

A Decade of Nation-Building in Socialist Republic of Montenegro, 1964-1974

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Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS	IV
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
1.1 THEORIES ON NATIONS, NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING	6
1.2 COMMUNIST THEORY OF NATION AND ITS OPERATIONALISATION.....	12
1.3 YUGOSLAV COMMUNISTS, FEDERALISM AND THE “YUGOSLAV WAY”	19
1.4 A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY.....	22
CHAPTER 2: MONTENEGRO AND MONTENEGRINS IN SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA, 1945-1974	25
2.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF MONTENEGRIN NATIONAL REPUBLIC.....	25
2.2. HARD ROAD TO MODERNIZATION: MONTENEGRO UP TO 1964	32
2.3. POLITICAL CHANGES IN YUGOSLAVIA, 1964-1974	37
CHAPTER 3: NATION- AND CULTURE-BUILDING IN MONTENEGRO, 1963-1974.....	43
3.1. SYMBOLIC SHIFT: NJEGOŠ AND THE MAUSOLEUM	46
3.2 HISTORIOGRAPHY AND NATION-BUILDING	63
3.3 LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEBATE	78
CONCLUSION.....	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY	100

Abbreviations

AJ	<i>Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Beograd</i>
DAC	<i>Državni arhiv Crne Gore, Cetinje</i>
EC	<i>Executive Council</i>
CC	<i>Central Committee</i>
CPM	<i>Communist Party of Montenegro</i>
CPY	<i>Communist Party of Yugoslavia</i>
LCM	<i>League of Communists of Montenegro</i>
LCY	<i>League of Communists of Yugoslavia</i>
MANU	<i>Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Art</i>
SOC	<i>Serb Orthodox Church</i>
SR	<i>Socialist Republic</i>

Introduction

In the large body of academic literature dealing with socialist Yugoslavia we read about the quarrels between Serbia and Croatia, about Slovenian economic jeremiads, about nation-building in Macedonia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, about ethnic problems in the province of Kosovo and even about their lack in Vojvodina. But Montenegro, the smallest of the six republics, has for the most part been overlooked. Most authors pay little to no attention to it. Those who do, give just general remarks, listing almost no events in half a century of its history in socialist Yugoslavia. Even the books dealing specifically with Montenegro have little to say about this period. Led by the popular myth that socialism prevented any national feelings, one might presume that apart for it's hurried, yet still under-average economic development, Montenegro stayed frozen in the state of "brotherhood and unity". Yet it is highly naïve and erroneous to assume that the period between 1945 and 1991 has been a hiatus of any national development and that concealed national sentiments have been awoken only in 1991. Quite the contrary: though with a certain delay, the national developments in Montenegro followed closely those in other republics, especially those of the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, with which it shared many common characteristics. The problem of Montenegrin nation has been profoundly changed and raised on another level in 45 year of life in socialist and federate system of Yugoslavia.

Montenegro revived its statehood in 1943-45 as one of the six republics of communist-ruled Yugoslavia. Each was to be a national homeland of one south-Slav nation, a formula that should have solved the national question that has burdened inter-war Yugoslav kingdom and that has plunged its nations in bloody civil war of 1941-45. Nonetheless, what started as a purely

formal federalism under the strict tutelage of the Party underwent a thorough administrative decentralization in 1950s and 1960s that allowed republics to appear as the key players in policy making. With the “republicanization” of the system came also the growth of national feelings that culminated in the 1968-1971 nationalist outburst in Croatia. These general tendencies, above all the growing focus on national/republican interests did not bypass Montenegro.

In this thesis I intend to research on the ten most tempestuous years of history of socialist Montenegro, between the start of the economic reform of 1964, to the proclamation of the 1974 constitution, and the marks they left on the Montenegrin national question. Shunned away in 1945, the questions of who Montenegrins are and what makes them specific emerged again. The group of intellectuals and politicians that wanted to alleviate Montenegrins to the status equal to any other nation in Yugoslavia was opposed by those who wanted to keep their traditionally close ties with Serbs and a sort of sub-national or dual identity. In order to learn more about these tendencies I will observe three specific “case studies”, three problems that saw most discussion on nationhood arise. The first one is the attempt to promote a separate Montenegrin language. The second will deal with the historiographical debates on some crucial moments from Montenegrin history as well as on national identity of Montenegrins in the past. The third case study will examine the debate on the remodeling of the most important place of memory and symbol in Montenegro –Mt Lovćen, and the building of the Njegoš mausoleum on its top. Through these case studies I shall try to identify the key players and the connections between them, to systematize and analyze the argumentation of all sides and see if and in which direction did it shift. I will try to assess was how much was the reviving of national feelings the work of the republican political elite, how much of the local intelligentsia and how much the push came from outside of the republic, from the general political occurrences in Yugoslavia. All of this

will be impossible without giving a framework both theoretical and the one of socialist Yugoslavia. I remain aware that many of the stated questions will only be tackled and left open for the following researchers.

In my thesis I will try to show that the crucial period for the establishment of the Montenegrin national and ethnic sentiment as it exists today is not to be found in distant past or in the one from the period of Montenegro's independent existence but in the epoch of socialism, and that a base for further actions was set in late 1960s and early 1970s. I hold that the turbulent events of the last two decades charged with nationalist sentiment are the fruit of the seeds sown and grown in the socialist period and that they cannot be explained without an insight into the development of the national question in the socialist era. Thus I will argue that this period was crucial in forming the present-day situation, for the establishment of Montenegrin nation and the notion of ethnic Montenegrinhood.

As I have already mentioned, not only that the period I look into here lacks a proper scholarly monography, but even the secondary literature is scarce and only touches upon the subject. Therefore the body of my thesis is built on analyzing the sources, newspapers from Montenegro, from the two largest centers, Belgrade and Zagreb, as well as archival sources from Montenegrin State Archives and the former Archive of Yugoslavia (presently known under the name of the Archives of Serbia & Montenegro). Walking in uncharted territory it was sometimes hard to reach to the bottom of things and even harder to limit myself to referring only to Montenegro while leaving out the background of the story, which at some moments speaks more vividly than what we find in sources. In order to understand a very specific context and to see how the socialist Yugoslavia functioned I have gone at some length in explaining the theoretical setting of the whole era (chapters I.2 and I.3). While focusing on Montenegro in late 1960s and

early 1970s it was impossible to leave out the evolution of the Montenegrin republic in post-war era (chapters II.1 and II.2). It was also necessary to refer to political events in Yugoslavia between 1964 and 1974 (chapter II.3), events that directly influenced the developments in Montenegro. The idea that led me on the whole was that in a case like this it was wiser to write more than less.

One minor note in the end. In order to distinguish between inhabitants of Serbia and those Serbs living in other republics I used two different terms. Thus “Serbs” will denote members of this nation without regard if live in Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia or Montenegro, while “Serbians” would be used solely for the inhabitants of Serbia. The same distinction was used by Montenegrins, who, in 19th and early 20th c. (with some exceptions reaching even to the period studied here), considered themselves Serbs but distinguished between themselves and Serbians.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Background

Approaching the question of Montenegrin national identity in socialist Yugoslavia must be done on two levels, both of which are equally important for the proper understanding of the process.

On the first, broader, level I will examine in brief a broad array of theories which have reshaped our knowledge and concepts of nations and nationalism. This level will give us a general vision of the process, where several more or less divergent theories allow us to see it in an objective manner. The general idea about these will allow us to observe the developments in Montenegro from different angles and thus see also some of the dilemmas on how to approach the question of Montenegrin nationhood with special emphasis on the period between 1945 and 1989.

The other level will be the contextual one: in order to fully grasp the debates waged in the period discussed in this thesis we need to examine the strict theoretical worldview of communists and the way they perceived concepts such as “nation” and “nationalism”. Apart from the necessity to set their argumentation in the context of Marxism-Leninism and Marxist dialectics and thus back their arguments in 1960s and 1970s in Yugoslavia it was also necessary to show the knowledge of the local adaptation of these theories. It will also be necessary to assess to what extent the theoretical notions were applied in practical policies and how the multinational/federal states of the communist block were dealing with their “national questions”. Because of the specific case of Yugoslavia where six national republics were developing parallels with the flowering of national communism in East European counties will also be considered.

1.1 Theories on Nations, Nationalism and Nation-Building

In last couple of decades the understanding of nations, nationalism and national identities has undergone a huge transformation and the scholarship on these subjects has become enormous. My intention here is to give only an overview of the most important theoretical approaches, with a special emphasis on those that will give insight on the case of Montenegro and its situation in the latter part of the 20th c, helping us understand and classify some of its experiences in a general context. I must add here that the example of Montenegro is the one in which too many theories and opinions appeared while very little empirical research has been done.

Though far from being a current theory, the primordialist stand is still very present the agenda of many nations and nationalists. According to these theories nations are a usual state of organizing and self-identification of men because of the differences in race, language, customs, religion etc. They have been present, in one form or another, since time immemorial and despite many changes their core has remained essentially the same. As very convenient, this theory has been vocally promoted in the age of strengthening of nation-states in 19th and 20th c and has been adopted by each advancing nationalism. Its appeal lies in its simplicity but it lacks a historical perspective. Though it has been extensively applied by nationalists and some of the “nativist” scientists in Montenegro who tried to link Montenegrins with Illyrians, Dukljans and Zetans,¹

¹ Dukljans (*Dukljani*) were the inhabitants of Duklja, one of the states formed on the territory of modern day Montenegro in early Middle Ages and named after the late antique town of Dioclea. The name was replaced by Zeta (thus Zetans i. e. *Zečani*) by 12th century. In high Middle Ages Lower Zeta was the name of the plains around Lake Skadarsko while Upper Zeta is the mountainous region between the plains and the Adriatic Sea, the core of Montenegro. The name Zeta comes from the river flowing through it. Walker Connor’s question “When is a nation?” is essential in Montenegrin case. While some scholars see the 19th c. “Serb renaissance” of Montenegro as a natural continuation of its previous history, the others see it as a deviation. Both sides put large emphasis on previous eras, the first on Nemanjićs, the other on Duklja. The views here depend on the epoch which is taken as “original”, essential for nation building. In my opinion, the further we go to the past, less importance should be given to the processes and events that shaped Montenegrin identity.

this theory is hardly applicable on a nation that takes its name from a geographical term first mentioned in 13th century.²

Though this was not the only approach to nations (we shall see later what the Marxists had to say on it) the idea that the nations can be traced long way back into history survived as the conventional viewpoint on the subject until 1977 and the appearance of Eugen Weber's groundbreaking book on the formation of the French nation in the 19th c.³ In his book Weber showed that most of the provincial dwellers did not consider themselves members of the French nation until as late as 1870s and that this transformation was gradual through state institutions such as schools or army. Since the author showed this process in the case of France, which was considered a paradigm of a nation-state, the scholars embarked on exploiting this subject and soon the so-called modernist school emerged. This school does see a nation neither as an everlasting phenomenon nor as a necessity.⁴ In contrast with the primordialist views, it points out the role of the state in forging a nation.⁵ Accordingly, nations are modern in origin and constructed to the political needs of the state. In the form known to us today a nation is a product of centralized state and its bureaucracy as well as of large-scale modernization, especially industrialization and the revolution in communication. The role of the state in forming the nation and its identity, as well as of modernization is hard to overemphasize in the case of Montenegro.⁶ Though understudied, these two processes are seen as essential in forming modern Montenegrin identity by scholars.

² Name "Montenegro" (*Crna Gora*) was first mentioned in a charter from 1282.

³ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977)

⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

⁶ More on these two important issues will be discussed in Chapter II.2 of this thesis.

A more radical, post-modern approach was taken by a group of scientists who by placing more emphasis on observing the cultural aspects of the nation concluded that nation is a cultural construct used for certain purposes by its “constructors”. Nations are “imagined societies” bond by the willing perception of a group not by any common interest or economical reality.⁷ Such an approach is valuable in perceiving the Montenegrin case and the construction of a Serb identity in 19th c, and of constricted Montenegrin identity in communist times have been adequately stressed.

Further along this line is a constructivist approach that sees nations not as real collectives but as “institutionalized forms, practical categories and contingent events – in other words, as social accomplishments”.⁸ As such, nations exist only through and with nationalisms.⁹ Brubaker points out that nationalisms without nations are a reality since the origins of the nations should be sought in practices of states.¹⁰ Even if they seem real to its members, it is an assignment of scholar to inquire how they obtained such real quality.

Much more precautions and balanced stand is offered by the ethno-symbolist approach. The construction of a nation could not commence just anywhere and by anyone – there are certain preconditions needed in order to “construct” a nation, shared symbols and cultural ties that derive from ethnic groups in pre-modern period.¹¹ In stressing different aspects of a nation,

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (revised edition) (London and New York: Verso, 1991)

⁸ Rogers Brubaker quoted from: Graham Day and Andrew Thompson, *Theorizing Nationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004): p. 85

⁹ Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997): p. 99

¹⁰ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National State in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

¹¹ Anthony D. Smith. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1988), Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe”, *New Left Review* 1 (98), 1993, pp. 3-20, available at: <<http://www.newleftreview.org/?view=1702>> (accessed: May 25, 2010). Smith also provides us with one of the most valuable definitions of nation: “Nation is a human group sharing (usually by birth) a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, often a common language, a mass public culture, a common perception of threat and common legal rights and duties for all members”, in *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991): p. 14

such as its political, ethnic or religious identity, we can see that nationalism can be a product of any dominant ideology, not only one based on primordialist common features. In a more drastic view of things the nations were already present but their self-consciousness and idea – the most important aspects of modern nations – were awoken only in 19th c.¹² In Montenegrin case this theoretical approach is of certain value since it allows us to see how some regional traits have been used in distinguishing Montenegrins from their neighbors. Though some features have been unscientifically overemphasized for the purposes of creating a nation, many have existed for a long time and presented a specific characteristic that cannot be overseen, above all a common history, yet to a large extent separate from Serbian history, and tribal organization. Yet, this theory cannot explain why the national awakening in Montenegro took on a Serb garb.

One further step in criticizing the modernist and post-modernist view of invention of nations was taken conservative medievalists who strongly opposed the view of modern origins of nations by providing evidence on the existence of national consciousness and nationalism from Middle Ages.¹³ These nations were formed on the base of religion, state structures and different languages and though not all-embracing like modern nations they do not fit into previous theories. Applying this view on Montenegro is questionable although many nativists stress the statehood of Duklja, as a proto Montenegrin state, to the statehood of Raška, a Serbian state as well as the large presence of Roman-Catholics in the literal of Montenegro.

Since in this thesis I intend to deal with the shaping of national identity of Montenegrins in later part of the 20th c the most valuable theoretical approach would be the one of modernists and post-modernists which allow us to see the impact of political elites, state promotion, building of institutions and overall modernization. I argue that the case of Montenegro resembles more

¹² Walker Connor. *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

¹³ Adrian Hastings. *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

the examples of nation-building in the West than in the East Europe, namely that the nation was created by the state not the other way round.¹⁴ Therefore, adopting some of the ideas of modernist school we should bear mind that Montenegro in 1945 did not consist (or did not consist only) of tribal groups untouched by state and its institutions but presented a society that has already undergone several phases in building of its national identity. In the earlier phase of the socialist era Montenegrins would represent a kernel of what in Walker Connor's classification of nations¹⁵ is dubbed an "offshoot nation". Namely, they were separated from the parent group for sufficient time to develop separate consciousness although (and this is different than in the suggested classification) they did not still believe that the characteristics they have in common with the parent group are less significant than those that they have unique. This notion developed in the period studied. Most authors agree that from the start of the 19th c. at least up to 1918 (and generally to 1945) Montenegrins considered themselves Serbs. Thus, state- and nation-building in Montenegro bore both a Montenegrin and a Serb character, forming a dual or a sub-national identity of its Orthodox Slav inhabitants.¹⁶ The process of shaping a proper nation was taken up in the communist era when the goals of national movement (as Miroslav Hroch calls it) started being realized.¹⁷ As I have already mentioned above this process does not start from a scratch. In view of Hroch's classification of stages in nation building,¹⁸ it started (with few exceptions) after 1945 at the beginning of Phase A in which there are only a few dedicated

¹⁴ Hroch 1993. The problem here lies in the fact that Montenegrin national development in 19th c. had a hugely integrative character and did not perceive itself as different as that of Serbs in other areas. If we see Montenegrins as a part of Serbs than we will see that there is a nation building a state. But if we adopt a stand that certain cultural, social and historical particularities typical for the Old Montenegro, the core of the state, were disseminated to the acquired areas, then we have the Western model in front of us.

¹⁵ Connor 1994: pp. 77-79

¹⁶ Though very specific, the case of Montenegro is not unparalleled. Similar developments can be traced in Moldova that after 1918 noticed that it is not up to all standards of "Romanianess" or in early 20th c. Macedonia where being Macedonian was not excluding being Bulgarian as well.

¹⁷ These goals are national culture, self-administration and a complete social structure (Hroch 1993)

¹⁸ Hroch 1993

literati who are “devoted to scholarly enquiry into and dissemination of an awareness of the linguistic, cultural, social and sometimes historical attributes of the non-dominant group” but in the 1960s developed into Phase B in which “a new range of activists emerged, who now sought to win over as many of their ethnic group as possible to the project of creating a future nation, by patriotic agitation to ‘awaken’ national consciousness among them”.¹⁹ In line with this we can conclude that the communist attempt to build a full-fledged republican/national identity was in the first years after the War meager, and that even later, in its most active phase studied in this thesis, did not match the intensity of some other cases from the region since it did not move the next phase of massive support. The overall problem of applying Hroch’s pattern to Montenegro is that in it nationalism underwent through Phase A already in 19th c. but that the scholars, though speaking about Montenegrins, reached the conclusion that they are Serbs. Same kind of nationalism underwent also through the Phases B and C. But while building a general Serb identity, Montenegro has been building also a state-based one. As a result, it was exactly the Montenegrin proud feeling of being the “best of the Serbs” (even racially superior!)²⁰ that made them different from the rest, what many of them painfully realized once absorbed in the unified state.

Setting aside some specific traits discussed in Chapter 3 that influenced this we must now take a closer look on how the communist theoreticians perceived nations and how their power-holders tried to solve the national problems.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ František Šistek, “The restoration of Montenegro in the plans of the Montenegrin political representation in exile (1916-1922)” (MA thesis, CEU 2001), pp. 66-67

1.2 Communist Theory of Nation and Its Operationalisation

The communist theory never built a clear argument regarding nations and national questions.²¹ This comes above all from the unclear views given on the subject by Marx and Engels²² and later from very loose use of these by Lenin for the practical purposes of the movement at that moment. Their writings were considered by the coming generations of communists as “sacred texts”, unmistakable truths while in fact the founding fathers have only been making presumptions which have often proven wrong.²³ The contradictions of the ideological founders could never be formulated into a consistent theory. The inconsistencies in their writings left their adherents a chance, which they gladly used, to act according to the circumstances and (above all) their needs at particular moment, while explaining their actions as being ideologically sound by using assorted fractions of Marx’s or Lenin’s thoughts.²⁴ Or, put differently, with time Marxism learned how to use nationalism to its own purposes.²⁵ Declaring Marxist ideological accuracy was the obligatory part of any text or speech, but it was apparent that dialectics can be bent so much as to prove anything. The much feared “deviations” were actually constantly present and soon communist theory on nations was turned into a pretense.

Nations and nationalisms were not much debated by Marx and Engels, especially not in the earlier phases of their writing. In Marx’s economic approach to history, nation is a historically developed phenomenon that appears only with the demise of feudalism and the

²¹ Day and Thompson 2004, pp. 19-21. In his preoccupation with economic forces Marx was convinced that the resolution of practical economic problems will settle all other social dilemmas.

²² A. James Gregor, *Marxism, Fascism, and Totalitarianism: Chapters in the Intellectual History of Radicalism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009): p.164

²³ Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (London : Verso, 1981²), p. 329, Barbara Jelavich, *History of Balkans: Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): pp. 337-338

²⁴ Gregor 2009, p. 162

²⁵ Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984): p. 6.

advent of capitalism, a transient consequence of temporal economic development.²⁶ The bourgeoisie employed nationalism to the use of its own causes masking the fact that working classes of all nations have much more common among themselves than with their better-off compatriots.²⁷ Since communists must deal first of all with their own bourgeoisie and take over the power in their states, nations as forms could not be fully disregarded.²⁸

What is going to happen with nations after the victory of the proletariat is not quite clear from Marx's writings. Unlike nationalism which, as a relict of the bourgeoisie era, is bound to disappear, nations will survive for some time, but the differences between them are going to wither away together with the artificially induced antagonisms, since classes represent general social interests.²⁹ Nations are going to become only practical, economic units while the fraternity of the workers and their international spirit of solidarity are going to prevail.³⁰

Though nationalism was used by bourgeoisie to mask its own interests as the interest of the whole nation, it is not necessarily a negative phenomenon. If a nation is in a semi-feudal stage than nationalism plays a progressive role; if it has already entered the capitalist stage of development than nationalism is reactionary. Put to practical terms this means that communists can support nationalism if it serves them the purpose of taking the power. That is why in his later writings Marx came up with the slogan of the self-determination of nations. However, as Engels clarifies, this right is to be enjoyed only by "great nations" who can function on their own, not by all the small "nationalities" (or "ruins of peoples" how he dubs some of them) and uncivilized

²⁶ Gregor 2009, p. 165, Suny 1993, p. 4

²⁷ On the other hand, Marx regarded that capitalism and bourgeoisie were already destroying national system since they disseminated commercial and industrial influences without regards to countries, bringing closer the interests of the workers as well (Day and Thompson 2004, pp. 21-22). Here we see how Marx saw calculated interests standing above national feelings.

