoslavia point out to the fact that the categories which were most likely to identify as Yugoslav were the urban residents, the young (“demographic

²⁵⁷ Randy Hodson, Dusko Sekulic and Garth Massey, “National Tolerance in the Former Yugoslavia”, *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 99 (1994): 1534-1558.

²⁵⁸ Steven L. Burg, and Michael L. Berbaum. “Community, Integration, and Stability in Multinational Yugoslavia”, *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 83 (1989): 540.

Garde, Paul. *Vie et Mort de la Yougoslavie*. Fayard, 2000.

Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995). 32.

Yugoslavism), those from nationally mixed parentage, the Communist Party members and the minorities (“defensive Yugoslavism”).²⁵⁹

The new Yugoslav identification and the supra-ethnic self-perception were indeed progressively being spread and accepted in particular among the youth: “Yugoslav identification also provided a way of breaking with an increasingly discredited past, especially among the younger persons – it was a protest against traditional nationalist politics that seemed to be at the heart of the region’s problems.”²⁶⁰ Thus, the complete portrait of the pro-democratization and anti-nationalist initiatives would not be complete without the youth.

The Yugoslav youth, as in the other socialist states, had formal organizations. In the Yugoslav case, they were also built on a somewhat federal model. In the final grade of the primary school (the age of 14) all students used to be admitted to the League of the Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia - LSYY (*Savez socijalističke omladine Jugoslavije*), which was the federal, pan-Yugoslav body and encompassed all the Associations of the separate republics. The category of “omladinac” (a young person) was considered to last until the age of 28, while for someone to enter the Party the compulsory age was not less than 18.²⁶¹ But, during the 1980s, the LSYY grew more and more distant and independent from the political realm, the number of young people seeking membership in the League of Communists started decreasing and the youth voiced some of the first

²⁵⁹ Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson. “Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia”, *American Sociological Review* Vol. 59 (1994): 83-97.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Slobodan Bjelajac and Stojan Obradović. “Omladina u Savezu komunista” in *Klasno-Socijalna Struktura Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije* / “The Youth in the League of Communists” in *Class and Social Structure of the Yugoslav League of Communists* (Belgrade: Center for Social Research, 1984).

requests for change, well before the political initiatives were taken up. For example, at the 1986 Congress of the LSYY, a 22-point program was adopted for changing/reforming of Yugoslavia²⁶², which certainly proved the youth's constructive, far-sighted approach. Undoubtedly, this large body of students and young professionals was a highly heterogeneous group which likewise had many voices and currents.

In May 1988 the LSYY organized the last celebration of the Youth Day (25th May, which was also celebrated as Tito's birthday), but in a very different manner, without the traditional Baton of youth, without any ideological symbols, Tito's portrait or young participants from the Yugoslav Army. On the contrary, the celebrations began in Novi Sad with a discussion on the current societal crisis.²⁶³ Similarly, in September 1988, following the unfolding of the Kosovo crisis, the LSYY issued an official statement blaming the "almost totally inefficient political system" for "a situation which is closer to fratricidal war than progressive solution of the problems."²⁶⁴ The statement also advocated free elections, market economy, individual and public accountability at all levels, culture of dialogue and internally integrated Yugoslavia. The youth at this point seems to have been more socially and politically aware than the political elites, as the Presidency of the LSYY further stated: "We want to discuss the fate of our homeland today because it may be too late if left for tomorrow. We do not accept solutions which offer arms and blood because we know that when the guns stop firing and blood

²⁶² "The Slovene Spring" – an Interview with Miha Kovač. *New Left Review* Vol. 177 (1988): 115-128.

²⁶³ *Open Society Archives, Budapest*: Yugoslav Subject Files I. HU OSA 300-10-2. 496 (Youth).