²⁸ Martin Mevius, "Reappraising Communism and Nationalism", *Nationalities Papers* 37 (2009), p. 382, Connor 1984, p. 7. Peter Zwick, *National Communism*, Boulder, Coll.: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 28-29

²⁹ Day and Thompson 2004, pp. 21-22

³⁰ Connor 1984, p. 8, Kemp 1999, pp. 4, 22ff

peoples.³¹ This unclear delineation leaves once again broad space for communists to give higher reasoning to practical support to some nation when needed and deny it for other nations/nationalisms when it is contrary to the benefit of the whole of the communist movement.³²

Both Marx and Engels underestimated the power of national feelings and boundaries that divided the classes. They did not perceive that nationalisms could sometimes represent genuine cultural, economical or political interests of nations.³³ In their materialist worldview they could not imagine nationalism as an equal rival.³⁴ Their, as well as their progenies'³⁵ tactical flexibility, inability to come up with a remedy for playing one nation against the other and for developing concerted class action proved decisive for the failure of socialist states.³⁶

Much more attention to the question of nations was given by Austro-Marxists,³⁷ above all by Otto Bauer. Compared with Marx, Bauer introduces a new, non-economic dimension and defines nations primarily in terms of shared culture and as “communities of faith”. Enabling national cultures to flourish is neither incompatible with economic development, nor it is with socialism: relieved of their class connotations nations will not engage in conflicts.³⁸ Bauer also marked a clear difference between the affairs of state and those of nations which should be kept at a distance, with nationalities providing focus for education and culture. Everyone could decide

³¹ Zwick 1983, pp. 29-30

³² Connor 1984, pp. 11-12

³³ Pipes 1954, p. 259

³⁴ Anthony D. Smith. *Nationalism in 20th Century* (London: Martin Robertson, 1979), p. 116 describes nationalism and Marxism as two rival “salvation movements of modernization”.

³⁵ Pipes (1954, p. 259) points out that Bolsheviks were least qualified to solve the national question in Russia amongst other things because they underestimated the power of nationalism.

³⁶ Day and Thompson 2004, p. 23, Zwick 1983, p. 30

³⁷ More on them in Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode (eds.), *Austro-Marxism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) or in Ephraim Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism: Theoretical Origins of a Political Crisis* (London: Pluto Press, 1991).

³⁸ Gregor 2009, p. 179

his national affiliation making a nation a group of individuals out of the realm of economics and politics.³⁹

Though he personally remained internationalist all his life, Lenin adhered to the positions of strategic Marxism⁴⁰ (the strain that could give priority to class or nation depending on the situation) and his positions changed significantly as a result of WWI experiences and the practical problems of the revolution in Russia.⁴¹ For Lenin nationalism was mere reflection of current circumstances, that is, of capitalist needs; as for proletariat, national sentiment could never express its true interests.⁴² For the practical purposes of revolution, however, he publicized the slogan of self-determination of the peoples, adding, in order to show that this is not just a tactical move, that the communists also support the right of political secession. Lenin, nonetheless, explained that this right should be regarded as an anesthetic: when pains and fears of national subjugation are calmed down the economic interests of the working class are going to become evident.⁴³ The reasons to secede would disappear since all the nations will be granted the right to use their language and get education in their mother tongue. The idea behind this was to grant the language but to control its content which should remain internationalist and Marxist (“national in form, socialist in content”). The nations are slowly going to merge and assimilate.⁴⁴ The process of assimilation needn’t be regarded as negative since nations are not going to merge into some other nation but into a totally new, higher level of identity, one of “socialist men”. In

³⁹ Day and Thompson 2004, pp. 35-36, Kemp 1999, p. 33

⁴⁰ One of three strains, as identified by Walker Connor, which could give priority or class depending on the situation, the other two being classical and national Marxism (Connor 1984, p. 19). Lenin believed that many nations cling to nationalism because of their economic backwardness (Gregor 2009, p. 169).

⁴¹ Gregor 2009, p. 161

⁴² Gregor 2009, pp. 170-172, Suny 1993, p. 87

⁴³ Day and Thompson 2004, p. 33

⁴⁴ Connor 1984, pp. 31-38

the same way the state is going to disappear by way of proletarian dictatorship, the nations are going to merge together in the process of the “blossoming of nations”.⁴⁵

It was a general Marxist notion that the socialist state needs to be centralized.⁴⁶ While federalism as well as the personal autonomy (suggested by Austro-Marxists) were resented both by Lenin and Stalin, the idea of territorial autonomy was not, but there was no detailed explication of the difference between the two. Stalin’s definition of nation in his influential work “Marxism and the National Question” (1913) as a “historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture”⁴⁷ was broadly put and led to conclusion that territorial autonomy is a needed prerequisite of a (free) nation. Anyway, all of these arrangements were considered temporary since the nations are soon going to wither away.

The right of self-determination and secession was supported well through the civil war but as the territories inhabited with minorities were captured by the communists came also the first hedging: the nation has the right to secede but only if the masses demand it, not the bourgeoisie.⁴⁸ Naturally, who represents the masses was to be judged by the Bolsheviks; soon the right of secession – if consumed – became counter-revolutionary praxis. Nevertheless, the slogan of self-determination was kept as a powerful weapon for propaganda use outside of the Soviet Union.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Connor 1984, pp. 201-202. This is a classic example of the (mis)use of “Marxist dialectics”. Communists were fond of calling contradictions dialectic hoping that they will resolve themselves in the end (Kemp 1999, p. 85).

⁴⁶ Richard Pipes, *Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 242, Suny 1993, p. 86

⁴⁷ Quoted from: Day and Thompson 2004, p. 34

⁴⁸ Pipes 1954, p. 259. The author points out that the platform of self-determination has been very useful as a means of fighting for power but has become unpleasant once the power was attained. On this and Lenin’s disagreement with this point see Suny 1993, p. 89

⁴⁹ Connor 1984, p. 46ff

As the Bolsheviks came to turns with power they alleviated their original resentment to federalism as they had to deal with the fact of nationalism. While on one side the “Fundamental Law” (i.e. Soviet Constitution) of 1923 invested almost no functions in republics and autonomous regions⁵⁰ in line with Stalin’s statements that centralization is going to achieve freer national development of peoples,⁵¹ on the other the indigenization (*korenizatsiia*) of nations assigned favored treatment to the previously oppressed nations.⁵² Although pseudo-federal, Soviet Union was the first state built of ethnic political units. It denied the nationalities their sovereignty but allowed cultural and educational institutions in local languages as well as promotion of native cadre.⁵³ In practical terms, the outlining of separate national homelands was much more continuity with practices of nationhood than a break them.⁵⁴ The relatively broad autonomy of the nations could be granted since behind the whole state stood the unifying factor of the Party.⁵⁵

By creating federal units and stimulating national languages and culture in them⁵⁶ (even though their content was socialist) the communists created appropriate vessels of retaining active national cultures. As R. G. Suny puts it “rather than a melting pot, the Soviet Union became the

⁵⁰ The position of RSFSR remained unclear since it did not have a separate republican government and competencies of some of its bodies coincided with those of the Federation. Pipes 1954, p. 237

⁵¹ Kemp 1999, p. 71

⁵² This was the line advised also by Lenin (Suny 1993, p. 93). On indigenization of the nations see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 396-397 or Suny 1993, pp. 102-106

⁵³ Suny 1993, p. 101

⁵⁴ Kemp 1999, pp. 61-62

⁵⁵ The extent of central power over the republics is a matter of debate. While some claim that the federalization was just a smokescreen for the control of Moscow, others pointed out that at least in 1920s Party was far from centralized. Grey Hodnett, ed., *The Khrushchev years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974)

⁵⁶ The local authorities were in charge of the Commissariats (i. e. Ministries) of education, culture and indigenization.

incubator of new nations".⁵⁷ Despite Stalin's Russification policies, the republics have by 1960s become much more national in character.⁵⁸

The republics, not the centre, became the focus of attention and local leaders had to pay more attention to the interests of their constituents instead to the promotion of proletarian internationalism. National culture was proclaimed to be the only possible proletarian culture,⁵⁹ while national politics were persecuted; obviously, Stalin was wrong when he claimed that there is no link between the two.⁶⁰ As the nations became capable of sustaining themselves the unequal relations between the centre and the republic became unbearable.⁶¹ While the unifying Party dogmatism prevailed the centrifugal powers of nationalism were leashed; as soon as the control of the Party loosened its grip the socialist content would start disappearing in favor of the national form. Stimulating national in all aspects but the politics created a confusion that led the Party to perform regular purges of the local CP leaders from time of Khrushchev on, but the national sentiment itself was not hit; on the contrary in many aspects it was on the constant rise.⁶²

A similar ambivalent policy toward nations and federalism was taken in the only other European communist multinational state, Czechoslovakia.⁶³ After the end of the war Slovak nationalism and autonomy were initially supported but this changed when the CP scored badly there in the 1946 elections. Suddenly the Party started promoting more centralized government and by 1950 the Slovak Council was stripped of most of its powers.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the country adopted an unusual asymmetrical system in which only the Slovak part had its bodies; whether

⁵⁷ Suny 1993, p. 87

⁵⁸ Suny 1993, p. 109. The policy of denationalization in order to prevent any splitting like the one of Tito was badly received in the East European counties (Zwick 1983, pp. 88-89, Mevius 388)

⁵⁹ Mevius 383

⁶⁰ Kemp 1999: pp. 73, 81-82, Suny 1993, pp. 111-113

⁶¹ Suny 1993: p. 113

⁶² Kemp 1999, p. 152, Mevius 384, Suny 1993, pp. 120-124, Zwick 1983, p. 88ff

⁶³ The other European Communist regimes set on course of national socialism that enabled them to use both ideologies (Zwick 1983).

⁶⁴ Kemp 1999, p. 102

this was a privilege or a policy of retaining Slovaks as unequal partners was viewed different by these two nations.⁶⁵ The turn to the idea of federalization came with the “Prague Spring”, but while Slovaks viewed it the most pressing problem the Czechs saw democratization as the necessary prerequisite to it. After the intervention the Soviets found it favorable to play on Slovak disadvantage and in 1969 federalization was employed. Still it was a federation without decentralization of economy whose constitutional amendments were overridden by the powers of the unfederated Communist Party.⁶⁶

1.3 Yugoslav Communists, Federalism and the “Yugoslav Way”

In the first years of its existence the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (formed in June 1919) found itself in disagreement with the Comintern on the national question in Yugoslavia.⁶⁷ While CPY supported unification as a progressive step towards a larger unit of production and distribution in which the conditions for progress are going to grow,⁶⁸ the Communist International viewed Yugoslavia from the point of national Marxism as a “creation of the Versailles” that needs to be dismembered along national lines only to be unified again under the leadership of the proletariat. While CPY saw Yugoslavia as a move forwards in national liberation, Comintern saw it as the country ruled by one nation over the others. By drawing parallels with the Russian Empire, the Comintern propagated the idea of Serbs being the Yugoslav *Staatsvolk*, their bourgeoisie the main enemy and any kind of movements towards

⁶⁵ Karol Skalnik Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation versus State* (Boulder: Westward Press, 1997), pp. 64-65

⁶⁶ Skalnik Leff 1997, p. 66, Connor 1984, pp. 132-145

⁶⁷ The name Yugoslavia was officially proclaimed only in 1929 while previously the country was known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. For practical purposes I shall use term “Yugoslavia” when talking about both pre- and post-1929 state. CPY made an important statement adopting the name “Yugoslav” and not “of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes” or splitting into national lines.

⁶⁸ Further, the local nationalist sentiments worked against that progress. On this Marxist stand see Gregor 2009, p. 168

moving closer as unitarist and anti-national.⁶⁹ In the battle against them it was cooperating with all of its enemies, even the extreme nationalists, all of who were perceived as lesser evils.⁷⁰

When in 1926 this wing took the upper hand, the Party, now purged and filled with new rank and file trained in Moscow, assumed the stand that Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro and a united Macedonia should become separate states, while ethnic Hungarians and Albanians living in Yugoslavia should be granted the freedom to join with their kin in the neighboring states. This remained the Party line until 1935 when the danger of Hitler's Germany rendered Yugoslavia useful to USSR.⁷¹ The policy was now reversed: CPY concluded that there was no popular will for secession and called onto the state's nations to unify against the foreign threat. Once again this changed after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact (1939) but this time only calls for broad autonomy were issued.⁷²

During WWII the Yugoslav Communists proclaimed that the country would be rearranged on federal principles. According to the recognition of five constituent nations and six federal republics there was to be not only one but five separate entities all merging in one Yugoslav line. The right of self-determination was still present in their rhetoric but it was claimed that the masses have already plebiscitary voted for the unification when they joined the fight led by the CPY ("retroactive self-determination").⁷³ This essential national right was present in the 1946 constitution that copied the Soviet 1936 model but was left out in 1953 after the break with Stalin, which gave an impetus for unifying policies in the country. In their

⁶⁹ The notion of "Greater Serbian Hegemonism" and its "unitarism" as the biggest enemy of equality of nations in Yugoslavia continued to be used as a favorite phrase of the Communists also after the war. The phenomenon of gerrymandering the strongest nation in Yugoslavia was unique in communist regimes (Connor 1984, p. 333).

⁷⁰ Similar cooperation with nationalists or fascists was applied by Comintern in other countries. Mevius 383-384

⁷¹ Pavlowitch 1971, p. 89

⁷² Connor 1984, pp. 132-145

⁷³ Connor 1984, p. 161, Audrey Helfant Budding, "Nation/People/Republic: Self-Determination in Socialist Yugoslavia", in *State collapse in South-Eastern Europe: new perspectives on Yugoslavia's disintegration*, eds. Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2008): p. 99-100

federalization the CPY followed the Soviet model defining self-determination in territorial, i.e. republican terms.⁷⁴

After the clash with Kominform and denouncing of Soviet centralization and bureaucratization it was essential for Yugoslav leadership to answer the accusations of Moscow of “bourgeois nationalism” or “national deviations”. Yugoslavia had to prove itself in two fields – rights of the working people and national policies i.e. federalism. It did so by abolishing Stalin’s ideas and Soviet practices while returning to Marx and Lenin as basis while trying to figure out a new, original social theory and practices which would suite it conditions, but none the less its Party.⁷⁵

In 1950 the Yugoslav leadership announced the introduction of a new element in the state system that would make it essentially different from the Soviet one and give it a weapon in answering to its attacks.⁷⁶ The workers’ self-management⁷⁷ was supposed to lower the decision making, promote decentralization and to give more voice to the workers (“development from below”).⁷⁸ It was also assumed that the greater preoccupation with immediate problems in their own environment will distract people from national concerns. Walker Connor deems that self-management functioned and had impact in the later stages of development, but himself points out that the main benefactors from the increased decentralization in Yugoslavia were the republics in a “republicanization of economic policy”.⁷⁹ It is doubtful that the workers’ associations, themselves tightly controlled by the Party cadre and still having to operate by the coordinating plans, were ever more than a smokescreen to hide who’s pulling the strings of power and a

⁷⁴ Budding 94

⁷⁵ McFarlane 1988, p. 45, Jelavich 1983, II, p. 386

⁷⁶ Russinow 1977, p. 47-49

⁷⁷ This feature of Yugoslav system has been dealt with many authors and to an extent by those writing in the period of Yugoslavia’s existence. For instance: Bruce McFarlane, *Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics and Society* (London & New York: Pinters Publishers, 1988)

⁷⁸ Jelavich 1983, II, p. 386

⁷⁹ John B. Allock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst & Co, 2000), p. 76

propaganda tool of the “Yugoslav way to socialism”. Decentralization and implementation of workers’ self-management were the root of the disintegrative tendencies that started as early as in the 1950s.⁸⁰ As self-management remained the most important ideological component of Yugoslav communism it was repeatedly applied to back all kinds of claims that the Party made in the name of the people. Self-management rights were not only for workers and enterprises but were assigned also to local councils and republics to underline their ability to reach independent decisions not forced from the centre.

In the same way that the CPY pronounced policies in USSR to be un-socialist in terms of workers’ rights, so did it do in dealing with national issues. Giving more rights to the national republics was to make them less nationalistic and more willing to stay in the common state. When the promotion of a Yugoslav identity was dropped after 1964, Edvard Kardelj claimed it to be the first step towards the dampening of nationalisms. Just like in the Soviet case these dialectics proved wrong. The “compartmentalization” of the communist movement in a number of national republics brought the situation that six separate national communisms evolved within one country and the national/republican interests on the level of economy and culture and prevailed over the ideological bounds.

1.4 A Note on Terminology

In order to lessen the terminological confusion (to fully evade it is in most probability impossible since different authors and actors were not aware of each other claims) we shall take a brief look at the most important terms used in this thesis, both in English and in Serbo-Croatian language.

⁸⁰ Allock 2000, p. 78

On the English side of the barrier authors use terms “nation”, “state” and “ethnicity” sometimes very freely. There are, of course, numerous definition of each of them and one has to choose between the common use of terms and the more precise but less broadly accepted. Definitions and divisions adopted for the practical use of this thesis in no way claim to be the best or universally acceptable. I will follow mostly the thoughts of Walker Connor in his article “A Nation is a Nation is a State is an Ethnic Group...”.⁸¹

The first distinction made in it is between a “nation” and a “state”. While the state is a political entity, the nation can transcend state borders and is only definable by shared ideologies and beliefs, an irrational psychological bound. There are very little states which can claim that they encompass only one nation and only these can be adequately called nation-states. States are political actors that can exist for centuries but needn’t develop a national character. Therefore what many authors call “nation-building” is nothing more than “state-building”. State is not necessarily the focus of its inhabitants loyalty, most often it is the nation. In the end Connor defines an ethnic group as an entity that is defined from the outside (in contrast with nation which must be self-defined) while its members have no sense of their uniqueness.

In Serbo-Croatian of the studied period the terminology is somewhat more confusing, greatly because the socialist regime intentionally blurred the ethnic/cultural principle of nationhood and the territorial/political one.⁸² There are three basic terms in use: *narod*, *nacija* and *etnos* (or *etnička grupa*). The term *narod* (literally “people”) is a neutral, wide-embracing term gladly used by Communists as it was used in contrast with previous, “royal” period in which authority was forced from above and did not come from the (working) people. Therefore we have: *Narodna republika* (People’s Republic), *narodno vijeće* (people’s council), *narodna*

⁸¹ Connor 1994, pp. 90-117

⁸² Budding 2008, 92

vlast (people's authority). The term is convenient for describing all the members of a group, disregarding their national or religious feelings, as in the *narod Crne Gore* ("the people of Montenegro"). However, the same term can come closer to the meaning "national" in certain usages; that is how the term *crnogorski narod* ("Montenegrin people" but almost with the same meaning as "Montenegrin nation") had a very different connotation, as we shall see below.

We have seen above that nation was seen as the product of capitalist era. Therefore, in the first period after the communist takeover it was viewed with some scruples. Later on, with decentralization and promotion of Yugoslav republics as homes of the nations the term "People's Republics" disappeared. Fighting for national rights was done through the institutions of republics or autonomous provinces but in the name of their "titular" nations. Therefore "national" and "republican" are often used arbitrarily especially in the case of republics who did not have sizable populations living outside of their "homeland" (Slovenia, Montenegro and Macedonia).⁸³

The term "ethnicity" (*etnička grupa*) had an even worse standing since it connected social nations with groups from the past and in this way giving the floor to potential nationalist discussions. Yet since the term "nation" was crisscrossing with "republic" the "ethnic belonging" (as in *Muslimani u smislu etničke pripadnosti* – Muslims in the sense of ethnic belonging) was a more scientific way to denote the nation. The movement for national rights in Montenegro was tolerated or even backed, but when one of its fractions set for an ethno-linguistic push they were criticized from the top.

⁸³ Budding 2008, 93

Chapter 2: Montenegro and Montenegrins in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-1974

2.1. Establishment of Montenegrin National Republic

Montenegro was proclaimed one of the six constituent republics of Yugoslavia and Montenegrins one of its five constituent nations in the Third Assembly of AVNOJ in November 1943 and both were legalized as such by the 1946 constitution.⁸⁴ Yugoslav republics were seen as sovereign⁸⁵ “national homelands”, national republics of their eponymous nations⁸⁶ with broad rights and all of the symbolic aspects of a national community.⁸⁷ Of course, under the strict guidance of the Party and led by its slogan of “brotherhood and unity”, sovereignty remained purely theoretical.⁸⁸ The six republics were, theoretically, equal in every sense and this principle was applied as the main guarantee of the national equality. Having a national republic and equality with others should have solved all national questions in Yugoslavia.

In addition to the three “old” nations that were already enjoying their national rights in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes, the CPY recognized equal rights to two more nations that had a “belated development”⁸⁹ – Macedonians and Montenegrins,⁹⁰ rescuing them from the “Great Serbian” repression and, conveniently, creating a

⁸⁴ Fred Singleton, *Twentieth-Century Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 237. Montenegrins were present in all the calls for national self-determination in Party’s plans since 1926. On this see Connor 1984, pp. 128-171.

⁸⁵ Connor 1984, p. 223. All the other constitutions vested the sovereignty in the people.

⁸⁶ Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1977): p. 132. In theory, correspondence of nations with republics was essential but in practice this left many things unclear Budding 2008, p. 99

⁸⁷ Hannes Grandits, “Dynamics of Socialist Nation-Building: The Short Lived Programme of Promoting a Yugoslav National Identity and Some Comparative Perspectives”. *Two Homelands – Migration Studies* 28 (2008): p. 18

⁸⁸ Aleksa Djilas *The contested country : Yugoslav unity and communist revolution, 1919-1953* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991): p. 159

⁸⁹ Grandits 2008, p. 18

⁹⁰ Muslims, future Bosniaks, were recognized as a nation only in 1969.

national equilibrium in the country.⁹¹ Many, above all Serbs, viewed this as an act if not pointed against them than at least one with unclear reasons – the establishment of a Montenegrin federal unit was a step far from obvious at the time being.⁹² Doubts about the nationality of Montenegrins were also present in the highest structures of the Party. Who were Montenegrins and what made them different from the (rest of) the Serbs?

The duality of Montenegrin identity was already publicized during the war in the “both/and” formula⁹³ but now this ambiguity needed a more “scientific”, that is Marxist explanation. To quiet these doubts and criticisms the task of addressing the problem of Montenegrin nationhood was assigned to Milovan Djilas, a top ranking official of the Communist Party originating from Montenegro who was at the time the vice-president of the country and the minister for the People’s Republic of Montenegro. Djilas was also known as a skillful debater and propagandist. In his later, rather regretful, recalling of events that gave him the title of the “father of the Montenegrin nation”, Djilas recalls that he was reluctant regarding these orders. He did not want to create a new nation but rather to bring back to life Montenegro as a political entity that underlined the difference between Montenegrins and the other Serbs.⁹⁴ Djilas even claims that he stated bluntly to Tito that “Montenegrins are Serbs”, upon which he got an answer “All right, but now we need a republic”.⁹⁵ Concluding, Djilas states that “This formula was satisfactory to all the currents existing at the time in the Party”.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Grandits 2008, p. 18

⁹² Roberts 2007, p. 400. On similar dilemmas in Croatia see Djilas 1991, pp. 168-175

⁹³ As Ivan Milutinović, one of the highest ranking officers of CPY from Montenegro, elaborated on the 3rd session of the Anti-fascist Council of People’s Liberation of Montenegro and Boka Kotorska on August 14, 1944 in Kolašin: “A question arises: does Montenegrinhood diminishes or excludes Serbhood? Comrades, the one who is not a Montenegrin is not a good Serb either... Montenegrins and Serbians are a people /descending/ of one tribe...”. *Zbornik gradje za istoriju radničkog pokreta Crne Gore*, vol. 2, Titograd 1960, quoted from Batrić Jovanović, *Crnogorci o sebi* (Beograd: Sloboda, 1989): p. 334

⁹⁴ A separate republic was also intended to be “a balm for wounded pride”. Roberts 2007, p. 394

⁹⁵ Milovan Djorgović, *Djilas, jeretik i vernik* (Beograd: Akvarijus, 1990), p. 124

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

Though we might view the details of this recollection with suspicion, Djilas brings up several important issues here. Firstly, the new state - and the Party that was controlling it - *needed* the new republic. On the one hand, to have a new republic, they had to have a well argued Marxist-Stalinist justification of the new republic based on the rights of national self-declaration as proclaimed by the Party, based on the example of USSR and grounded in the rhetoric of class struggle. Because of the “currents” in the Party, Djilas knew that there is a wing pushing for this solution but, on the other hand, that he shouldn’t go too far with promoting differences of the Montenegrin nation. The feeling that the new nation was formed without a clear will or consensus from both inside of Montenegro and from some circles in Belgrade continued to persist in the first two decades of its existence, blocking the wholehearted, or even active, pursuit of the proclaimed national goals.

In the beginning of 1945 the official herald of the Party, the “Borba” daily, brought a series of editorials and articles dealing with the problem of Montenegrin nation. The series culminated on May, 1st 1945 with the article entitled “On the Montenegrin national question”,⁹⁷ written by Djilas. His main task was to clear up the blurred differences between Montenegrinhood and Serbhood, often mixed up by the partizan communists themselves. Moreover, the article was used to discredit the two other parties existent in Montenegro during the civil war - the federalists as “separatists” and “helpers of Ustašas”, and unitarists as the progenies of the “old hegemony” and of a “small group of Serbian rich” (*šacice srpskih bogataša*) – implying, of course, that the course of the Party is the only reasonable one. The Party’s stand on the question set the communists in between these two “extremes”: there is absolutely no intention to erasing Montenegrin individuality but there also won’t be any

⁹⁷ Milovan Djilas, “O crnogorskom nacionalnom pitanju”, *Borba* 1. 5. 1945. There also exists a short pamphlet by the same title, probably printed around the same time as the newspaper article. The article appears also in Milovan Djilas, *Članci, 1941-1946* (Beograd 1947)

separation of Serbs and Montenegrins. The Montenegrin people has its own nationality reflected in national equality with other peoples and the federal position of Montenegro. Standing on the point of Marxist dialectics, and using the “laws of nation-forming” Djilas went one step further and ventured into a historical explanation of the emergence of Montenegrins. “Montenegrins, surely, belong to the Serb branch of South Slav tribe” (*srpskoj grani južnoslovenskog plemena*) but “the roads of development towards nationhood were different in Serbia and in Montenegro”. In a word, “Montenegrins are ‘Serbs’ differing from all other Serbs” and that is, Djilas claims, a fact felt by all of the people living there (meaning in Montenegro). The words of such an important figure as Djilas set the line to be followed by the others as well. Similarly, Blažo Jovanović, the prime minister of the People’s Republic of Montenegro, repeated Djilas’ phrases faithfully at a party meeting in 1948.⁹⁸

Though at some moments Djilas seems on the verge of falling out of balance in his middle course, in the end his statement is clear: Montenegrins are a nation since they had and again have their national state; “politically” Montenegrins, they are ethnically Serbs,⁹⁹ from which they emerged as a separate subgroup. In this way, the middle, compromising view was adopted leaving the Party with a broad space for maneuvers, standing neither against the general nor against the particular feeling of Montenegrins with the conclusion that “on the future we can only speculate”.¹⁰⁰

Proclaiming a republic was an easy task, but it took much more effort to determine its borders. This task throughout Yugoslavia was done by combining of ethnic and historical

⁹⁸ Blažo Jovanović, *Izveštaj o političkom radu PK KPJ za Crnu Goru* (Cetinje: Obod, 1948)

⁹⁹ Although Djilas lashed also at the Montenegrin federalists, at this issue Djilas takes the same view as the federalists did between the two World Wars, that Montenegrins are a “political nation”. Jovanović 1986: p. 309

¹⁰⁰ Djilas 1947, p. 223. Naturally, this last phrase was meant to conceal that the Communist leadership expected it to prosper.

principle.¹⁰¹ Not counting the state border with Albania (since it was not debatable), Montenegrin borders were as well such a blend. Borders with Bosnia and Serbia were historic following the borders of the Kingdom of Montenegro established in 1878 and 1913 respectfully. In comparison with the situation at the end of the Balkan Wars, when the independent Montenegro reached its largest territorial extent, there were two changes: it lost the northern part of Metohija to Serbia, that is to the region of Kosovo because of the majority of ethnic Albanians living there; on the other side, it got the region of Boka Kotorska¹⁰² that was already administratively in the same unit with Montenegro since 1918. Because of this, the title of the partizan “National Council for the Liberation of Montenegro and Boka Kotorska” during WWII respected the historic separation¹⁰³ of the two lands. The region of Sandžak (the area to the east of the river Tara) belonged to Montenegro only from 1912 to 1916 (nominally to 1918) and in these few years did not have the time to embrace specific Montenegrin feelings.¹⁰⁴ In their calls to armed struggle, partizans addressed the local population as “brothers Serbs and Muslims”, never mentioning Montenegro. Further, Sandžak was for long seen as a possible federal republic, based on its half-half mixture of Serbs and Muslims. Renouncing of this in 1945 and splitting the region in half between Serbia and Montenegro caused a small scandal amidst the local Muslim communists.¹⁰⁵ That Montenegro’s population was not envisioned to be clearly distinguishable

¹⁰¹ Djilas 1991, p. 161

¹⁰² This is the stretch of present day Montenegrin coast from the border with Croatia and reaching just to the north of the town of Bar.

¹⁰³ Boka Kotorska was never a part of Montenegro and the region’s Orthodox, that constituted 2/3 of the population, had little to none Montenegrin sentiment. In the proclamation of the partizan assembly in 1943 we read “that the Montenegrin people and the people of Boka (...)”, Ivo Banac, *The national question in Yugoslavia: origins, history, politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993): 104, Živko Andrijašević, Šerbo Rastoder, *Istorija Crne Gore: od najstarijih vremena do 2003* (Podgorica: Centar za iseljenike, 2006): p. 427, Djilas, 1991, p. 171

¹⁰⁴ This can be seen in the regions overwhelming support of the Whites in 1918. Jovanović 1986

¹⁰⁵ Roberts 2007, 397, Andrijašević & Rastoder 2006, p. 436, Budding 2008, p. 97, Zvezdan Folić, *Država i vjerske zajednice u Crnoj Gori 1945-65* (Podgorica: Istorijski institute Crne Gore, Cetinje: Centralna narodna biblioteka “Djurdje Crnojević”, 2007): p. 106

by ethnic criteria is seen also from the attempts of local communists to aggrandize their republic by acquiring East Herzegovina or even Dubrovnik.¹⁰⁶

From all of this we see that ethnic principle was not the primary source of inspiration for the communist leadership. Same like in Bosnia-Herzegovina (or in demands for Vojvodina as well to become a federal republic) we observe that in the case where tactical reasons demanded, ethnic principle could be shunned aside and historical one introduced.¹⁰⁷ The foundation/restitution of Montenegro and the fixing of its borders were primarily a pragmatic venture inspired by the communist inter-war view of the national problem: freed from the fear of the “Serbian hegemony” the Montenegrin (national) question was solved while at the same time Great Serbian chauvinism was inflicted a blow.¹⁰⁸ In a similar line Tito described in 1945 the creation and the role of republican borders only to stop fears of [Serb] hegemony.¹⁰⁹ Further, following the idea of Dejan Jović that “Socialism (as a period of transition to Communism) was a vision-driven project in which the elite did not primarily represent reality (...) but the desired future”¹¹⁰ and that “the vanguard (the Party elite) aimed at radically changing, not representing, reality”¹¹¹ we could conclude that Montenegrin national question was solved not on some real criteria but on the presumption how things should be in the future. If, in the words of Paul Shoup, the primary purpose of the Yugoslav federal system was “to serve as a lightning rod for

¹⁰⁶ Roberts 2007, pp. 396-397

¹⁰⁷ Budding, 95. The author also discusses other similar cases such as the one of Dalmatia.

¹⁰⁸ Connor (1984, pp. 333-334) has reflected on some of the republican borders as “part of a much larger plan to weaken the relative numerical advantage of Serbs by gerrymandering”. Weakening of the largest ethnic element in such a way was unique in Marxist-Leninist states. Great numbers of Montenegrins that took part in the partizan movement are a considerable factor to be taken into account here. Nevertheless, since their own ranks were split on the question on the Montenegrin Republic one could not say that Montenegro’s establishment as a federal unit was a concession to their influence.

¹⁰⁹ Djilas 1991, p. 166

¹¹⁰ Dejan Jović, “Communist Yugoslavia and its ‘Others’”, John Lampe, Mark Mazower, eds., *Ideologies and National Identities: the case of twentieth-century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2003): p. 278

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

national emotions, without limiting the power of the Party”.¹¹² In this respect we can say that the Montenegrins were pacified and content.

We should, however, remember that the overall view of the communist leadership at the moment, based on the thoughts of Stalin, was that the nations, as well as the state, are about to disappear in the near future and that the federalist system is an ephemeral formality.¹¹³ Therefore, there was no further need to deal with the Montenegrin nation – satisfied within their republic, the Montenegrins will be able to turn to developing their country and facing other social and economic problems. Communist federalism did not imply a division of powers. What really meant was the communist control of the country and so of Montenegro as well. And indeed we will see that the most important aspect of Montenegrin equality proved to be in having not only its own republican institutions, but a separate Communist Party (CPM, *KPCG*)¹¹⁴ stuffed with the cadre that came only from within the Republic.¹¹⁵

In comparison with the “classic” nation-building efforts put up in Macedonia that endowed it with a newly codified language, national history, literature, ethnological color as well as symbols and institutions,¹¹⁶ Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina were moving on a much slower pace. Montenegro has been nominally proclaimed a nation but its nationhood was not based on an ethnical but on historical grounds. It seemed enough that the injustice brought upon its statehood was revised to put things into order, as they were before 1918. But if nations in Yugoslavia were supposed to be equal in all aspects, how long would it take Montenegro (and

¹¹² Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav national question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968): p. 113

¹¹³ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962-1991*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1992²): p. 45, 50

¹¹⁴ The CPM was formed in 1948 in an effort to more closely control the communist during Tito’s clash with Stalin in which many Montenegrins supported the latter. Cf. Ivo Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist splits in Yugoslav Communism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988)

¹¹⁵ Steven Burg, *Conflict and cohesion in socialist Yugoslavia : political decision making since 1966* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1983): p. 25, Ramet 1992, p. 73

¹¹⁶ Grandits 2008, p. 18

Bosnian Muslims) to switch to the “Macedonian track”? In the first two decades of post-war development Montenegro had plenty of problems to deal with and very little freedom of expression to question the established national arrangement.

2.2. Hard Road to Modernization: Montenegro Up To 1964

Already poor and underdeveloped before, Montenegro was also one of the areas hit the hardest in the Second World War. Though the advance in the following two decades was significant, even at the end of the period the Montenegro was seriously lagging behind other republics.

In the first years after the war situation in Montenegro was chaotic and the living conditions were very hard. Except for providing for the bear necessities, in these years the work of the Party was mostly focused on suppressing political adversaries, exterminating the hostile elements, agitation, organizing of “mass organizations”, founding of cooperatives, and, very importantly, on nationalization and expropriation.¹¹⁷ The roads were few and far apart so that many areas were more accessible from other republics than from the Montenegrin capital Titograd and large parts of the land were cut off from the rest of the world during the winter. In 1947 there were only two radio stations (Cetinje and Kotor), both of modest radius; there were ten cinema halls and two mobile cinematographs, while five of the county seats were without any cinema.¹¹⁸ In these conditions it was hard to spread ideas and influences of the newly established Republic and provide a feeling of new kind of unity and common ideals, to “nationalize” the

¹¹⁷ Rusinow 1977, p. 132

¹¹⁸ DACG Podgorica, Centralni komitet, f. 6, V/1, *Izvjestaj o radu agitaciono-propagandnog odjeljenja PK KPJ za CG*, 30. 1. 1947, p. 5

population. In rural backwater, the population lived a life barely influenced by the novelties of the 20th century. The traditional instrument *gusle* was still more present than newspaper or radio.

Needles to mention, most of the “intellectual” help that was imported from outside of the Republic, especially in the first decade after the war, was connected with the promotion of communist ideals and glorifying the Party.¹¹⁹ That many of the subjects dealt with Serb subjects did not seem to bother Montenegrins. To be more precise: if anyone resented this could not do nothing about it because of the official party stand as defined by Djilas as well as because of the practical difficulties in abandoning everything Serb when there was nothing else to alter it. Taking into account also the clash with Kominform in 1948 that brought huge purges in Montenegro¹²⁰ we see that there was hardly any space to say anything that did not fully correspond with the course of the Party. One other aspect of this event was that the fear of Moscow had a unifying role, prompting the tendency of merger of nations towards a single Yugoslav consciousness, rather than their separate development,¹²¹ which in case of Montenegro has proven dangerously sympathetic with “Mother Russia”.

One of the specificities of Montenegro important for the development of its particularistic feelings was the absence of Orthodox Church. The structure of SOC in Montenegro was destroyed during the war by decimation of its priesthood both by occupiers as well as by partizan forces on the grounds of collaboration. The number of priests in 1945 was cut to half of the prewar number and kept decreasing drastically because of their age structure so that in 1957 there were only 53 of them left.¹²² This meant that as much as eight local councils in Montenegro

¹¹⁹ For instance, the CC considered official Party herald from Belgrade “Borba” much better in quality and much more useful than local “Pobjeda” although it rarely had any news from Montenegro. DACG Podgorica, CK, f. 96/III (1952), p. 7

¹²⁰ More on this hugely important topic in Montenegrin history see Banac 1989

¹²¹ Connor 1984, pp. 432-433

¹²² Folić 2007, p. 65

did not have even one priest!¹²³ Any attempts to revive religious life were controlled by the state Commission for Religion (*Vjerska komisija*) and the Society of Priesthood (*Udruženje sveštenika*) that openly defied their bishops. This was an important factor in breaking the ties with tradition.

In terms of culture, even in 1958 Montenegro was having great problems standing on its own two feet. Because of the lack of funding as well as low level of performance the number of institutions in culture such as theatres, folklore societies etc. had to be reduced.¹²⁴ For the same reasons the main Montenegrin newspaper, the Titograd “Pobjeda”, was now transformed into a biweekly and had the circulation of 10,000.¹²⁵ Only 10-15 % of the villages had electricity.¹²⁶ In that year there were 12,772 radio receivers in the Republic, the number almost twice as high as only two years before.¹²⁷ In order to cut the expanses and gain in the quality it was suggested that some of the institutions and societies could be merged with corresponding ones in Serbia.¹²⁸

Due to the long established cultural ties with Serbs/Serbia¹²⁹ most of the help in terms of culture came from there. In 1963 Serbia and Montenegro embarked on closer cooperation in many fields, such as the integration of industry, mutual support in export trade and the finishing of the Belgrade-Bar railway.¹³⁰ This was explained by the fact that “in the fields of economy, education and culture our republic has with SR Serbia the most questions of common interest

¹²³ Folić 2007, p. 146

¹²⁴ DACG Podgorica, Centralni komitet, f. 124, *Aktuelni problemi kulturno-masovnog rada i neki drugi kulturni problemi*, p. 2

¹²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 9

¹²⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 14

¹²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 10. This is explained in the document by the fall of their price, the spread of electrification and the rise of the living standards.

¹²⁸ DACG Podgorica, Centralni komitet, f. 126, 9, *O medjurepubličkoj kulturnoj saradnji – Ocjene i zaključci Ideološke komisije CK*. But there were different opinions on the subject, that Montenegro should develop its own institutions «like any other republic».

¹²⁹ From the three “old” and therefore culturally more developed nations, the Serbs were the closest and the obvious solution above all because of the common Cyrillic script and the lexic.