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

stops flowing we shall be neither freer nor richer. [...] We are for a SFRY in which understanding, progress and democracy prevail.”²⁶⁵

In the late 1980s while the political and the economic crisis was aggravating, there was still a popular sentiment, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina which was anti-nationalist and pro-Yugoslav. As Woodward notes, “Among citizens there was still much that attracted substantial loyalty to the idea of Yugoslavia, its independence and prestige abroad, the personality of Tito, and even the democratic aspects of the system of workers’ self-management...”²⁶⁶ It is important to underline that while the new political and intellectual elites pushing the Yugoslav platform clearly were distancing themselves from the communist-socialist discourse of the past and were adopting a democratic and reformist outlook, the popular sentiment was still considerably embedded in the symbols of the anti-fascist, socialist, brotherhood-and-unity dimension of Yugoslavia.

“Surely people didn’t inter-marry across ethnic and religious lines following Party directives [...] When our sports teams played, we all cheered [...] They can say it was all artificial, but if we return to the video materials of the football match Hajduk - Zvezda when they announced Tito’s death - people literally cried like children. This surely was not fake. There was something...”²⁶⁷ This way of reasoning is not uncommon in the post-Yugoslav context. As it was already mentioned, sport was indeed one of the few things which were able to arouse Yugoslav patriotism. The World football Cup in Italy 1990 was one of the last

²⁶⁵ *Open Society Archives, Budapest: Yugoslav Subject Files I. HU OSA 300-10-2. 496 (Youth).*

²⁶⁶ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy - Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 144.

²⁶⁷ Personal interview with Prof. Ljubomir Cuculovski, President of UJDI - Skopje (April, 2009).

occasions which saw the manifestation of this popular sentiment. In Macedonia, even ten-year olds, both girls and boys were collecting albums with sticker pictures of the World Cup teams and although not understanding much, they were following the matches, taken by the atmosphere of general euphoria. Vuk Janić's documentary "The Last Yugoslav Football Team" among other things conveys the atmosphere on the streets of Sarajevo after Yugoslavia won the match against Spain and entered the quarter finals. Hundreds of people cheering "Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia!" and carrying Yugoslav flags for a moment, united in their celebration, might have thought that this shared enthusiasm would be capable of defeating the likelihood of any future tragic scenarios.

After the meeting of the republics' Presidents near Sarajevo at the last "YU Summit", upon their arrival at the "Konak" Residence in the city, a large crowd of Sarajevans was there, among which members of the Social-Democratic Party.²⁶⁸ Revolted with the politicians' nationalist talk and inability to properly deal with the situation, they even broke into the Residence. While the parliamentary sessions of the Bosnian assembly during 1991 were turning into permanent arguments with growing nationalist rhetoric and military wings of the parties were being formed, the ordinary people were forced into clear-cut camps and categories. Just before the outbreak of violence in Bosnia, the editors-in-chief of the main Bosnian media launched a last, desperate appeal for peace transmitted

²⁶⁸ Personal interview with Mr. Safet Pihljak, Sarajevo citizen (April, 2009).

on the radio and television news and in the daily *Oslobodjenje*, “urging the people of Bosnia to refuse any party’s call to attack their neighbors.”²⁶⁹

The last big protest where the ordinary people voiced their anti-war stands and the support for Yugoslavia (since at that moment it still seemed to be the only anti-nationalist, supranational, reconcilable platform and option) took place on 5th April 1992 in Sarajevo. The popular ‘front’ was finally defeated at this last mass protest held in front of the Holiday Inn Hotel, opposite the Bosnian Parliament, when “Serbs, Croats, and Muslims alike carried Yugoslav flags and portraits of Tito.”²⁷⁰ Among other things, the crowd was singing “Let them hear in Serbia and the hole of Croatia that our Bosnia is a community of brotherhood.”²⁷¹ But, the crowd demanding peaceful solution to the Yugoslav crisis was shot at by Serb paramilitaries and the war in Bosnia was officially announced from the most multicultural city of Yugoslavia. “Until April 5 [1992], most of Sarajevo’s citizens - Muslims, Serbs, Croats, Yugoslavs, Jews alike - had clung to the complacent conviction that war could never happen in their city.”²⁷² As a Sarajevo citizen and a participant in these events recalls, “We occupied the Parliament, made that circus, naively thinking our opinion matters to someone [...] And then, in front of the “Holiday Inn”, they started shooting at us.”²⁷³ Even at this stage, there was a great disbelief that they would actually fire on the ordinary people gathered in the city. “Are you crazy? - I said to my friend. There is no way they will shoot. I could

²⁶⁹ Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of peace Press, 2003), 99.