¹³⁰ Ramet 1992, p. 83

that can be solved with mutual efforts”.¹³¹ In 1964 the meeting of the CCs of two republics planned to finish this railway by 1970, but also to get connected by the new highway; further, it was announced that Radio Belgrade and Radio Titograd will link their programs, that the schooling of profiles needed but for which there were no schools in Montenegro is going to be conducted in Serbia and, in the end, that there should be closer cooperation in the field of preserving the cultural heritage, above all because in both republics “exists a rich fund of monuments which illustrate common political and cultural past of both peoples”.¹³²

In 1956 the largest factory in Montenegro, the steelworks in Nikšić, was proudly opened. In the next few years it became obvious that the factory is hardly going to produce any surplus and that in most years it was actually losing money and was subsidized from above.¹³³ The same year saw the start of the ambitious project of hydroelectric power plants to be built in Montenegro but the planning protracted due to the inter-republican clashes with Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹³⁴ The main reason for the inefficiency of Montenegrin factories was seen in the bad transport network that made it hard to send goods from and in the republic. Therefore, immediately after the war the strategic planning started for the railway line that would connect Bar in the littoral and Belgrade. The works were started in 1951 but were halted already next year because of the lack of funding. The first section of the proposed railway in Montenegro, the one from Titograd to Bar, was put into use in 1959 but this was still far from the envisioned plans that would take two more decades to come true.¹³⁵ The new, large port in Bar was started, but without the trains coming it seemed as a project that is not making any sense. The leadership of

¹³¹ AJ, CK SKJ, IV CG – K2/1-39, 4, *Zapisnik sa sjednice Izvršnog Komiteta*, 16. 5. 1963.

¹³² AJ, CK SKJ, IV CG – K2/1-39, 11-2, *Zaključci zajedničkog sastanka izvršnih komiteta CK SK Srbije i CK SK CG*, 10. 2. 1964.

¹³³ Milovan Zečević, *Početak kraja SFRJ* (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1998): p. 222

¹³⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 74-75

¹³⁵ Jezdimir S. Nikolić, *Istorija železnica Srbije, Vojvodine, Crne Gore i Kosova* (Beograd: Zavod za novinsko izdavačku delatnost ŽS, 1980): p. 385

the republic urged the federal bodies dealing with transport to most urgently continue with the works.¹³⁶ Considering all of this, Montenegro presents itself an excellent example of the problems of inequal development that Yugoslavia faced. With almost no industry and very little roads and railways Montenegro was lagging behind the Yugoslav average in all aspects of economical development while the investments in it seemed to make no difference and were continuing only for the reason of the equal development of all the regions.

Apart from huge efforts pointed towards the build up of its own industry, infrastructure and the boosting of agricultural production, Montenegro was at the same time making first steps towards building up of its own institutions. This was not an easy task, primarily because of the lack of money and the unwillingness of local educated people to return back to Montenegro from larger centers where they were attended schooling.¹³⁷ But there also lacked a determination towards achieving this goal. This peculiar stand was later on officially explained by the efforts of the Party to build up the material base first. The only institutions that emerged in this period were the Faculty of Education in Nikšić (*Viša pedagoška akademija*) in 1947, training teachers for elementary and high schools, the Historical Institute of Montenegro (*Istorijski institut Crne Gore*), founded in 1948, the archives in Kotor (est. 1949), State Archives in Cetinje (est. 1951),¹³⁸ as well as an agricultural institute in Titograd and one for cattle in Nikšić (both from 1945).¹³⁹ Even these few existing institutions were working in very bad conditions or had very unimpressive results. One report from 1958 on the culture read at the CC of LCM, states that from 60 students that enrolled Faculty of Education in Nikšić last year only two graduated while

¹³⁶ Zečević 1998, pp. 150, 222

¹³⁷ DACG Podgorica, Centralni komitet, f. 124, *Sjednica ideološke komisije CK SK CG*, 16. 11. 1958

¹³⁸ Ulf Brunnbauer, ed., *(Re)Writing History: Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism* (Münster: Lit, 2004): p. 202. *Istorijski institut Crne Gore* is incorrectly translated into English as “Montenegrin Historical Institute”. Though it seems like a minor difference we shall see that this formulation made a significant difference.

¹³⁹ *Pobjeda*, 4. 7, 1974.

others either quit or left the school to work as unqualified teachers!¹⁴⁰ Though they thought that the founding of some faculties would be good, the people from the CC doubted that it is possible at this moment.¹⁴¹ The initiative at its founding did not have some national agenda but a simple explanation that their establishing would “ease the pressure on the bulky university centre such as Belgrade”.¹⁴²

The whole period of Montenegrin history up to 1960s was characterized by predomination of cultural ties with Serbia. Non all of them should be seen in terms of “paternalizing” the smaller republic: in early 1960s Serbia was trying to establish itself as a leader of the bloc of underdeveloped republics, constituting as well of Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro.¹⁴³ A bit later, in 1963, Serbia and Montenegro announced the plan to closer integrate their industrial production, to coordinate their foreign export efforts, long term planning and the conclusion of the Belgrade-Bar railway.¹⁴⁴ As long as it stayed like this the Serbia could be contended and the feelings of those who cherished pro-Serb sentiments in Montenegro were managed so that there was no reason to grumble or protest about the sovereignty of Montenegro.

2.3. Political Changes in Yugoslavia, 1964-1974

The decade of 1964 to 1974 was one of major changes in socialist Yugoslavia. It saw the efforts to decentralize the power, the rise of nationalism that followed constitutional changes and

¹⁴⁰ DACG Podgorica, Centralni komitet, f. 126, *Sjednica ideološke komisije CK SK CG*, 16. 11. 1958, p. 17

¹⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 20

¹⁴² AJ, 507/VIII, II/2-b, Ideološka komisija, K-6, *Zapisnik sa sastanka Komisije za ideološki rad*, 12. 12. 1958

¹⁴³ Ramet 1992, p. 16, DACG Podgorica, Centralni komitet, f. 48/I, *Zapisnik sa sastanka biroa CK KP CG*, 8. 2. 1949

¹⁴⁴ Ramet 1992, p. 83

then its sudden fall in 1971/72 after which followed a more sober period of promotion of federalism ending in the historic 1974 constitution.

The failure of the Five-year Plan in 1961 and the overall poor economic results led to internal wrestling between the republics for funding and investment allocated by the federal government. This discord and the seemingly unsolvable problems of distribution were the key points in the case by the anti-centralists.¹⁴⁵ By 1963 Tito was convinced that the economic difficulties were coming partially from strict control of the federal government and thus green light was given for an economic reform to be launched.¹⁴⁶ The new constitutional statute was promulgated in April 1963 in order to harmonize the complex of political and economic developments in the last decade¹⁴⁷ but this only deepened the gap between the conservatives and the reformists.¹⁴⁸

The 8th Party congress held in December of 1964 was the turning point. Its most notable decision was the official abolishing of any attempt to back Yugoslavism.¹⁴⁹ In his speech Tito condemned “the confused idea that the unity of our peoples means the elimination of nationalities and the creation of something new and artificial”.¹⁵⁰ Even more importantly, the Congress authorized republican and regional party meetings to be held before the one of the LCY and any of the functions previously belonging to the federation were now assigned to the republics. Thus was generated the “lowering of democratic centralism for one level - the

¹⁴⁵ John B. Allock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, (London: Hurst & Company, 2000): p. 79

¹⁴⁶ Lamp 2000, p. 285

¹⁴⁷ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Yugoslavia* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1971): 296

¹⁴⁸ Pavlowitch 1971, p. 290

¹⁴⁹ The heyday of Yugoslavism was 1958 when on the 7th Congress of LCY the leading Party ideologist Kardelj claimed that nations will disappear in the socialist society and the concept of “Yugoslav culture” was adopted. The founding of many institutions with Yugoslav prefix followed. Perhaps most important was the introduction of the category “Yugoslav” in the 1961 census. Cf. Grandits 2008, pp. 15-28; Connor 1984, p. 434

¹⁵⁰ Ramet 1992, p. 51

republicanization of the Party”¹⁵¹ or, to use more down to earth phrase, “the confederatization on of the LCY”¹⁵². The newly instituted pluralism was not a democratic but a republican/national one. Instead of setting on the path of true liberalization and decentralization, Yugoslavia adopted the national pluralism controlled by eight party elites. Centralized command economy has been dismantled but the economy was not rid of the political influence which was just shifted to a lower level to silence the criticism. The decentralization of the power, together with the economic differences that were, contrary to the expected, still on the rise, instigated further rivalry and deepening of the gaps between the national republics, with the novelty of republican leaderships now often turning for support to the local nationalistic feelings.¹⁵³ One of the biggest changes that the 8th Congress brought was the drastic introduction of the new and younger people to the structures of the LCY (69% of new members!); this was due not only to the change of generations but also to the redistribution of power within the Party elite.¹⁵⁴ The professionals and the younger generation of the LCY members were stepping instead of the old cadres. In 1965 came one further step in the way of reforms: scraping of central planning, introduction of “market socialism”, and giving a greater say to federal units and (to a lesser extent) to local councils and enterprises on the questions of economy.¹⁵⁵ This was yet another victory of the reform camp, deepening the gap between the two streams in LCY’s top level. The conservatives, voicing their disagreement through the ECs of Serbia and Montenegro,¹⁵⁶ were afraid of the conjunction of national and economic fronts and of loosened control of the Party as well as the end of the emotional bound of common Yugoslav feeling.

¹⁵¹ Laslo Sekelj, *Jugoslavija: struktura raspadanja* (Beograd: Rad, 1990):p. 92, Allock 2000, p. 80

¹⁵² Lamp 2000, p. 286

¹⁵³ Pavlowitch 1971, pp. 300-301

¹⁵⁴ Sekelj 1990, p. 93

¹⁵⁵ Ramet 1992, p. 82. Connor (1984: 224) rightly observed that “although the republics were only one competitor for the decision-making powers relinquished by the centre (...), the republics were clearly the major recipients”.

¹⁵⁶ Rusinow 1977, p. 183. The same author gives us reasons behind Montenegrin conservative stand: only they, due to their specific influence and connections, have done consistently well from central distribution (*ibidem*, p. 136).

The ousting of Aleksandar Ranković, country's vice-president, strongmen of the State Security and the leader of the conservative wing, in July of 1966 was the final step in this conflict.¹⁵⁷ Ranković was a Serb, supporting tighter Party control and more funding from central funds to the underdeveloped regions. The leadership of Montenegro, together with that of Serbia solely supported Ranković.¹⁵⁸ Judging on the large number of the people from Montenegro prosecuted together with Ranković¹⁵⁹ we see how strongly the idea of Yugoslavism (even in the form of centralized distribution to poor regions!) influenced Montenegro. His demise was apprehended by the Serbs as a loss of the most important representative in the very top of the power structure. Though the Party tried to hide the real reasons behind his resignation and dispel the ideas that this meant a radical change of policies, the political signals were read by the political actors. Certainly the most important consequence of this event was that the republican leaders gained full control over the secret services in their republics.¹⁶⁰ After Ranković's fall, Montenegro duly switched to the reformist camp.¹⁶¹

The victory of the decentralist camp was crowned in 1968 when, in accordance with the new policy, the congresses of the republics for the first time met before the congress of the LCY; additionally, a parity was introduced in constituting the bodies of the LCY.¹⁶² Further amendments to the constitution that came in 1967-71 adopted the principle of equal representation of republics in Party's highest organs and reduced the power of the federal government to defense, foreign affairs and foreign trade, effectively turning Yugoslavia into a

¹⁵⁷ Nicholas J. Miller ("Reconstructing Serbia 1945-1991" in *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia 1945-1992*, New York : St. Martin's Press, 1997) saw it as "motivated by the desire of the rest of the ruling class in Yugoslavia to stigmatize, finally and completely, centralism and Serbianism as one and the same ill in YU" (p. 296)

¹⁵⁸ Roberts 2007, p. 423

¹⁵⁹ Zečević 1998, p. 24

¹⁶⁰ Aleksandar Pavković, *The fragmentation of Yugoslavia: nationalism in a multinational state* (London: Macmillan, 1997): p. 65

¹⁶¹ Ramet 1992, p. 82

¹⁶² Sekelj 1990, p. 93

sort of a confederate state with primary decision making vested in the republics.¹⁶³ By 1970 it was becoming evident that the economic reforms brought little improvement and that the misinvestment has only been devolved to the republican level and so they were put to a halt.¹⁶⁴ The only considerable reforms were now those demanding more constitutional affirmation of national republics, governmental autonomy or building up of the rights of ethnic entities.¹⁶⁵ What started as an economic reform was transformed into a movement for political change that transformed the Yugoslav system.

By 1967 politicians, especially those in republican organs, adopted the vocabulary in which “national” could be linked with almost any concept in order to establish the reasoning for its promotion. These demands were tolerated and even backed as long as they called for the establishment of national culture and cultural institutions. When some of the republican leaderships started running ahead of LCY’s schedule with demands for loosening the tight on the system, joining forces with nationalists and rallying with masses, as they did in Croatia, Tito stepped in and suppressed these tendencies in 1971/72. The Croatian leadership was thoroughly cleansed of the nationalistic elements while in other republics politicians that have made their names with people had to go away accused of “liberalism” or “technocratism”.¹⁶⁶ During 1972 all the republican leaderships were purged, with the exception of Montenegro.¹⁶⁷ Party was thoroughly cleansed from anyone even slightly off its course and party cell structure was revised, especially in the state administration, economy and (after many years of not functioning) in non-productive sector, most importantly in culture and media.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Ramet 1992, pp. 92, 118, Connor 1984, p. 225

¹⁶⁴ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and its Problems 1918-1988* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1988): pp. 24-25

¹⁶⁵ Pavlowitch 1971, p. 355

¹⁶⁶ Pavlowitch 1988, p. 25

¹⁶⁷ Leslie Benson, *Yugoslavia: A Concise History* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001): p. 124

¹⁶⁸ Benson 2001, p. 124

Adopted in January 1974, the new constitution was the longest in the world and easily the most complicated. Though still hiding behind the phrases of the “leading role of the Party”, it ceded further power to republics and their LCs allowing them to control the naming of officials and so the central authorities lost almost all prerogatives of power over republics. Further, any of the eight units could now veto decisions on federal level, a situation that led to a paralysis of common, federal frame.¹⁶⁹ Collective state presidency, composed from one member from each republic or autonomous province, was set up. Republics got their own presidents and prime ministers and could initiate laws. John Lampe described the system as “a confederation of single-party regimes”¹⁷⁰ as the only unified thing was the will of the communists to stay in the power.

The common impression was that the wishes of the nationalists have been all but granted.¹⁷¹ If one was to conclude from the previous experiences, it was hard to believe that a system decentralized like this would not create further frictions between republics and nations. The wiser among the nationalists saw no reason to stir the pot - the system was working in their benefit.

¹⁶⁹ Roberts 2007, p. 425

¹⁷⁰ John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000²): p. 305

¹⁷¹ Miller 2007, p. 209

Chapter 3: Nation- and Culture-Building in Montenegro, 1963-1974

Decentralizing policies applied in 1963 and then accelerated in 1966 as well as the promotion of the “political periphery” placed Montenegro in a different, much more favorable political setting than just a few years before. Montenegro was promised help that will enable it to reach the level equal with other republics, politically, economically and culturally. In terms of politics, devolving of power from the federation and equal status of all of the republics in the Council of Nations (formed in 1968) promoted it into an equal player on the federal level. Economically, Montenegro could not stand on its own, but the previous attachment to Serbia was now broken in light of promised help from federal funds.¹⁷² In an atmosphere of newly found freedom following the loosened grip of Ranković’s secret police,¹⁷³ the official promotion of nations left space for nationalisms of various shapes to appear more aggressively and, many times, without consequences other than criticism.

Reading the signs around it, the political leadership of Montenegro set their course towards greater independence, as did most of the republics, especially the small ones whose nationalisms were not seemed as dangerous as those of the Serbs or Croats. The greatest obstacle for Montenegro on this course were the national and cultural links with Serbia and the legacy of its tutorage from the previous period. In order to bring Montenegrin nation to an equal status with other nations in Yugoslavia there was a set of items it needed to obtain. In this lengthy chapter I will deal bring forth three aspects that were promoted in order to build up an independent culture, a concept that was tightly interknitted with the one of nation. But before

¹⁷² Jovanović (2003, p. 237) realtes the story that several months before the Brioni plenum, Tito “ordered” Djoko Pajković, president of the CC of LCM, to break the 1963 agreement with Serbia and promised that the budget deficite will from now on be covered by the Federation.

¹⁷³ Roberts 2007, 419

dealing with them, we should see how in general Montenegrin leadership saw its current situation, how it reflected on the past period and how it envisioned the future.

At very end of the year 1970, with just a week separating them, in Titograd “Pobjeda” there appeared two authoritative texts from two leading Montenegrin politicians. The one of Veselin Djuranović, president of the Montenegrin CC, was his speech from the 20th session of the CC; in “Pobjeda” it appeared in the column “Present Time, Future Time” (*Vrijeme sadašnje, vrijeme sjutrašnje*) and with a supra-heading “Intra-National Relations: Montenegro and Montenegrin Culture” (*Medjunacionalni odnosi: Crna Gora i crnogorska kultura*) since it protracted in three consequent numbers.¹⁷⁴ The same pages five days later were reserved for a lengthy interview that Veljko Vlahović, the gray eminence of Montenegrin Party and one of Yugoslavia’s top ideologists, gave to the editor of the newspapers Dragan Vukčević.¹⁷⁵ Recapitulating the year filled with debates, many on nationhood, they gave a coherent view of the LCM on the national question, explaining to the Montenegrin public Party’s previous and their present course that marked the several past years.

In the period behind them Montenegro was bound by the inherited problem of underdevelopment and most of the efforts were spent on building-up of the “material base of socialism”. Because of that, in this phase “Montenegrin communists were paying less attention to creating wider possibilities and a more favorable atmosphere in which science, culture and education would in a creative way deal with our own past”.¹⁷⁶ However, culture is an integral part of the self-managing development and there cannot be real socialism without it. The previous, etatist phase of development was not favorable to the full development of nations.

¹⁷⁴ “S vremenom i protiv njega”, *Pobjeda*, 27. 12. 1970, p. 5, “Negacija i ‘odbrana’ sa sličnih pozicija”, *Pobjeda*, 31. 12. 1970, p. 4-5

¹⁷⁵ “Crnu Goru smo zatekli, nijesmo je birali”, *Pobjeda*, 31. 12. 1970, p. 4-5

¹⁷⁶ *Pobjeda*, 31. 12. 1970, p. 4. Phrase “a creative way of dealing with the past” was used to underline that past should not be simply reproduced but recreated to suit the current needs of society.

Today, self-management, “which boosts self-confidence and consciousness in people, does the same to the nations”.¹⁷⁷ The creation of nations in Yugoslavia is lagging behind the developments in Europe, but “nation, Djuranović explains, as a historically conditioned community of people, is a reality of our socialist epoch as well”.¹⁷⁸ “Many in our country are confused by the fact that on the field of national affirmation we had to solve with delay some tasks that the bourgeois Europe by and large solved in the 19th century”.¹⁷⁹ This course should not be observed as a step back. “More precisely, Djuranović continues, I will be frank to say that it might seem that were going one step backwards but the essence of [this move] is not to miss the lawfulness of historical development (*da ne bi preskakali zakonitosti istorijskog razvitka*)”.¹⁸⁰ But on this course LC is not alone – like it or not, there are some other forces as well: “The lagging behind should be compensated and when one is compensating it is sometimes done also by heterogeneous forces”.¹⁸¹ Vlahović was also of an opinion, typical for the apparent contradictions in Marxist dialectics, that nationalism will be easier to notice in conditions of the affirmation of nations than in the conditions of national inequalities. In the end they set a boundary not to be crossed: one should not forget that unitarism and separatism are two sides of the same medal – of nationalist chauvinism (sic!). Even if a strong tendency of negating Montenegrin individuality and the individuality of its culture is apparent and waged from the “old positions of the Great-Serbian bourgeoisie”, defending these individualities, one should not lapse in divisions on ethnic grounds.¹⁸² As we can read from this, the Party knew its course and set its own tempo in realizing full national equality of Montenegrin nation. Both those who try to

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ *Pobjeda*, 27. 12. 1970, p. 5

¹⁷⁹ *Pobjeda*, 31. 12. 1970, p. 4

¹⁸⁰ *Pobjeda*, 27. 12. 1970, p. 5

¹⁸¹ *Pobjeda*, 31. 12. 1970, p. 5

¹⁸² “Negacija i ‘odbrana’ sa sličnih pozicija”, *Pobjeda*, 31. 12. 1970, pp. 4-5

slow it down and those who try to force their own pace will be considered as working against the LC.

Several years prior to 1970 and the few years following it were marked by this course. In the next three subchapters we will see their working in three separate, yet very much connected, fields.

3.1. Symbolic Shift: Njegoš and the Mausoleum

It is almost impossible to overemphasize the symbolic value that Mount Lovćen holds for every Montenegrin and every Serb. The cruel stone giant seen from afar was the last strongpoint of Montenegrin defenses with its forests the refuge even when the capital Cetinje was looted by the Turks. It was the first sight of homeland from the Adriatic and the last one Montenegrins would see leaving to work in the American mines. For a warrior people with their back protected by the mountains it was easy to establish it as a symbol as soon as Montenegro appeared as a state formation at the beginning of 19th century. After Njegoš's glorification of Lovćen as the metaphor of Montenegrin freedom¹⁸³ it became known in all lands where Serbs resided and further across the Balkans. The strength of mountains as incarnations of capitals, and indeed of the whole states, is clearly seen in the parallel Belgrade with its Mt Avala and Cetinje with Mt Lovćen, used often throughout the 19th century.¹⁸⁴ With its Jezerski vrh top as the last resting place of Njegoš, who by late 19th century was firmly established as one of the most important

¹⁸³ For instance in the poem "To Lovćen" in Petar II Petrović Njegoš, *Pjesme* (Beograd: Prosveta – Cetinje: Obod, 1977): p. 235

¹⁸⁴ During the visit of King Nicholas of Montenegro to Belgrade in 1896 Serb poet Jovan Jovanović Zmaj read one of his poems with verses "From Avala, from Lovćen, one trumpet is playing, Avala comes closer, to kiss Lovćen" (*Sa Avale, sa Lovćena, jedna truba trubi, Avala se približuje, Lovćen da poljubi*). Savo Vukmanović, *Nikola I Petrović Njegoš: biografske crte* (Cetinje: S. Vukmanović, 1990)

Serb national poets,¹⁸⁵ Lovćen's symbolic was completed, making it, even nowadays, the most important place in and of Montenegro, an imagined vertical holding the entire state.¹⁸⁶ The sight of the top (even though it included a *chapel* at its top) became so important to the image of Montenegrin struggle for freedom that it even made it into the communist era coat-of-arms of this republic in 1945. When in 1960s the discussion over the demolition of the chapel and the building of the mausoleum erupted, the emotional charge concerning this symbol was so strong that there was rarely a person not wanting to express his opinion on it, writing to the state officials and to the people.

Despite the great number of articles and data documented about it, the history of Jezerski vrh and human interventions on it is relatively simple. While still in full strength and health, Njegoš came to an unusual idea to build a small, modest stone church at Jezerski vrh which was to become his final resting place, by all means a strange choice for a bishop. Harsh weather conditions in the winter of his death (1851) followed by the war with the Turks that came after the succession of prince Danilo to the throne, allowed his will to be fulfilled only in 1855. Except for an occasional damage inflicted to it by thunders, the church/chapel stood unchanged playing its symbolic role and visited by rare travelers until 1916 when it was destroyed in Austro-Hungarian shelling during the battle to take over Lovćen.¹⁸⁷ The remains of Njegoš were carried from Cetinje monastery and the remains of the chapel were supposed to be demolished in

¹⁸⁵ Andrew B. Wachtel, "How to Use a Classic: Petar Petrović Njegoš in the Twentieth Century" in: Lampe J., Mazower M. (eds.), *Ideologies and National Identities – The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 2004): p. 135

¹⁸⁶ For King Nicholas of Montenegro "the hill (sic!) of Lovćen is the Serb Olympus, a monument built by the divine hand to Freedom and its defenders", *Glas Crnogorca*, 16. 2. 1913. Even earlier, the poet Ljubomir P. Nenadović, who spent a part of his life together with Njegoš in Montenegro and on his journeys, praises Lovćen as the "Serb Ararat" where the ark of Serb freedom stopped, cf. Jovan Skerlić, *Omladina i njena književnost* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1966)

¹⁸⁷ Though some sources claim that the Austria-Hungary planed to build a gigantic statue of victory in place of the chapel, this was probably meant to be executed on the other top of Lovćen, Štirovnik, which is better seen from the coastland.

order for Lovćen to lose “the aureole of the sanctuary that it has now, especially having in mind the benefit of this for the future annexation of this area”, as Austro-Hungarian foreign minister baron von Burian wrote to his envoy in Cetinje.¹⁸⁸ Njegoš’s remains were carried to the Cetinje monastery but the demolition was never finished due to the wartime circumstances. After the war, the first idea of the victorious King Alexander of Yugoslavia¹⁸⁹ was to build in this spot a more impressive tomb for Njegoš by the plans presented to him by Ivan Meštrović, one of his favorite artists, and probably one of the best known Yugoslavia had at the time, who envisioned it in his usual eclectic style reminiscent of antic temples. However, the metropolitan of Montenegro Gavriilo Dožić and other church leaders managed to persuade the king to settle for the renovation of the chapel. The restoration work was assigned to the Russian émigré Nikolaj Krasnov, a favorite with the king and architect of many government edifices. Krasnov designed the chapel to be of same shape and sizes and tried to use all of the original stone blocks that could be found on the spot. On the other hand, the still poor conservational knowledge and principles of the era, as well as his own will to embellish the original edifice, the architect did not manage to produce the Spartan simplicity of the original church: the cornice, a decorated portal and a round base encircling it were his own additions while a memorial plaque functioned as an architrave of the door and bore the inscription commemorating its renewal. Though still modest, the interior was now decorated with icons of saints of Montenegro, the inscription under the dome and a new marble sarcophagus for Njegoš. Also, the road leading up this inhospitable mountain was widened and it was by it that in September 1925 arrived the king, church leaders, many politicians and high ranking officers of the army in the course of a three-day ceremony. The restoration works were not at the time widely discussed – there weren’t many people who

¹⁸⁸ Komnen Bećirović, *Borba za Lovćen Njegošev* (Cetinje: Svetigora, 2002): p. 136

¹⁸⁹ King Aleksandar paid for the rebuilding of the mausoleum from his own purse, Wachtel 2004, p. 138

saw the original and from far away it seemed the same as it did before 1916. Just how powerful symbol the restituted chapel was became obvious when during the Second World War a rumor spread that Italian army planned to use the chapel as a target for practicing which stirred much anger and disapproval so that the Italian authorities had to their best to calm the people down.

After the end of the Second World War the new communist regime in Yugoslavia retained a high esteem for Njegoš, using his symbolic though it was by now saturated in Serbhood and inter-war Yugoslavism. On the contrary, Njegoš was retained as a Yugoslav national poet only that he was now coming from the newly nationally liberated, smallest, yet “most heroic” of Yugoslav republics and was presented as a middle way between Serb and Croat nationalisms.¹⁹⁰ He was, of course, also the most important poet and historic figure in Montenegro as well and the centenary of his death in 1951 was the first major post-war celebration in this republic, envisioned as “not only as the apotheosis of Njegoš but also a manifestation of our cultural heritage and the display of cultural revolution which has taken place in our country from 1941 to this day”.¹⁹¹ The chapel featured abundantly in the program of the celebration and amongst other things the small damages on it were mended, its picture was included in the album dealing with persons and places of Njegoš’s life and it even featured on the poster by the famous painter Milo Milunović announcing the celebration.¹⁹² It was not once mentioned in any negative context, the most fascinating thing being that its religious component is completely shunned by its national importance. After the Celebration the chapel remained the most prominent symbol of

¹⁹⁰ Wachtel 2004, p. 141

¹⁹¹ DACG, 254-1, 2. 12. 1950. Another reason why the year 1951 was appropriate for the celebration is that it was the ending year of the first five-year plan in Yugoslavia. Also, Njegoš and his works were seen as patriotic and connected with the partisans’ fight in WWII. The comment on the commissioned “Heroic Oratorio” by Vojislav Vučković, composed on the verses of “Mountain Wreath” says: “Through words and music breaks through the same protest against violence, same hatred towards the traitors of the people, same call to fighting and insurrection of the enslaved people which motivated for battle heroes from the popular uprisings of the last century and heroes of the recent National-Liberation War” (DACG, 254-8-990). The committee also emphasized that this will also be “a political manifestation” (DACG, 254-7-513)

¹⁹² DACG, 254-7, 29. 1. 1951

Montenegro, a single monument that could represent the country and featured on several postal marks.¹⁹³

Because of all this it came as a surprise that already in 1952 Montenegrin government contacted Meštrović, to make drafts for the grandiose monument to replace the chapel.¹⁹⁴ The committee for the erection of the mausoleum was founded in 1954 and set its aim to finish the work until 1963, when the mausoleum would be opened upon the celebration of 150 years of Njegoš's birth.¹⁹⁵ Meštrović finished the monumental sculpture in 1957 but the works on Lovćen were lagging behind from the very beginning and were then completely abandoned for the lack of funds. In the meantime Meštrović died in 1962 and so did the president of the committee while most of its members were not in Montenegro anymore. After the project's concept was attacked in press by an eminent Belgrade art historian Lazar Trifunović,¹⁹⁶ it was decided in 1962 to abandon it, though it already consumed a lot of money, the tunnel to the top of Lovćen was started, building material stood underneath the top and Njegoš's sculpture and caryatids were in Cetinje.¹⁹⁷ The discussion on the project in the newspapers started only in 1963 although the report of 1964 states that everything was ready for the assembling of the mausoleum, the only things remaining to be done were the dismantlement the chapel and drilling of the tunnel.¹⁹⁸ In 1966 came the Rapport of the Commission for Reorganization of Cetinje Museums formed by the Department for education and culture of Montenegro, which was led again by Lazar Trifunović and made of eminent scientist, most of them from Montenegro, others from Serbia. The commission gave a very negative view on the mausoleum and unanimously voted against its

¹⁹³ *Katalog poštanskih maraka jugoslovenskih zemalja 2* (Beograd: Jugomarka, 1980): pp. 45, 54

¹⁹⁴ Lazar Trifunović, ed., *Umetnost* 27/28 (1971): pp. 36, 41

¹⁹⁵ DACG, 99-11-351, doc. nr. 4

¹⁹⁶ *Danas*, 30. 8. 1961

¹⁹⁷ DACG, 99-11-351, doc. nr. 5

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*

putting on Lovćen.¹⁹⁹ The report fueled the discussion in newspapers; among the opponents of the mausoleum was also the Collegium of the Cetinje museums (*Stručni kolegijum muzeja Cetinja*). After this even the Serb Orthodox Church felt safe enough to join the discussion, loudly advocating against the mausoleum for the first time since the start of the discussion. The last person working on the mausoleum, the guard watching over the marble parts, was let off in June 1966.²⁰⁰

In the course of these several years (1961-66) parties for and against the mausoleum were formed, both with an array of different arguments. The discussion was unusually fierce, open and full of critique – very different from the bureaucratic matter of dealing with things silently, which was seen in this case in the period afore 1961. Discussing the importance, meaning and symbolism of Lovćen made it possible to grasp the views of the participants on the history, present and future course of Montenegro, their views on Njegoš's (and therefore also Montenegrin) nationhood and even ethnicity. Here are the arguments of both sides.²⁰¹

The party in favor of the mausoleum and its placing on Lovćen considered that Njegoš's chapel²⁰² was torn down in 1916 and then definitely in 1925 and that the present-one is actually a chapel of King Alexander, work of monarchy supported by Church. As such it can only be a symbol of the Karađorđević dynasty that occupied and abolished independent Montenegro, symbol of Alexander's dictatorship and Great Serbian hegemony.²⁰³ Although nobody

¹⁹⁹ Trifunović 1971: 59-60

²⁰⁰ DACG, 99-11-351, doc. nr. 8

²⁰¹ The arguments are grouped in logical wholes and are not presented chronologically and thus include also some of the older dates. Some of the opinions have been proved wrong but are listed nonetheless since they played an equally important role in the minds of the party supporting them. Most of the false arguments were never renounced, as can be seen from the later discussions.

²⁰² The terminology used in the discussion in which each side tried to attach the name of Njegoš to its own building and slandering the other one ascribing it to king Aleksandar or Meštrović, shows us that the battle was fought also on a semantical level.

²⁰³ This was, amongst others, also the view of Vladimir Dedijer, a publicist and historian well positioned in the Yugoslav communist hierarchy; *Pobjeda*, 20. 8. 1970.

mentioned it aloud, this view was projected to the present-day situation and protests against the mausoleum were presented by some as the doing of Serbia which is trying to subdue Montenegro and belittle Njegoš by leaving him to rest in the chapel.²⁰⁴ The work of the great sculptor Meštrović, they argued further, will adequately honor Njegoš (“the existing chapel, built in 1925, is not appropriate to the greatness of Njegoš”, noticed general Savo J. Orović).²⁰⁵ The imposing mausoleum has been specifically modeled to stand on Lovćen where it will make a harmonious whole (“in contrast with the present one [i.e. the chapel], this monument will be a low quadrangle which will blend with the natural line of Lovćen” was the opinion of Meštrović himself)²⁰⁶ and it is not suitable for Cetinje, neither from esthetic nor from the symbolic point of view (“Lovćen, not Cetinje is the symbol of Montenegrin resistance and struggle” cried out the Department for Education and Culture of Montenegro).²⁰⁷ There it will be admired by a large number of visitors and tourists who will easily ascend it by the new road and tunnel, which will bring Njegoš closer to the masses of Yugoslavs. One of their strongest points was arguing that Njegoš should be praised above all as a ruler and a poet while his role as a bishop was of minor importance for his personality and work (“Rade Tomov²⁰⁸ was not only a bishop but above all a leader of brave nation and poet-philosopher” noted K. Čakić).²⁰⁹ Njegoš was above all a Montenegrin and Yugoslav and the greatest Montenegrin national hero; for this reasons Montenegrins have a right above all to decide what to do with Lovćen and their memory of him (“The building of the mausoleum is a sovereign right of Montenegrin people”²¹⁰ considering that “Njegoš grew from the people it is the right of the people to pay the due to him in a best possible

²⁰⁴ *Politika*, 9. 4. 1990

²⁰⁵ *Borba*, 24. 2. 1966

²⁰⁶ Trifunović 1971: 46

²⁰⁷ DACG, 99-11-351, doc. nr. 5

²⁰⁸ Njegoš's secular name was Radivoj (Rade) Tomov Petrović

²⁰⁹ *Vjesnik*, 26. 3. 1969

²¹⁰ *NIN*, 30. 3. 1969

way”).²¹¹ Chapel is not at all adequate for the top of Lovćen, the symbol of Montenegro since one V. Džaković commented

a Christian chapel on Lovćen is not in accordance with Lovćen as a symbol of armed fight for freedom. Further, the chapel is not in accordance with the spirit and content of “Mountain Wreath” since it is well known that “Mountain Wreath” is not a Christian ode but the glorification of heroic armed struggle - the wreath of glory of heroic Montenegro and the expression of free philosophy of Njegoš.²¹²

The last of the statements is especially remarkable and indicative to many other similar to it, as it speaks in contemporary terms, dealing with Njegoš as if he was one of World War Two partisans, transposing the situation of the present day to the past. This is specific for this party which stood in favor of modern, i.e. socialist principles, against traditionalism and church.

The party in favor of the preservation of the chapel emphasized that a modest chapel and not a mausoleum is what Njegoš built for himself and where he wanted to be buried; building the mausoleum would be the rewriting of history. Even if the chapel is Aleksandar’s, it is also Njegoš’s. Its seclusion on the unspoiled top of the mountain is also a constituent part of Njegoš’s will. The chapel is a religious monument in the possession of the Church and is moreover listed as a cultural heritage monument under the protection of the state. The mausoleum can be built in any place and even Cetinje doesn’t have a Njegoš’s monument (“it can ruin Lovćen, but can add a lot to Cetinje” added T. Đukić).²¹³ The mausoleum is too bulky, unharmonious and the mountain top will need to be “pruned” for it, not to mention the drilling of Lovćen, which will all desecrate this holly place (“The top of Lovćen is the symbol of Montenegro as it is now, part of its coat-of-arms and of the memory of a visitor” pointed out O. Perović).²¹⁴ Additionally, the whole of this expensive project will be paid for by the poor Montenegro and its citizens.

²¹¹ *Politika*, 18. 3. 1969, quoting from the session of the Local Council of Cetinje.

²¹² Trifunović 1971: 118

²¹³ *Danas*, 8. 11. 1961

²¹⁴ *Pobjeda*, 13. 5. 1963

Meštrović's mausoleum is a dark and mystical tomb suited for a pharaoh or a tyrant which doesn't suit Njegoš, his historical role and his personality ("the sculpture represents Njegoš more as a master and a ruler than as a poet and a symbol of freedom" was the opinion of the Commission for the reorganization of Cetinje Museums)²¹⁵ and its conception is foreign, "directly opposite to all the ideas born in this [Yugoslav] society (Lazar Trifunović).²¹⁶ Meštrović's work is done in style that is old-fashioned and his glorification of cardinal Stepinac makes him unworthy to mould Njegoš.

The compromise offered by the Church and the chapel party when they were pressed against the wall was to incorporate the chapel into/beside the mausoleum but this never met approval with the mausoleum party who seemed to be decisively against the chapel as a religious monument.

For two years (1966-68) the discussion melted down and the question was set aside in what seemed as a victory of the "chapel party" and its common sense. But the course of gradual changes in Yugoslavia changed the stand-off between the two parties. The victory of the decentralist camp was crowned in 1968 when, in accordance with the new policy, the congresses of the republics for the first time met *before* the congress of the LCY; additionally a parity was introduced in constituting the bodies of the LCY. One of the biggest changes that the 8th Congress brought was the drastic introduction of the new and younger people to the structures of the LCY (69 % of new members!), an occurrence which drastically changed the structure of the League of Communists of Montenegro as well. This was due not only to the change of generations but also to the redistribution of power within the Party elite.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Trifunović 1971, pp. 59-60

²¹⁶ *Danas*, 30 .8. 1961

²¹⁷ Sekelj 1990, p. 93

The positions of the new republican leadership were soon reflected on the issue of the half-finished Mausoleum. Suddenly, but in fact accordingly with the broader tendencies, on 9th of December 1968, the local council (*skupština opštine*) of Cetinje in one of its regular sessions reached the decision to take the building of the mausoleum upon itself forming the commission to deal with the question. The decision of the local council is based, as it is said, on “interpreting the wishes of Yugoslavs, and especially of Montenegrins and the citizens of Cetinje”. Funding, the main obstacle for the finishing of the mausoleum was to be gathered by voluntary donations of companies and ordinary people – “As Njegoš and his work belong to all nations of Yugoslavia, the local council of Cetinje expects that it will find understanding and support of all Yugoslavs in this venture”.²¹⁸ A year later, the project again gained support from the state, that is, from the executive council of the parliament of the Montenegro.²¹⁹

Immediately after reaching the decision, the council launched a fierce campaign, obviously with the support from some higher instances, which was felt in the media reporting that was now much more in favor with the mausoleum than before; the reporter from the streets of Cetinje and in Njeguši village²²⁰ finds only support for the decision of the council or restrain, no opinion against, except a silent one: “There are also those who claim that they already stated their opinion and stick to it”.²²¹ After the protest by the Church Synod on 21st May 1969 the Cetinje local council was enraged demanding the resignation of metroplitan Danilo of Montenegro and Littoral and threatening to sue the Synod. Tomorrow, “spontaneous” demonstrations of high school pupils²²² against the interference of Church in state business and “work strikes”

²¹⁸ DACG, 99-11-351, doc. nr. 5

²¹⁹ DACG, 99-11, p. 141

²²⁰ Where Njegoš was born. .

²²¹ *Pobjeda*, 10. 4. 1969

²²² The inscriptions worn by the pupils, obviously made by the same person(s), read “The decision about the building of the monument must be carried out!”, “Only a monument like this is worthy” (with a picture of Meštrović’s sculpture), “Honest citizens think like us” etc.