²⁷⁰ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*. (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 227.

²⁷¹ Kemal Kurspahić, *Prime Time Crime: Balkan media in war and peace* (Washington DC: US Institute of peace Press, 2003), 99.

²⁷² Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*. (London: Penguin Books, 1996). 226.

²⁷³ Personal interview with Mr. Safet Pihljak, Sarajevo citizen (April, 2009).

not believe that they actually started shooting at us..."²⁷⁴ The threats of bombing Sarajevo were met by the same amount of disbelief, with the people thinking that everything is possible but that scenario. "We didn't even know what grenades were..."²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Personal interview with Mr. Safet Pihljak, Sarajevo citizen (April, 2009).

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

Conclusion

In August 1992 Paul Harris, war reporter for Bosnia wrote in a Scottish Sunday newspaper:

“Once destabilised, society could terminally break down with terrifying speed: just as in Bosnia, Scotland, in this doomwatch scenario, could be consumed with violence in just a few weeks. All this would happen not because the Scots actually hate the English but because the situation had been engineered by a relatively small group of people with access to media and weapons.”²⁷⁶

This thesis, taking into account the context, the “media and weapons” factors, strove to look closer at the years preceding the violent Yugoslav dissolution and locate those voices, individuals, initiatives and streams of thought which remained marginalized, if not forgotten. There is a sound argumentation as to why it is usually the events and political developments in Slovenia, Serbia and Croatia that are subject of analysis in the scholarly works on Yugoslavia. Yet, they seem to assume a rather deterministic approach and overlook the numerous alternative, anti-nationalist, pro-reformist and democratic voices coming from different corners of the federation and spanning over different social strata - from intellectuals, to rock musicians and ordinary workers. The thesis also tried to give an overview of the political and the non-political initiatives which tried to offer a constructive solution for the Yugoslav crisis and, by focusing on the usually neglected republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia when it comes to the

²⁷⁶ Tom Gallagher, *The Balkans After the Cold War: from tyranny to tragedy* (London: Routledge, 2003), 107.

pre-1992 period, to answer the question why it was these two federal units (or more precisely the Macedonians and the Bosniaks) which advocated and wished for the preservation of a reformed Yugoslav state. While the political elites were primarily driven by pragmatic motives, rationally calculating that numerically and economically inferior Bosniaks and Macedonians would be able to preserve their relative security and prosperity within a larger polity, the non-political actors were guided by a mixture of motives, where emotional arguments did not represent a rarity. The special attachment of the Bosniaks and the Macedonians to the Yugoslav idea and project is logical and understandable when taking into account the historical circumstances related to their nation-building projects. These two communities which for the first time in their history achieved a status of equal and recognized political partners and separate national and cultural entities, almost simultaneously developed the Yugoslav along their ethnic/national layers of identity (as it was demonstrated in the chart in the introduction). However, from September 1991, Macedonia and Bosnia took entirely separate paths, as Macedonia managed to negotiate a peaceful retreat of the Yugoslav Army from its territory and secede without major consequences or obstacles. On the political level, a prominent difference is to be found in the biographies of the leadership: while Bosnian President Izetbegović was a former political prisoner and often not hesitating to follow the religious nationalist line, the Macedonian political elite led by Gligorov used to be part of the Yugoslav political circles and institutions.

When writing on matters related to Yugoslavia, one is always tempted to engage with the question of what essentially led to the break-up of one of the most prosperous South-East European states. Although this was not the focus of this work, because of the overlap of the time-period, several insights and hypotheses were offered. Thus, this thesis absolutely disregarded the 'ancient-ethnic-hatreds' argument and refutes the unavoidability-of-the-dissolution one. Nothing in the political and the social realm is predetermined and unavoidable. The Yugoslav events of 1989-1992 and the wars which ensued were a consequence of moves, stands, strategies assumed by individual and identifiable actors, some of which, it is possible, at that time might have not been fully aware of the real consequences their actions would have. It might be also important to note the reversal which started to emerge from 1989 onwards: while the **regime** of the federation after 1945 was Yugoslav, socialist/communist, and openly anti-nationalist, accompanied by underlying nationalist **movements** which Tito's rule and policy of anti-nationalism successfully suppressed and marginalized, from the late 1980s until the break-up of Yugoslavia one can observe the opposite, i.e. the gradual institutionalization of the nationalist movements through the first republican multi-party elections in 1990 and later establishment as regimes (those of Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman as the most prominently nationalist), while the regime basis of Yugoslavism, socialism and anti-nationalism started to wither away and to gradually take the place of a movement which eventually lost the battle it wanted to fight with non-violent means.