(extension of work hours for one hour more) were launched as well. The president of the local youth committee exclaimed: “I think that metropolitan of Cetinje has his work to do and not to interfere with our self-managing /*samoupravna*/ rights”.²²³ The opinion of the Synod was matched by the Organization of orthodox priests of Montenegro that gave support for mausoleum and even gathered a donation for its building.²²⁴

The Committee for the building of the Mausoleum was formed on 7th of July 1969 and among its members counted many prominent party officials (such as Filip Bajković, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, Peko Dapčević, Veselin Đuranović, Vidoje Žarković, Veljko Milatović, Vlado Popović – namely all the top officials of Montenegro as well as those of them now on service in the organs of Federation).²²⁵ This of course, meant also the support of the tops of other republics.²²⁶ The success of the media campaign which the Committee launched is described in its report from April 1970 to the Executive Council:

With the aim of propaganda and support for the action from that time on [from the first meeting of the Committee] over 200 shorter and longer news articles were published, than over 150 radio reports, two longer TV shows (...) It is important to emphasize that in this period only a small number of articles (*napisa*) which are contrary to the building of the mausoleum appeared. (...) 50,000 copies of the proclamation from the first meeting of the Committee were printed.²²⁷

Further on they reported that “from the donations of the companies from all over the country half of the total sum of money needed for the construction was collected”.²²⁸

A well directed state action was underway but the opposing party still thought that they could appeal to the common sense of the power holders, responsible institutions and of the ordinary

²²³ *Politika*, 18. 3. 1969

²²⁴ *Pobjeda*, 24. 4. 1969

²²⁵ For full list see *Pobjeda*, 10. 7. 1969

²²⁶ *Politika*, 6. 5. 1970, 15. 5. 1970

²²⁷ DACG, 99-11-142

²²⁸ *ibid.*

people. This fight was led by the intellectuals who gathered an impressive list of names in supporting of the cause, mainly writers, painters, architects and university professors.²²⁹ They were Montenegrins interested both professionally and nationally, then those whose voice counted only because they came from Montenegro, like the Montenegrin students studying in Belgrade, and in the end Serbs with no connection with Montenegro who mostly protested from the position of their profession though some were also concerned for the Serb side of the Montenegrin identity. Some of the articles aspire to achieve its cause with friendliness, other are quite bitter. Most of the protesters ask questions but hesitate to give answers, and the only institution that is attacked is the lowest of them all – the local council in Cetinje. However, silence that came from the upper instances of the state spoke louder than words. Professor Mihailo Đurić²³⁰ noted that the mausoleum is much more intended to divide than to unite:

Who could be interested that much in a monument that obviously contradicts its own purpose, which divides and sets people against each other, under which it will by no means be possible to gather all the true admirers of the great poet, to which obviously won't come many of the important representatives of Serb culture (...)?²³¹

Their attempts and protests were attacked by newspapers as anti-self-managing or spurred by the Church. *Vijesnik u srijedu* from Zagreb held that the “loud campaign” and “growingly unpleasant atmosphere” is created against the will of the “only ones who are socially qualified (*društveno kvalifikovani*) to make it – the Montenegrins themselves” ending with a conclusion

²²⁹ These among others included writers Ivo Andrić, Miroslav Krleža (who was later accused by some for his anti-Serb positions) and Meša Selimović, poets Vasko Popa, Stevan Raičković and Matija Bećković, painters Milo Milunović, , Peđa Milosavljević and Petar Lubarda, sculptor Risto Stijović, art critic Oto Bihalji-Merin, linguist Pavle Ivić, architect Aleksandar Deroko and many others, among them prince Mihailo Petrović-Njegoš, grandson of King Nikola of Montenegro.

²³⁰ A professor at the Belgrade Law faculty, Đurić was imprisoned in 1972 for his written protest against the erection of the Mausoleum as well as for his lecture at his faculty in which he argued that Yugoslavia was “virtually a geographical expression, given that on its soil, or more precisely on its ruins (...) a few independent, autonomous, even mutually opposed nation-states have been established”, Nick Miller, “Return Engagement – Intellectuals and Nationalism in Tito's Yugoslavia“ in: Lenard J. Cohen, Lenard, Jasna Dragović-Soso (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe; New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008); p. 185

²³¹ Trifunović 1971, p. 187

that the protest follows the one of the Serb Orthodox Church.²³² The action for collecting the signatures against the mausoleum in Philological Faculty of Belgrade University was cut short and designated as a “nationalist outburst” since it “directly meddles in what is an inalienable right of People’s Republic of Montenegro and its people”.²³³ The article against the mausoleum in the magazine of Novi Sad students *Indeks* entitled “You can and god gave you the power” (*Vi možete i bog vam je dao*)²³⁴ and signed by 161 Montenegrins was banned for its “insults against the highest self-managing organs of People’s Republic of Montenegro”.²³⁵ On the other side a convicted war criminal, a close associate of Ante Pavelić and his Nazi regime and an ideologist of a separate Montenegrin ethnicity, Savić Marković Štedimlija wrote an article in a reputable Zagreb daily *Vjesnik* (though, it must be mentioned, only in the section “Readers Write”) entitled “We Know Who is Waging the Campaign Against Njegoš’s Mausoleum”.²³⁶ The cooperation between the officials working for the mausoleum and the officials and institutions in Croatia, which was at the moment living its nationalist revival of “Mass Movement” (*Maspok*) and “Croatian Spring”, was witnessed on several occasions. In May 1971 Matica Hrvatska, one of the leaders of the Croat nationalist revival, formed a commission for the gathering of help for the Njegoš mausoleum since it “symbolizes the centuries old struggle of Montenegrin people for freedom, as well as the cooperation between our two nations”.²³⁷

Another pinnacle of the clash and a very suggestive source is the sue filed by the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) against the Republic of Montenegro and the Cetinje local council because of the destruction of the chapel which the Church argued to be one of its temples. That

²³² Trifunović 1971, p. 114

²³³ *Politika*, 19. 6. 1970

²³⁴ The title is referring to the verse from the epic poem “Početak bune protiv dahija” that sings about the start of the First Serbian Uprising in 1804. With this verse one of the Turkish leaders warns the others that ruling by power and violence will lead to their doom.

²³⁵ *Politika*, 31. 5. 1971

²³⁶ Trifunović 1971, pp. 141-143

²³⁷ Trifunović 1971, p. 176

the chances of wining were low was obvious and seen well from the statement of Petar Tomanović, president of the local council and one of the leaders of the mausoleum initiative; naming the witnesses (sic!) for the accused he listed “Republic of Montenegro, which originally ordered the monument, and whose president at the time is the present-day president of the Constitutional Court, then the Local Council of Cetinje and the whole of Montenegrin people.”²³⁸ On the trial, the answer of the defense (the Republic) argued that SOC can’t be a representative of the legitimate interests of Montenegrin Orthodox Church (MOC), reaching in the detailed historical and canonical analysis of the claim that MOC was illegitimately subdued by SOC in 1920. Thus the “Macedonian Scenario”²³⁹ was put to work as an ultimate threat raised on several occasions against SOC in Montenegro.²⁴⁰ Hence we have a socialist government (that was attacking constantly the church from the position of secular state) advocating the restoration of another church for which there was almost no one interested but itself.²⁴¹ The conclusion of defense said:

Insisting that Njegoš should stay in the existing Aleksandar’s chapel in Lovćen means nothing else then a means for fighting against Montenegrin national equality, an attempt to bring the spirit of present-day generation of Montenegrin nation back to 19th c of Serbian-orthodox and wrongly directed national-romanticism existence.²⁴²

The court decided that the chapel is not a temple but a funerary monument and a cultural monument and as such will according to the law be transferred to another place.

²³⁸ *Novosti*, 6. 5. 1970

²³⁹ Not much earlier, in 1967, the Macedonian speaking orthodox clergy proclaimed independence of all Orthodox church units in the territory of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia from the (albeit since WWII only nominal) tutorship of SOC that existed until then. Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols. Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002): p. 46

²⁴⁰ Zvezdan Folić, “Izbor crnogorsko-primorskog mitropolita 1961”, http://montenegrina.net/pages/pages1/religija/izbor_crnogorsko_primorskog_mitropolita_1961.htm, last access: 16 May 2010

²⁴¹ The first, little known demand for an independent Montenegrin Orthodox Church came in June 1945 from a group of orthodox priests led by partizan war veteran Petar Kapičić but was abandoned because of the divided opinions of the communist officials. Perica 2002, p. 49

²⁴² Trifunović 1971, p. 172

The whole discussion waged in hundreds of articles is equally about socialist against religious, new versus old or even Serb against exclusively Montenegrin, as it is a discussion on the destruction of the original and construction of the new national symbol according to the plans of the power holders, and therefore it is also about the reinvention of tradition, of recasting of history. The party in favor of the chapel defends it as a testament of the time, as the witness of the supposed “wrongly directed national-romanticism”. The opposing party, led by the communists who saw it as a fight against reactionary forces and a reason to strengthen their lines, saw it as a progressive move, a right of the new age to build a monument to the other side of Njegoš’s personality, the one of ruler, disregarding the one of a bishop (in as much as the chapel did the opposite) and since the chapel is not Njegoš’s but Aleksandar’s – the argumentation follows – mausoleum is also a fight against monarchist Great Serbian dictatorship that tortured communists and Montenegrins. The chapel could not be a symbol of the new Montenegrin nation and it stood in such prominent place that it had to go. The mausoleum is a new start for a new nation, and this is exactly what many from the chapel party feared: rooting out of Njegoš from his Christianity leads to his rooting out of Serbhood as well. Although this was not mentioned openly except on several occasions, it was felt by many that this stubbornness against the chapel and insisting on only one side of Njegoš’s identity leave an open door to further interventions in the reconsiderations of his work and all of Montenegrin history. One more impression a historian has after reading the documents is that from the beginning of the 1970s and in light of the happenings concerning Lovćen it seems that the uncertain positions from the previous 25 years of development in socialism have been left behind and that from now on we have many people who have taken firm positions on nationality and its further course in Montenegro. After a long period of total ambiguity we now find people who can be clearly

identified with one idea or the other. Most of the people are still somewhere in between or can swiftly shift loyalties, but as time passes they will have less and less space to negotiate a self-identity not influenced by the opposed statements of the two sides.

After the start of the final phase of works, in Belgrade appeared a special edition of magazine “Umetnost” (“Art”) for 1971, wholly dedicated to the discussion on the mausoleum. It kept aloof from the discussion with printing of both pro and contra arguments, though it was obvious which side it took (it was edited by Lazar Trifunović, one of the leading figures in the pro-chapel camp). In its second part it listed also poems and paintings on this problematic subject from many important artists. Qualified as a criticism of the ruling structures, the magazine was withdrawn from sale and all of its copies were destroyed.²⁴³

After the construction of the tunnel and the securing of the needed money, the chapel was finally demolished in 1972. The promises that the chapel is going to be dismantled and than put up again in Njeguši village were never fulfilled and its stones were disgracefully thrown in a field near the village, unmarked and unattained.

Announcing the approaching opening of the mausoleum, the editorial of Titograd’s “Pobjeda” commented that the “Njegoš mausoleum is a work that has grown from the feeling of national debt to the great poet and his presence in our time”; Njegoš’s work should not be limited by Christian Orthodoxy or romanticism allowing misinterpretations – “Our time requires a more modern approach to Njegoš and his work”. The article continues “Maybe that monument /the Mausoleum/ will for a number of our compatriots bring soberness from Orthodox and political errors (...) Maybe some will not like it, but the future will add to its beauty and necessity”, concluding “With this monument we make Njegoš closer to our time”.²⁴⁴ As we see from this,

²⁴³ Vjera Vuković, *Lovćen – krov otadžbine* (Beograd: Politika, 1991): p. 5

²⁴⁴ *Pobjeda*, 28. 7. 1974

leaving the chapel would mean bringing “our times” to the (original) Njegoš whose ideas could not be absorbed as a whole for their ideological mistakes, while with the construction of the mausoleum Njegoš and what “our times” needed of him were brought to the present day conditions.

The mausoleum was opened on 29th of July 1974. The president of the presidency of Montenegro, Veljko Milatović²⁴⁵ in his speech emphasized that “The road to this act wasn’t easy”, continuing that “the biggest monument to Njegoš, his creative self-willness (*stvaralačkoj samovolji*) and aspirations for freedom is a free Montenegro in a free union of equal nations and nationalities (*naroda i narodnosti*) of socialist and non-aligned Yugoslavia”, adding that “(...) in order to build up and prolong the life of his truths it is necessary to bring him back to his authenticity; we are obliged to release the interpretation of his work, as a poet and as a stamen, from the ballast of romanticism and folklore naivety, of Orthodox and bourgeois mythomania (...)”. In Milatović’s speech Njegoš’s role was kept strictly to Montegrins and Yugoslavs, without any mentioning of the Serbs: “We today view Njegoš’s contemplation-poetic work as the highest expression that emerged on Montenegrin grounds (...)”, “Montenegrin nation in whose literature his /Njegoš’s/ poetic work (...)” etc.²⁴⁶

It is interesting that the chapel continued to live in Montenegrin coat-of-arms until 1992, but the badge of the newly founded (in 1973) Montenegrin Academy of Arts and Sciences (*CANU*) represents Lovćen topped by the Mausoleum.

²⁴⁵ The ceremony was attended by the highest republican officials and led by Milatović who has by this time emerged as the leader of the camp in the SKCG that was advocating Montenegrin national and even ethnic individuality. The leading politicians were followed by other members of the Committee such as Savo Brković (noted down just as “an official”) who was just finishing his controversial book “On the Origin and Development of Montenegrin Nation” (*O postanku i razvoju crnogorske nacije*; see chapter III.2. of this paper) or Filaret Koprivica, the president of the Society of Orthodox Priesthood of Montenegro whose presence was a clear sign of defiance to the official church hierarchy and to SOC in general.

²⁴⁶ *Pobjeda*, 1. 8. 1974

3.2 *Historiography and Nation-building*

In this chapter I will give an overview of how the historiographic production in and on Montenegro evolved in the period between the beginning of the 1960s and 1974. By closer examination of when and under which conditions new works dealing with nation and ethnicity of Montenegrins appeared, and in which ways these affected the larger nation-state building process in Montenegro, we will also see the driving forces behind them, be it their own views on some subject or a will of some political entity to enforce its view.

The debate was not as potent as one would expect from heated historiographical debate. The controlled conditions under which the debate (or rather not one but more of them which in a broader scope proved all linked) was evolving were not too benevolent to opinions contradictory to those of the authorities. Moreover, in the first period with which this paper deals not only do we lack a clear position from the state officials but we cannot compare it to the criticism as there was almost next to none of it. Apart from a few discussants that, due to their status, had a privilege of ushering some themes, all the others are more than careful not to provoke against the common slogans of the time and not to stray from the politically correct speech proscribed by the Party. However, we can see a sudden upsurge of themes concerned with nationality following the new Party guidelines of 1966.

One of the first steps in forging the new nation after the War was the publishing of the book “The Creation of Montenegrin State and the Evolution of Montenegrin Nationality”,²⁴⁷ by Jagoš Jovanović, head of the freshly founded Historical Institute of Montenegro and a proven partizan cadre, in 1947. Though the title promised a lot the book was very much in line with the

²⁴⁷ Jagoš Jovanović, *Stvaranje crnogorske države i razvoj crnogorske nacionalnosti* (Cetinje: Obod, 1947)

findings from the previous era and not disputing that Montenegrins are derived from Serbs, its main novelty being that it covered the history of the whole of the Republic in its 1945 borders.

In 1962, at the beginning of the decade studied here, appeared the important book of Dimitrije – Dimo Vujović “Unification of Montenegro and Serbia”.²⁴⁸ In the book, written on the basis of his PhD dissertation defended in Sarajevo the year before,²⁴⁹ Vujović skillfully showed the tendencies for unification starting from 1860 and erupting prior to WWI, than the political machinations during the war and in the end the process of the highly controversial Podgorica Assembly that pronounced the unconditional unification of Montenegro to Serbia. Though careful and with the dose of needed Marxist dialectics applied, Vujović remained objective and in many instances quoted the Montenegrins on their Serb feelings. The fact that no one even tried to criticize this speaks for itself. As we shall see, this would be unthinkable ten years later and Vujović will soon have to defend his positions against radical nationalist notions.

J. Jovanović’s book remained not much more than an outline based on literature which, with the advance in scientific research, was becoming rapidly outdated. Therefore, in 1961 the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Montenegro decided to sponsor a large project intended to publish a detailed history of Montenegro with funds deriving directly from the republican budget.²⁵⁰ “Istorija Crne Gore” was indeed an awe-worthy project that should have produced eight voluminous books written by leading scientists. The first book (“From the oldest times to the end of 12th c”) appeared in 1967, the second (in two volumes, “From the end of 12th to the end of 15th c”) in 1970 but then the project was almost stopped.

²⁴⁸ Dimitrije Dimo Vujović, *Ujedinjenje Crne Gore i Srbije* (Titograd: Istorijski institut NR Crne Gore, 1962)

²⁴⁹ Oral legend has it that Belgrade professor Vaso Čubriloović found it too critical on Serbia to allow the dissertation to be defended in Belgrade and that because of this Vujović had to do it in Sarajevo.

²⁵⁰ Batrić Jovanović (2003, p. 235) claims that the whole project was financed from the republican budget starting already with 1945 and that this subsidizing ended in 1963.

The main points of dispute concerning the project of multi-volume history of Montenegro was that almost all of the authors in the book were from Belgrade. This was, of course, commonsense considering that these were the leading figures in their fields of research and that Montenegro didn't have the scientists of such capacity to replace them. However, this also meant that the authors were too independent from the control of Montenegrin leadership and that they were not at all interested in promoting Marxist or Party notions or pointing out of anything distinctively separate in the history of Montenegro. In a word, the publication was going in the opposite direction from the course of the republic designated more strongly after the victory of the anti-centralist forces - it integrated Montenegrins with(in) the Serbs through their intertwined/mutual history. The Party leadership remained nominally benevolent to the project but it sought out to correct its course. When it failed in doing so, problems started to appear for the project. In the beginning of 1970s the group led by V. Milatović, as M. Popović noted,

created a certain space for the action and publication of scientific works to a group of leftist-minded intellectuals whose conception was determined by a radical criticism of Cvijić's, Ruvarac's and Belić's school as well as at that time still prevalent Đilas' definition –another definition no other person in the party even tried to formulate – of Montenegrin national question.²⁵¹

That the things were moving in a more favorable way for the adherents of fewer connections with Serbs and common history with them was well sensed. One of those who grabbed an opportunity of liberalization was Savić Marković Štedimlija, together with Sekule Drljević, the most radical pre-WWII exponent of the idea of Montenegrin separateness from the Serb. In his hatred he became one of the closest allies of Ante Pavelić the leader of the Croatian murderous pro-Nazi Ustaša regime, who in 1964 came back to his home in Zagreb from the

²⁵¹ Milorad Popović, *Crnogorsko pitanje* (Ulcinj: Plima, 1999): 151. Here the author pushes together three Serbian scientist from late 19th to mid 20th c - geographer and ethnologist Jovan Cvijić, historian Ilarion Ruvarac and philologist Aleksandar Belić - into one school of thought (probably great-Serbian), although this is hardly possible.

lengthy prison sentence as the war criminal. Under pseudonym Tomaš Marković he fooled the censorship and published in Belgrade in 1969 a book under the title “History of Schooling and Education in Montenegro”.²⁵² More about its content than this benign title could be grasped from the subtitle – “Duklja and Its Social Development with Special Emphasis on Schooling and Education from the Arrival of Slavs to 1830”. While its contribution on the schooling in the period in which it could have been studied was very valuable, its first chapters and general disposition were nothing more but the repetition of his thesis venomous attacks on Serb traditions in Montenegro and the thesis that Dukljans were a branch of Croats, with different culture, language and faith (being Roman Catholics) than the Serbs who conquered it and obliterated its separate identity almost to unrecognizing.

Subjects like this were suddenly not foreign even to much less apostate intellectuals. When in the summer of 1970 one of the most distinguished historians of the period from Montenegro Dimo Vujović came out with an article “On Some Incorrect Approaches to the Montenegrin National Question”²⁵³ in which he criticized superficial thesis by people who don’t have the knowledge of facts, courses of Montenegrin history and the inevitable Marxist-dialectical method, fearing that their writing is not there to discuss but to judge. In a few words he explains his stand on the situation: “Present-day Montenegrin national individuality is a historical consequence of a process that started in the period of forming the bourgeois society in Montenegro, but the process then unfinished, but protracted to this very day”. He also points out that the people whom he criticizes “look at the existing level of Montenegrin individuality as something that always existed” and project this picture backwards. They become worried about the “state of our historiography” because it does not fulfill their expectations. That the editorial

²⁵² Tomaš Marković, *Istorija školstva i prosvjete u Crnoj Gori: Duklja i njen društveni razvoj sa naročitim osvrtom na školstvo i prosvjetu od doseljenja Slavena do 1830. godine* (Belgrade, 1969)

²⁵³ Dimo Vujović, “O nekim nepravilnim pristupima crnogorskom nacionalnom pitanju”, *Pobjeda*, 19. 7. 1970.

board disassociated itself from such a by no means new or extreme opinion, was a sign of its own.