Yet, a viable question arises: why did all the constructive, pro-European, pro-Yugoslav and reformist political initiatives, along with the popular support, eventually fail to have a real impact? Although the aim of this work was not to answer this very question, but only to offer the complementary overview and the alternatives present before the dissolution, yet it does make sense to raise it. As it was pointed throughout, many of these concrete reform projects, programs and political platforms came too late in order to be able to essentially influence or change things. By 1991, the controlled media were able to instill sentiments of fear and threat and to influence, polarize and shape the public opinion. Moreover, a significant portion of Yugoslavs were taught through and by the system which from 1974 onwards functioned as a *de facto* confederate arrangement to think in ethnic rather than in civic terms.

The unimaginable degrees of suffering the experiences of the 1990s brought on the territory of former Yugoslavia understandably brought analyses which disregard the events and actors that stayed outside of the nationalist arena. By not wanting to underestimate the importance of these developments, the presence of the nationalist drive or the centrality of the Serb-Croat axis, this thesis wanted to add the indispensable “but”; to fill in the missing gaps and to reinforce the argument that there were viable alternatives which might have proven successful had they come earlier or had they possessed the sufficient support both from the inside and the outside. Rarely one could find a family in the post-Yugoslav context which was not in some way affected by the dissolution. This work wanted to also implicitly recall the thousands of Yugoslavs who lost

their homes, families, their lives, their past and future and did never envisage, vote for or desire such an outcome. Eventually, those who were for the most part politically and otherwise indifferent, the large mass of ordinary people who had family and friends on all sides and could not care less about constitutional provisions or models of confederate arrangements - it was they who had to pay for the sacred slogans of self-determination and independence with their own lives. It is of an immense importance, in particular for the future generations of the post-Yugoslav region, that they have available to them all the pieces of the mosaic and that they take into consideration that sometimes the truth hides in the grey areas. In this sense, the words of Bosnian Croat writer Milenko Jergović seem to touch upon the heart of the matter: "In all of the countries of former Yugoslavia there are stereotypes which want to represent that country as something abnormal or unnatural which caused us pain and suffering. I don't think that Yugoslavia was some perfect country, but I do not accept this type of falsification of experiences; I think that Yugoslavia is one great story which needs to be told, and not forgotten."²⁷⁷ This thesis hopes to be one part of that "great story".

²⁷⁷ Jovana Gligorijevic, "Beograd je balkanski Njujork - intervju Milenko Jergovic, pisac" / "Belgrade is the Balkan New York - interview with Milenko Jergovic, writer", *Vreme* 959 (May 2009) <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=865297> (accessed 24 May, 2009).

ANNEX

ТРГОВАЧКА ШКОЛА
СКОПСКЕ ТРГОВАЧКЕ ОМЛАДИНЕ

СВЕДОЧАНСТВО
О ЗАВРШНОМ ИСПИТУ

Павловски Трифун
рођен 15 фебруара 1941 год. у Скопљу

СВРШИО ЈЕ
Трговачку школу
Скопске Трговачке Омладине
у Скопљу

и положио други пут завршни испит пред испитним одбором у
времену од 25 маја до 3 јуна 1940 год.

Владање: Тримерно
Успех: добар

Број 81
Скопље, 12-VII-1940

Mr. Trifun Pavlovski's high school graduation diploma dated 12th July 1940, written in Serbian and with the Serbian version of his personal name

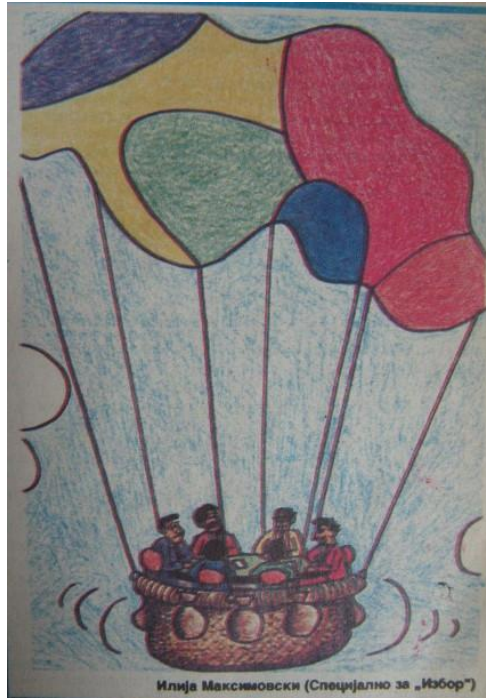


The six republics' 'chefs'



Negotiations from the trenches

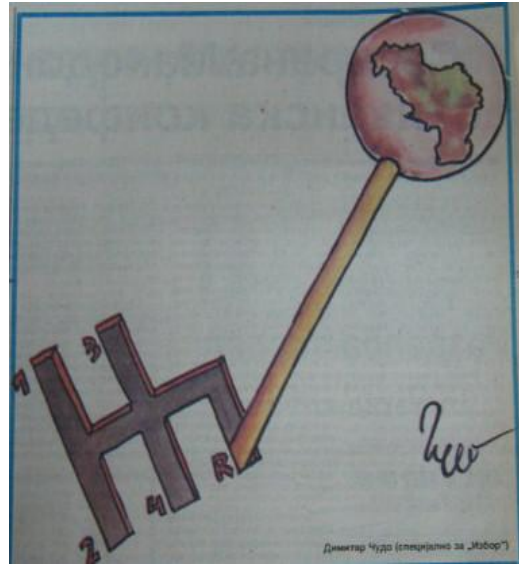
²⁷⁸ All caricature drawings were published in the daily newspaper *Nova Makedonija* in March, April and June 1991.



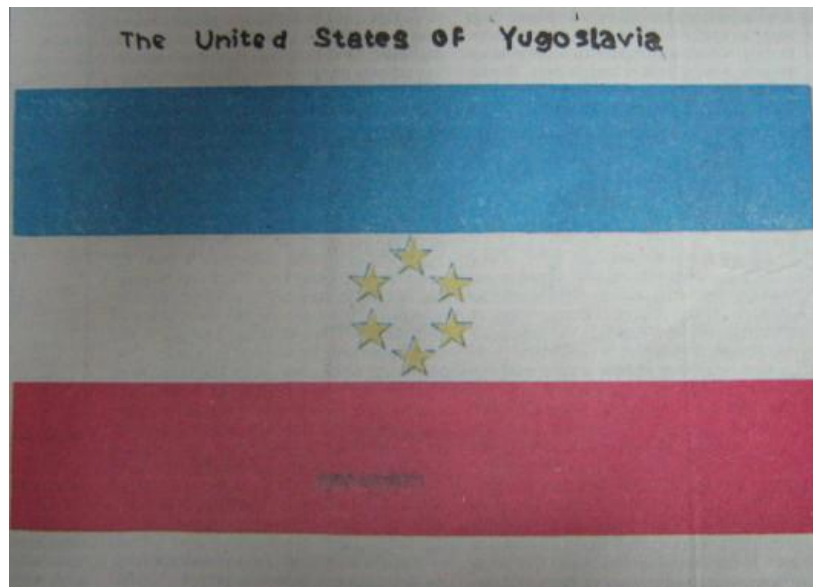
The YU Summits



"How are you, auntie Donka?" "Bad, son... At home no one talks to anyone... My son is still communist, my grand-son is for VMRO, my daughter-in-law for the reform forces..." "And you?" "I am for the pension!"



“The exit from the crisis is visible!”



ANNEX 2



Voting cards from the last congress of the LCY (personal archive)



Unused ballots for secret voting from the last congress of the LCY (personal archive)

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