Two weeks later came the answer: the pungent attack was waged by Pavle Mijović, a cultural historian.²⁵⁴ He criticized Vujović for relying on the “up till recently sanctified dogma by which there is no social precondition for the appearance of Montenegrin nation without the civil bourgeois society (sic!)” i.e. the stand that was originally postulated by Đilas and followed up till recently without much modification. Mijović continues stating that since there was no affirmation of bourgeoisie in Montenegro, basing on what Vujović said, that would mean that there wasn’t formed a specific Montenegrin national individuality. Though author does not say it this would imply that by the entry in the new, revolutionary and socialist stage, Montenegrin republic was not based on formed individuality but on an unfinished process. Reflecting on Vujović’s claim that the two nations – Serbian and Montenegrin – developed in the last one hundred years on the base centuries old specificities of Serb people in Montenegro, Mijović criticizes him by noting that no nation is formed on the base of specificities of some other, but of its own people! There either exist Montenegrin people and the Montenegrin nation or none! Continuing further, Mijović claims that the ethnic base of Montenegrin nation is not clear and that the bourgeois science could not establish whether Dukljans were Serbs, Croats or a specific tribe, or to which extent Zetans and Rascians were assimilated after Nemanja’s conquest, adding in the end that St Sava converted a part of the Zetan population to Orthodoxy. Since all of this ethnogenesis is far from clear no one should state that the Serbs and Montenegrins have the same ethnic base. Mijović concludes,

If we find as justified the historic act which has during our revolution and the first post-revolutionary years admitted the existence of Montenegrin national individuality, its

²⁵⁴ Dr Pavle Mijović, “O metodu u raspravljanju o crnogorskom nacionalnom pitanju”, *Pobjeda*, 2. 8. 1970, pp. 8-9

culture and its statehood, it is not up to historians and theoreticians to question that act and change it. Only the Montenegrin people can alienate or abolish this right, no one else.

Such notions that had their ground in current views of the LC (hidden behind the mask of “Montenegrin people”) were all but irrefutable. But more worrisome than the LC’s monopoly of truth were the similarities between the thesis propagated by Štedimlija and those of some of the historians.

Parallel with this one, a much longer debate on the similar subjects was waged between two historians, dr Novica Rakočević and dr Dragoje Živković. The cause was the publishing of Rakočević’s book “Montenegro in the First World War”,²⁵⁵ the theme he defended as his doctoral dissertation in 1965. The treatment of the “Montenegrin national question” in the book caught the eye of the editorial board of the “Ovdje” magazine that viciously attacked him for his treatment of Montenegro as a Serb land and the implicit idea that someone could have forced the feeling of Montenegrinhood onto Montenegrins.²⁵⁶ Not wishing to answer in such a tone, Rakočević just promptly explained that he could not and did not want to write different from the facts and that the problem of the editorial board is that it projected the present day national solution to a historical period he wrote about. The role of protector of a different stand was taken by Dragoje Živković²⁵⁷ and so started an extensive discussion on the national question which started in a polite tone soon to erupt in a real quarrel. While Rakočević was firmly standing on the point that he was only pointing out that “the Montenegrin national question was not an issue in this period” and that “in Montenegro existed certain particularities and individualities, as a

²⁵⁵ Novica Rakočević, *Crna Gora u Prvom svjetskom ratu 1914-1918* (Cetinje: Istorijski institut, 1969) Rakočević an older communist who got his diploma in law before WWII.

²⁵⁶ “Pet pitanja dr Novici Rakočeviću”, *Ovdje* 8 (1970): p. 2

²⁵⁷ Dragoje Živković got his diploma in Belgrade's Philosophical Faculty department of history in 1953 and his PhD in 1968 in Sarajevo on the subject of revolutionary syndicates on which he was working in the Institute for the History of Workers' Movements of Yugoslavia. In the same year he was appointed as the head of the State Archives of Montenegro, the position he retained until 1982.

result of historic development of Montenegrin statehood, but that does not mean that the Montenegrin nation was constituted in the eve of WWI, since this can't be scientifically proven".²⁵⁸ Živković seemed to be finding his line along the way. His main objection was that Rakočević uncritically and in an un-Marxist way approached the sources and literature, that he is quoting works of bourgeois that is regime historiography, that he forges the essence of the documents, which all meant that what could obviously be read from the sources was not favorable to Živković's argumentation. In his first text he admitted that Montenegrins have the same ethnic roots with Serbs and that they have never denied it while in the second one he clumsily changes this noting that he was fooled by the conception of the bourgeois historiography and that actually Serbs and Montenegrins are not at all of the same ethnic stock – Dukljans, "the ancestors of present day Montenegrins" were a mix of Slavs Romans and Albanians, retained their specifics throughout the Nemanjić period and from 1360 had nothing in common with Serbia but were formed from a union of autochthonous free peasants. In his third letter he adds that "in science it is well known that up to the Nemanjić period the forefathers of Montenegrins were Catholic" but were then "in a violent action" forced to convert to Orthodoxy. Later on the term "Serbhood" (*srpstvo*) actually only meant "Orthodoxy".²⁵⁹ Answering the much more comprehensible thoughts of his oponent he accused him that his attitude "approved the enemies of the equality of Yugoslav nations" and that according to him "the most responsible social and political factors in this country that during and after the last war 'did wrong against history' and from a 'unified' Serbian decided to form two peoples – Montenegrin and Serbian, should be brought to justice (*izvesti na optuženičku klupu*)". Concluding the debate the editorial board stated that Montenegrins demand from historiography answers to these questions which

²⁵⁸ Dr Novica Rakočević, "Odgovor dr Dragoju Živkoviću", *Ovdje* 11 (1970): p. 9-10

²⁵⁹ Dr Dragoje Živković, "Robovanje neoskolastici", *Ovdje* 18 (1970): pp. 7-8

can be achieved “only by critical revalorization of historical inheritance and Marxist elucidation of the past”.²⁶⁰

In a session of the Central Committee of the LC of Montenegro in 1970, a decision was reached to order a “Marxist study on the Montenegrin question”. The writing of this book was entrusted to Savo Brković, an older communist (b. 1906), bearer of the medal of the National Hero, a trustworthy Party cadre who held several high positions including the one of a minister in the first post-war government and, after that one, of a major of state security. As Brković was not a historian but held a diploma in law, he was to be aided by “assistants from various spheres”.²⁶¹ Deducing from the later disagreement on its results and the end of support to S. Brković’s thesis, there surely were some doubts regarding this project but obviously a stronger current in the leadership prevailed and from how it was defined nobody could object to a book like that.

During the course of the writing, Brković started a prolonged debate with Dimitrije-Dimo Vujović, a historian of the older generation and the leader of the redaction working on the “History of Montenegro”, on the subject of his writings in the daily “Pobjeda”. This discussion announced the kinds of arguments that Brković was gathering.

In the summer of 1970, the leadership of the republic, led by Veselin Đuranović, reported to Tito that the work is progressing on the multi-volume “History of Montenegro” with a remark that the work is done quite slowly “partly because of the funding and partly because of other hardships on the organization of publishing”.²⁶² They described the project as one of the “especially valuable scientific ventures linked with the cultural affirmation of Montenegro and for giving answers to some unanswered questions which are nowadays posed in the domain of

²⁶⁰ “Na kraju jedne polemike”, *Ovdje* 19 (1970): p. 2

²⁶¹ Jovanović 2003, p. 244

²⁶² AJ, Kancelarija Maršala, KPR II-2, *Prijem delegacije Crne Gore*, Brioni, 24, 6, 1970

history”.²⁶³ These mysterious “unanswered questions” were in fact points in history of Montenegro that were not in accordance with the current national policies and thus new, ground-breaking discoveries were expected. From what was said above, we can also conclude that the leadership was still hoping that they could correct the way the project was going and could continue with it.

We should not easily be led to the presumption that all of these decisions in founding new institutions were intended solely for the purpose of nation-building. Here we have a process in which the development of other republics, and the general situation in Yugoslavia, established the standards for Montenegro to follow if it intended not to lag behind the other members of the federation. Intentionally or not, institutions that were now established, were to become the leaders of the national “awakening”. No matter how critical to the communist era they were, the nationalists of the later generation readily admitted that this was the crucial period in building the “economical basis for the expressing of separate national interests”.²⁶⁴

Later in 1970 the 17th session of the Central Committee of the LCM concluded that “upon the decisions of the 5th congress of the LC of Montenegro and upon the decisions of the 9th congress of LCY, the culture and creation have entered a new era, which is of far higher value in many aspects” (*u novo, po mnogim momentima kvalitetnije razdoblje*).²⁶⁵ Standing on such a position, it gave “full support” to the continued work on the “History of Montenegro” but its aims seemed to be contrary to that of the project’s redaction. Namely, the Central Committee “pointed out the contemporariness (*aktuelnost*) of the development of scientific critical thought concerning the cultural-historical legacy of Montenegro, which would have a task to make a necessary scientific and historical *selection* of the *real values* and to integrate these values into

²⁶³ *ibid.*

²⁶⁴ Popović 1999, p. 25

²⁶⁵ AJ, Kancelarija Maršala, KPR II-1, *Informacija o 17. sjednici CK SK Crne Gore*

the current tissue of Montenegrin culture”. However, the Central Committee decided to take a precautious middle course on this question stating additionally that the communists are “equally against bureaucratic unitarism which favors larger nations, disrespecting the national differences, individuality, tradition, feelings etc as well as against bureaucratic particularism and keeping back in one’s own national frames” and by stating that communists “are equally in opposition to the phenomenon of cultural patronage as well as against the phenomenon of bureaucratic isolation”.²⁶⁶ This middle course would thus mean working on a Montenegrin culture and history within the wider framework of Yugoslav unity but not letting it slip into promoting more relations with Serbs and Serbia than necessary for finishing the task.

As for the remaining period on which this paper focuses, the abovementioned term “national frames” actually means “*republican* frames” while the term “culture” has a much wider implication than it might appear at the first look. The answering of the unsolved questions of Montenegrin history would have to take into account the present-day situation and the needs of the society of one self-managing socialist Republic.

The selection of the “real values” - of course, those in line with the political situation in Yugoslavia at that particular temporal junction - from the bulk of the previously gathered knowledge on Montenegrin past would prove itself to be a too heavy burden for the editors of the “History of Montenegro”, a task in which its members didn’t want to be involved. As a consequence of this split, the leadership of Montenegro had to turn to those who were willing to do so, although it had much to object to its views which were looming on the edge of the open nationalism and dangerously self-contained “particularism”. The next, third book in the “History of Montenegro” (“From the beginning of the 16th to the end of 18th c.”) appeared after many difficulties only in 1975, and this is where the project definitely ended. The main dilemma

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*

concerned what would come out in the next book that was supposed to deal with the period starting with metropolitan Petar I who ventured in organizing the Montenegrin clans into a state. While connections with Serbia and Serbs could have been tolerated up until this moment, advancing into the 19th c (which corresponded with Marxist thoughts that nations were created on bourgeois grounds), the view that Montenegro's statehood was based on a sort of Serb unity was intolerable. As Radoslav Rotković later maliciously observed, the project was "the elongated effect of the science of bourgeoisie to which we in Montenegro, against the clarity of science and our own interest, gave millions of hard earned funds".²⁶⁷

If the authors can't be judged for writing from the positions of what the established scientific view was, there is a place for criticism for not trying to discover something new. This, of course, would be impossible considering their biographies and credentials. The only ones who could get interested in something like this were to be Montenegrin scientists, most of them belonging to the younger generation and still unknown in wider academic circles. The next book in the series ("Montenegro in times of metropolitans Petar I and Petar II") was actually already prepared but it was never to be published in Montenegro. It appeared only ten years later in Belgrade, in a drastically changed situation and with a clear intention to inflict a blow to Montenegrin nationalists and all those who resented its publication.

The long-awaited Marxist study by Savo Brković's appeared in 1974 under title "On the formation and the development of the Montenegrin nation" (*O postanku i razvoju crnogorske nacije*). Though justly underlined as a cornerstone in historiography on the subject,²⁶⁸ it is much more so in its original approach to the subject than to the scientific advance achieved in it. To be precise, Brković is not only a bad historian or Marxist, but the overall tone of his work is one of

²⁶⁷ Dr Radoslav Rotković, "Šta nam nudi građanska nauka?", *Praksa* 4 (1981): p. 124

²⁶⁸ Šerbo Rastoder, "Istoriografija u Crnoj Gori 1998-2001 (sa posebnim osvrtom na istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine)", *Forum Bosnae* 32 (2005): pp. 165-212

a heated discussion, at moments led barely by reason, not to mention science. In the introductory chapter Brković continues his dispute with D. Vujović calling for an equal right of every man to give scientific contribution (thus disregarding Vujović's objections of his poor scientific qualifications) and disqualifies his opinion as obsolete and rooted in the "bourgeois science" while he, as he points out later in the book, works from the positions of the "liberated science, which is based on materialistic notion of history".²⁶⁹ Most of the book is in fact a clash with Vujović who has "a paternalistic stand towards those who even today objectively preach great-serbianism (*velikosrpstvo*) in Montenegro".²⁷⁰ Arguing that the "the origins of the nations and their ethnic belonging (sic!) are not important anymore in contemporary society" he also criticizes the transfer of nations to the oldest periods and adds that this kind of thing is contrary to Marxism but, as we shall see, Brković contradicts himself on these postulates in most of his book. The primary thesis of his work was to show that "in the process of historical development, through constant liberation fight, a consciousness of mutual belonging to Montenegrin people, that is to Montenegrin nation, has grown" (p. 9). The book makes a radical turn in viewing most of the Montenegrin past: Nemanjić Raška state is said to have occupied Zeta, proselytizing Catholics, destroying their churches and books, putting their nobles and peasants into an uneven position for which reason they rebelled; Dukljan historical consciousness lived for centuries after the demise of the state; Zečani²⁷¹ were one of the ethnic groups which together with Serbs, Albanians, Macedonians and others lived in the Serbian Empire; the population of Montenegro is autochthonous and does not descend from various regions; when they speak of themselves as "Serbs" Montenegrins of the 18th and 19th c. mean "Slavic Christian"; the whole of the Serbian politics up till 1945 was led by the Ilija Garašanin's "Načertanije" program intended to create a

²⁶⁹ Savo Brković, *O postanku i razvoju crnogorske nacije* (Titograd: Grafički zavod, 1974)

²⁷⁰ Op. cit., p. 237

²⁷¹ The Zetans, inhabitants of medieval state of Zeta.

Greater Serbia etc. Even if the Montenegrin ruling class and bourgeoisie did succumb to the propaganda that they are Serbs, this notion never took any root in the “Montenegrin peasant masses”. In his book one of the constant forces present in the history of Montenegro is its need to liberate itself from Serbia: in the same way Nemanja occupied Duklja, Serbian army occupied Montenegro in 1918; both occupations provoked a popular uprising. These parallels also speak vividly on the continuity of feelings in Montenegro and of Serbian malicious intentions enduring over a thousand years.

While some of these theories have been mentioned before, Brković now pushes them to their very limits. We have detailed them here for the reason that the theories presented by almost all “ethnic Montenegrin” historians are based directly upon them. Brković certainly raises a lot of new questions regarding the Montenegrin past, many of which have led to interesting conclusions, but in his radical “Serbophobia”²⁷² Brković also discredits himself and his position with many absurd theses. It is also very important to note that the author follows closely the vocabulary of its era with notions of classes, repressive bourgeoisie, imperialist powers etc. while the adversaries of his views are “against our social reality”, “the remains of the defeated Serbian bourgeoisie” who are “smuggling contra-revolution into our social flows”.²⁷³

With this work, S. Brković expressed, summarized and brought to conclusions many ideas that were looming around but were mentioned in half-voices only. This book is a cornerstone for nation-building in historiography as it unmistakably expresses all the “historical myths” of a nation: its antiquity, its originality and its importance in contributing to civilizations’

²⁷² Following the appearance of this book the term “Serbophobia” was widely used by the opposing party designating a fear of anything Serb in Montenegrin history, culture or traditions. Its constant use provoked S. Brković to use the term “Ethnogenesophobia” in the title of his next book.

²⁷³ Brković 1974, p. 33

development.²⁷⁴ In this case we are presented with the ancient Dukljans-Zetans-Montenegrins who are unlike the nations surrounding them²⁷⁵ and who have by their heroic ethos and poetry contributed to European culture.

It is hard to believe that this book is what the Central Committee had bargained for. Brković's book is undoubtedly pointed out only against one side and its stand is only a bit less extreme than the one of the group labeled as "separatists", from which it differs mainly in the use of Marxist vocabulary and argumentation. An unsigned article published in November of the same year²⁷⁶ that although it denied it, sounded like the official disassociation it was emphasized that Party's view on Montenegrin national question was never based neither only on empirics nor on pragmatic politics. Though Brković "in a documented way reminded us of many denials of Montenegrin nation and its culture and showed the methodological weaknesses of the approach of the bourgeois science" as well as "started an argued polemic" with some modern historians pointing out their weak spots and inconsistencies, he also paid too much emphasis on ethnogenesis and tried in a too heated manner to show the ages old specificities of Montenegrins. In the end the article contains the middle line of the Party: by trying to prove wrong the incorrect views "on the point that the Montenegrin nation was constituted after WWI or, at best case, at the dawn of this century, Brković made the mistake himself maintaining the thesis that Montenegrin nation was fully formed by 1918". So, in view of the Party the Montenegrin nation had been in the process of forming in the course of the 19th c, but this process did not finish until the inter-war period when the CPY acted rightly on this question and got a broad support of

²⁷⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991)

²⁷⁵ Here we have the aspect of the "negative identification" (which identifies what something/someone is not, rather than what he is) as still prevalent in Brković's system – since it was not entirely clear and scientifically established that Montenegrins are identical with Dukljans, than it was viable to state out what they undoubtedly were not. Cf. Saša Nedeljković *Čast, krv i suze: Ogledi iz antropologije etniciteta i nacionalizma*, Beograd: Zlatni zmaj : Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju Filozofskog fakulteta, 2007): pp. 87-88

²⁷⁶ "Nauka počiva na tlu činjenica", *Pobjeda*, 14. 11. 1974.

people. By proclaiming both views erroneous the Party retained for itself the monopoly of judging what is true in history and the position to control both sides that could endanger its power.

Brković's book was certainly not according to the taste of many members of the Central Committee but the leadership remained, at least officially, united on the subject. Party's official line was still a middle one: criticizing both sides but working on promoting "republican" interests, equally in economy and in culture. That stand was promoted on all levels and was repeated in a slightly different form also by Tito during his visit to Montenegro in 1977, saying that

Its national being and its statehood Montenegrin nation built in its centuries long struggle against aggressors. In complicated historical circumstances, it has achieved also a significant culture and ethical legacy. Because the process of forming and the emergence of modern nations in our country, though moved by the same laws, had in it also, as it is well known, a lot of specific characteristics.²⁷⁷

Curiously, there was little response to Brković's book, apart from the obvious answer by Dimo Vujović that turned into a continuation of their debate in "Pobjeda". Considering the amount of new and provocative in the book the only reason for this unexpected silence could perhaps lie in the fact that the sign sent was correctly apprehended: Brković was a man close to the leading figures in the republic and what he wrote obviously had support from these circles. The fury of the response had to wait for six years and the next book that opened the dispute between the two sides with great intensity that made even the authorities to take a notice and respond respectively.

Summing up on the epoch we see the appearance of three distinctive courses in Montenegrin historiography. On one side stood the course that changed little through the decade

²⁷⁷ AJ, Maršalat, KPR II-1, *Poseta J. B. Tita Titogradu*, 25. 2. 1977

and which claimed that “although the Montenegrin people are part of the Serbian ethnic entity, they passed through a specific historical development different from that of the Serbs, eventually to become a separate nation. Thus, the national individuality of Montenegrins is undisputed but is viewed as part of the larger Serbian ethnic space”.²⁷⁸ The opposite view came from the camp that became vocal in the second part of the period and which denied any ethnic, cultural and barely and historical connections with Serbs and Serbia. The third line was retained by the LCM which, though nominally closer to the first stand in practice pushed more in favor of the latter.

3.3 *Language and Literature Debate*

When dealing with related languages one of the most delicate questions the linguistics has to answer is where does one language end and another start? For instance: are the dialects of west Byelorussia more similar to Polish than amongst themselves? Or are those of Schleswig-Holstein closer to Danish rather than to those of German language in Bavaria? The second question related to this is when does one dialect become a language, what are the necessary differences to rise to the new status? Today we consider Norwegian or Afrikaans separate languages but at the end of the 19th century they were still in the status of dialects.

It is obvious that in both cases it is the matter of formal acknowledgement that makes a distinction. And in both cases the regulatory body is the state: though the peasants on both sides of the border can speak in identical vernacular on one side they will learn one and on the other a different literary language, which is official in that state. Similarly, there rarely exists a literary language where there does not, or did not exist a state or an autonomous region that could codify

²⁷⁸ Brunnbauer (ed.) 2004: 229. The overview of Montenegrin historiography here included the whole of the socialist period as well as the 1990s so that there is also noted a fully pro-Serb historiographic view that Montenegrins are the purest Serbs. I have not found any proponents of this view active in Montenegro at the studied period.

it and promote it as a standard amongst its populace. After all, each and every of the literary languages are a matter of convention, of an agreement to give up on some of the traits of one's speech in order to connect and communicate easier with the members of the same (more or less imagined) community.

In a region of such extraordinary mixture of ethnic groups such as the Balkans the two questions asked above have often reached problematic heights. Today, as they have indeed done for the most of the 20th century, most of the linguists - while observant of dialects and variants - consider the language of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia to be one, having many more similarities than distinctions. The usual name for that language in linguistics is Serbo-Croatian though some more “politically correct” alternatives have recently been suggested and used by various bodies.²⁷⁹ Since the Serbs and the Croats have been living in a mix of villages throughout Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the two national centers (Belgrade and Zagreb) have already appeared, the most distinguished philologist of two nations met in 1850 in Vienna and decided to promote a single variant of the language, used widely by two nations in mixed areas, which could be indistinctively called both Serbian and Croatian. Since the delegations were not official representatives of the two nations governments there still appeared two variants leaning on previous literary practices but the Vienna agreement set the general trend of coming together which was supported by most of the literati both from Serbia and Croatia, as well as those from Ottoman Bosnia and the tiny Montenegro. However, while this ambivalent solution made a lot sense if considered with good intentions from an

²⁷⁹ *Bošnjački-hrvatski-srpski*, shortly *BHS*, is the name used in international institutions in order not hurt any national sentiments and yet to convey the message that the speakers of this trilateral language do not need translators. With Montenegro declaring in 2009 *crnogorski* (Montenegrin) as its official language the situation has become complicated again and it will be interesting to see if the international community will opt for lengthening or the shortening of the present name, and if latter to what. For these reasons the name Serbo-Croatian, well established in scientific literature, continues to be used in all cases when one deals with more than one nation or with a group whose murky national feelings cannot be rightly expressed by using any of the four simple names.

exclusivist perspective it could also be seen as forcing one side's name or variant onto the other people. The Croats called their language Croatian, the Serbs Serbian while the Bosnian Muslims chose one of the options, depending on their own preference or on who was in power.²⁸⁰

Since at this period the Montenegrins considered themselves “the best of the Serbs”, the language of the country was named Serbian. Moreover, the Montenegrins were proud of their rich traditions when it came to the genre of epic folk songs that, as it was supposed, kept alive the “national spirit” and language alive for centuries. Its most famed writers Njegoš and Marko Miljanov, as well as Stjepan Mitrov Ljubiša from the Littoral, wrote in a rich language influenced heavily by vernacular.²⁸¹ One more additional bond was that Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Serbian philologist who spread the fame of South Slav folk songs through Europe and one of the most distinguished figures of the Vienna Agreement, codified the Serbian/Croatian language on the vernacular of East Herzegovina that he (and the others following his steps) considered the most correct dialect of the language. As a good deal of East Herzegovina became part of Montenegro in 1878, Montenegrins had one more reason to be proud of their share in constituting the literary base of the language.

After World War Two the first constitutions of the Yugoslav republics defined the official language in 1946 as “Serbian” in Serbia and in Montenegro, as “Croatian or Serbian” in Croatia and “Serbian or Croatian” in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus the name of the language was

²⁸⁰ It must be noted that during the Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina (1878-1918) there were attempts to call the language of this province Bosnian but this was shunned by Serb and Croat elite and was later on deemed anational and intended to estrange the three groups since it introduced a regional name instead of a national one.

²⁸¹ To be precise: Miljanov, who had no education, wrote in pure dialect of his native Kuči clan, Ljubiša - though writing in a folkloristic manner - has more layers to his language, while Njegoš combined the vernacular of his Old Montenegro with Russian and influences of learned Serbian from south Hungary (*slavenoserbski*). Jovan Deretić, *Kratka istorija srpske književnosti* (Novi Sad: Svetovi, 2001³), available at <http://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/jderetic_knjiz/index_c.html> (last accessed June 4, 2010)

adapted to the specific national situation in each of the republics.²⁸² This was, however, of little significance since in the general atmosphere of “brotherhood and unity” both the common people and the linguists agreed that it is one and the same language only with different names.²⁸³ The federal constitution was published in two variants, Eastern/Serbian and Western/Croatian, as well as in Slovenian and Macedonian. Though this practice was somewhat neglectful to certain linguistic points in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Montenegro it could be defended on the basis that the number of versions of public documents had to be limited, as well as by the fact that “literary language in these republics doesn’t have major peculiarities which would be unknown in one or other of the polarized versions and that all types of our literary language are fully understandable for all of its bearers”.²⁸⁴

One of the most noticeable achievements of Party’s Yugoslavism policy led in the 1950s - but also an achievement in mending the differences of the two variants of Serbian/Croatian language - came in 1954 with the signing of the Novi Sad Agreement (*Novosadski sporazum*). The agreement denoted that the “Literary language of Serbs, Croats and Montenegrins is one”, that both scripts (Latin and Cyrillic) are equal as are both of the pronunciations (ekavian and ijekavian i.e. east and west). The language was named “Serbo-Croatian/Croato-Serbian”,²⁸⁵ the variants of which were going to be used depending from the majority of its users in specific situations. The agreement also called for a need of a common dictionary, orthography and terminology²⁸⁶ and against the “putting of artificial obstacles to the natural and normal development of Croato-Serbian literary language”.²⁸⁷ The agreement proceeded from the idea of

²⁸² Sven Monnesland, ed., *Jezik u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo: Institut za jezik, Oslo: Institut za istočnoevropske i orijentalne studije, 2005), p. 422

²⁸³ *ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Pavle Ivić, *Srpski narod i njegov jezik* (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1971), p. 207

²⁸⁵ From here forth this will be, for practical reasons, referred to as SC/CS.

²⁸⁶ Monnesland 2005, p. 423

²⁸⁷ Ivić 1971, 208

merging and reconciling the language practices of Belgrade and Zagreb as the two most developed, yet in some points very distant centers of literary formation and writing. As a consequence of this view, out of many linguists, writers and other public figures who signed the Agreement there were only three from Bosnia-Herzegovina and none from Montenegro. The absence of signatories from Montenegro could be vindicated by a lack of relevant scientists in that republic, but the fact that not even any of the Montenegrin writers found their way to the list shows also that the question of the SC/CS language was considered to be problems that should be solved between the Serbs and the Croats, with a side role for Bosnians and even lesser one for the Bosnian Muslims. Though it was blessed by the Party, the Agreement was not forced onto, but had a genuine support in linguistic circles and was furthermore well accepted in the public. No complaints were made at the time of the signing.

Despite the several successful steps, most notable of which was the new common orthography published in 1960, the pour of the republican particularities in the 1960s ruined the united language policy. The first sparks appeared at the 5th Congress of Yugoslavists in Sarajevo in 1965 when ideas that Serbian and Croatian are functionally separate languages appeared; there was also mention of a Bosnian-Herzegovinian, Vojvodinian and Montenegrin variants.²⁸⁸

In March of 1967 in Zagreb press appeared the “Declaration on the Name and Position of Croatian Literary Language”, signed by 19 prominent scientific and cultural institutions of Croatia, 130 intellectuals – some of them members of the LC – amongst them the controversial Miroslav Krleža, one of the best known Yugoslav writers member of the CC of League of Communists of Croatia and Tito’s close friend.²⁸⁹ The Declaration demanded that the Croatian and Serbian be officially denominated in the federal constitution as two separate languages in

²⁸⁸ Mate Hraste, “O trećoj varijanti hrvatskosrpskog književnog jezika”, *Jezik*, 4 (1965-66): pp. 106-107

²⁸⁹ Rusinow 1975, p. 225

order to avoid the cases of inequality of the Croatian literary language. Further on, it demanded “a consistent use of Croatian literary language in schools, newspapers, public and political life, on radio and TV whenever the Croat population is in case”. A reaction to the Declaration from Belgrade came swiftly - “Proposal for Deliberation” was signed by 42 writers (among them 19 members of the LC).²⁹⁰ Starting from the fact that the Declaration was signed by “the most competent institutions for the question of Croatian literary language”, the Proposal fully supported their demands while adding that the same standards should then be adopted for all the Serbs as well.

Both the Declaration and the Proposal were immediately condemned by the LCY as “nationalist outbursts” and “diversions”.²⁹¹ The implications of separate languages for Serbs and Croats affected especially Bosnia-Herzegovina where such a policy would be almost impossible to manage in practical terms. In a spontaneous outburst of reactions from party meetings, factories and by other citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina²⁹² we read about a fear of the rise of the chauvinism similar to the one from 1941 mixed with the mocking of the Declaration's demands. The workers were pointing out that the source of such acts is in the „overforced role and significance of the republics“ and that „this will lead to the confederacy“. They were against the policy by which „a natural integration [of languages] is slowed down or even prevented by political actions“. “If this is so”, a report from Stolac notices regarding the points of the Declaration, “a question arises which language is then intended for the peoples²⁹³ in the Social

²⁹⁰ For detailed description of how it came to it and what happened afterwards see Nick Miller, *The Nonconformists: Culture, Politics and Nationalism in a Serbian Intellectual Circle 1944-1991* (Budapest-New York: Central European University Press, 2007), pp. 129-139

²⁹¹ AJ, CK SKJ, *XI sednica IK CK SKJ*, 11. 4. 1967, p. 4

²⁹² Rusinow (1975, p. 225) is probably very much right when he calls the reaction to the Declaration and the Proposal “a political uproar and almost hysterical campaign against nationalism” but reading from the documents we see that if the LC influenced the opinion it was only its lower ranks, much to the detesting of the Party top.

²⁹³ Here we should additionally note that the author of the report did not say to Montenegrins or Muslims or Bosnians but to the *peoples* of these republics, uncertain of how to denote them.

Republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro?”.²⁹⁴ Another report from Mostar concludes that “there arose, although sometimes in a humorous tone, opinions that it is now possible that Montenegrins will also start ‘their question’ and that they will also ask for an independent language”.²⁹⁵ For the ordinary people and low-ranking Party officials concern and consternation at the developments mixed with a dose of sarcasm when considering where all of it was heading. Similar reactions were noted in other republics as well. This spontaneous outburst of unity and protests was not at all to the liking of the top ranking officials of the LC. The executive committee of the CC of the LCY noted that these reactions were too “extreme” and that they had to react “hitting the breaks”. Though politically naïve, these reactions had in themselves a dangerous tone of unitarism and artificial Yugoslavism, which is even more dangerous to the development of self-management and socialism than the nationalism.²⁹⁶

Once the linguistic status quo and the virtual unity based on the Novi Sad Agreement were disturbed, a dangerous void was open instigating many questions. If the SC/CS language was to be substituted with Serbian and Croatian respectively there appeared a question which was to be the language of the Muslim population in Bosnia-Herzegovina and how is it going to be named? As Milan Šipka observed “the two-variant or two-language (that is to say two-national) concept of solving of the standard language problems on the Serbo-Croatian linguistic area means a direct negation of their [Bosnian Muslim and Montenegrin] sovereignty (*samobitnosti*)”.²⁹⁷ The initiation of the question of the name and status of the language in

²⁹⁴ AJ, Kancelarija maršala Jugoslavije, II-4b

²⁹⁵ AJ, Kancelarija maršala Jugoslavije, II-4b. How absurd the thesis that Montenegrins are a separate ethnic group from the Serbs sounded even to the people who were running the country can be observed from one conversation Tito had with Montenegrin political leadership in 1969. Commenting on the situation on Kosovo, Tito said: “It also depends a lot on the other national minorities and ‘ethnic groups’, the Serb and the Montenegrin one – it sounds like these are ethnic groups. /laughter/” (AJ, Kancelarija maršala Jugoslavije, II-2, *Prijem predstavnika CK SK CG*, Brioni, 17. 1. 1969)

²⁹⁶ AJ, CK SKJ, *XI sednica IK CK SKJ*, 11. 4. 1967, p. 123ff

²⁹⁷ Milan Šipka, “Jezik i nacionalni odnosi – potrebe značaj i osnovni pravci istraživanja”, *Sveske* 5-6, (1984): p. 17

Bosnia-Herzegovina opened doors for the forces unsatisfied with the status of their nation not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina but also in Montenegro.

We have seen earlier that language figured highly in all, including the Marxist definitions of nation. On the other hand, I have also shown that instituting a separate Montenegrin nation was based on historical and state reasoning, not ethnic and certainly not linguistic and that this fact made the question of language virtually nonexistent until late 1960s. But now that the common supra-national language was falling into pieces the logic of full equality of Yugoslav nations led to certain conclusions. If there is a Montenegrin nation then that nation has its own history, culture and language. Montenegrin nativist nationalist grasped this conclusion gladly and started exploiting its arguments. The struggle for a separate language became a struggle for their basic, constitutionally guaranteed self-managing rights. Deeply entangled with the one of Montenegrin language were also the questions of Montenegrin literature, its roots, presence in Yugoslav anthologies and its constituent authors as well of the schoolbooks and the ijekavian dialect in them.

Reacting to some of the earliest calls for a Montenegrin language linguist Mitar Pešikan, himself a Montenegrin but working in Belgrade, remarked that re-norming of the language is a move by which we can lose a lot yet gain very little. Inclusion of Montenegrin name into the name of the language would effectively paralyze it and thus one should not be too sensitive about the forms, since they only have the meanings we ascribe to them.²⁹⁸ Here we see that the side opposing the push for the Montenegrin language proposed staying true to Novi Sad Agreement and the status quo it offered.

Basic Montenegrin grievance was that their role and their dialect/variant/language, their addition to the common linguistic corpus of SC/CS is unjustly, or even maliciously, neglected.

²⁹⁸ Mitar Pešikan, "Crna Gora i pitanja srpskohrvatskog jezika", *Stvaranje* 4 (1968): pp. 350-361

Indeed, the philologist from Zagreb and especially those from Belgrade on many occasions did not take into consideration that Montenegrins should be at least mentioned alongside Serbs and Croats. For instance, an anthology of Yugoslav poetry in Italian was divided in Slovene, Croat, Serb and Macedonian writers, while Montenegrins were not listed. When at some point of work on the common SC/CS dictionary Croatian side suggested that words taken from Montenegrin authors were to be noted as such the Serb side disregarded this with an answer that as linguists they should not look upon political solutions. Previously mentioned in half-voices, these protests were uttered aloud starting from 1967.²⁹⁹

Another problem was that since 1963 there no schoolbooks printed in Montenegro. Not that many were printed before: only 16 of them since 1945 saw the light of the day in Titograd. Aiming to ease up its dire financial situation while also getting the schoolbooks of better quality, Montenegrin CC included the education as one of the provisions of its agreement on closer cooperation with Serbia. Though some differences in the school curriculum existed, Montenegrin aspects of each subject were mostly present as much as the pupils from Serbia should know about them which, of course, was not enough for those in Montenegro. Apart from that, excluding the first readers that were fully adapted to Montenegrin linguistic situation, from all other schoolbooks only 17-43% (depending on what class) of them in primary and secondary schools were in ijekavian.³⁰⁰ Whether or not this arrangement was better than the previous or whether this was the most pressing problem of Montenegrin educational system could be a matter of discussion but it is sure that it left Montenegrins in an inferior position.

This issue was exploited by Savo Brković, member of the CC, who pointed out that this situation is intolerable. The price of the schoolbooks, he writes, cannot be an obstacle when it

²⁹⁹ Pobjeda, 30. 3. 1967, *Prosvjetni rad* 1969, 9-10, p. 6

³⁰⁰ Dimitrije Marković, "Još jednom o udžbenicima", *Ovdje* 12 (1970): p. 7

comes to the rights of one nation. He attacked the people who allowed this and even argued that someone in Montenegro has a plan to gradually change the dialect of the Republic by introducing the dialect “of another nation”. He was also of an opinion that what pupils can read in one of the schoolbooks is “Great-Serbian and anti-constitutional”.³⁰¹

When in 1966 Milorad Stojović, writer and the editor in the Titograd publishing house “Grafički zavod”, was compiling the “Anthology of Narrative Prose of Montenegro 1918-1965” he was faced with the question which authors to conclude. Led by the idea that “real modern literature essentially surpasses every illusion of regionality”³⁰² he chose a broadly embracing standard that included also the authors whose works “by their setting and color are nor ‘Montenegrin’”. A principle that an author who did not live in Montenegro, did not write in any Montenegrin dialect or about Montenegro, would be noted as Montenegrin only because he was born there could be easily applied in a society eager for integration and binding together but when soon after this changed and national cultures became strictly divided the same standard became highly problematic.

When in 1969 “Matica srpska” from Novi Sad started publishing an edition called “Serb writers in 100 books” in which were to be included Njegoš, Miljanov, Ljubiša and Mihailo Lalić, Radoslav Rotković, a writer and cultural worker from Podgorica, stood up in defense of a strict territorial system, i.e. that the writers from Montenegro cannot be at the same moment Serb writers. Seeing the act as the violation of the constitutional right to inalienability (*neotudljivosti*) of national culture he sued “Matica srpska” to the Constitutional Court. By denying of the existence of Montenegrin literature one also denies the existence of Montenegrin nation since it was exactly these authors that expressed the essence of Montenegrin national being and who

³⁰¹ Ovdje 12, 1970, p. 7, Savo Brković, “I još jednom o udžbenicima”, *Ovdje* 13 (1970): p. 6

³⁰² “Prava literatura suštinski prevazilazi svaki privid regionalnosti”, *Titogradska tribina* 275 (1966): p. 6

constitute the irreplaceable part of Montenegrin culture. Serbian literature has many writers of its own, while Montenegro does not have any others.³⁰³ It was now clear that Montenegrin nationalists certainly did not want to be limited to their own republic or for their culture to start in 1918 or 1945; in order to be equal they will do as other nations already did - try to go as far and as wide as they could both in geographic and in temporal terms when declaring what is Montenegrin literature.

That a young and growing nationalist movement will be very radical and that, since it belonged to a small nation, will be permitted more became blatantly evident very soon. One month after Rotković's initiative, Nikola Racković came out in press criticizing Boško Novaković, dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad and the editor of the book "History of Yugoslav Literatures" (sic!). Asked about the principles to which he adhered in delineating writers into their national literatures Novaković mentioned that as for Montenegrin writers the redaction does not have a categorical attitude but will include those living and working in Serbia in the Serb corpus, on the condition that they do express that they are Montenegrin writers. The principle that someone who was born in Montenegro could freely decide not to be Montenegrin but Serb was not to Racković's liking. For him it is unscientific and arbitrary to allow the writers to decide to which literature they belong. One cannot equate how one declares in national terms and to which literature he belongs. Rather, by their birth and their language people (and writers) from Montenegro cannot be anything else than Montenegrin. Since there is a Montenegrin literature all the writers from Montenegro belong to it. Additionally, when Novaković speaks about dedicating one chapter of the book to the "present day literary work in Montenegro"

³⁰³ R. Rabrenović, "Jedno pismo ustavnom sudu SFRJ", *Pobjeda*, 16. 2. 1969

Racković sees this as a claim that Montenegrin literature started only in present day and wonders how will all the “national features of Montenegrin literature” be represented in one chapter.³⁰⁴

Racković’s strict territorial denomination of writers and the abolishment of their free will to declare to which literature they belong may seem radical but it was there with a deeper purpose. Namely, the clash was not only about modern authors but also about the classics and if Montenegro had its literature than this literature must have its history. Since the opposing pro-Serb side used the argumentation that Njegoš, Miljanov or Ljubiša claimed to speak and write in Serbian, their right to decide to which literature they belonged was not to be allowed. Since they were essentially Montenegrin they, no matter what they might claim, were to be a part of the Montenegrin literature. When the pro-Serb side claimed that one cannot cut the science into one before and one after the war the answer was that they slave to the concepts of bourgeois science. The battle over the existence of Montenegrin literature was already won by the nativist side. Their next problem was how to extract their culture from the Serb culture and how to persuade the Montenegrins in their republic and especially those in Serbia that they should opt for a separate nation and national culture.

The book that opened this debate was the anthology of less popular (and less known) writings of Njegoš “Plam u plamu” that was edited by Branko Banjević. His intention was to give only the best verses from the often long and tiresome songs but this problematic principle of separating and then re-combining was not the best. In the light of the fact that in the whole book there is only one mention of the term “Serb”, the pro-Serb intellectuals concluded that the poems have been redesigned in order to cut out the Serb name, so often used by Njegoš.³⁰⁵ To their

³⁰⁴ Nikola Racković, “Teritorijalnost umesto objektivnosti”, *Pobjeda*, 13. 3. 1969, “Bez naučnih principa”, *Pobjeda*, 23. 3. 1969

³⁰⁵ Jagoš Batričević, “Mrak u Luči”, *Prosvjetni rad* 9 (1970), Mr Jovan Čadenović, “Kompetencije redaktora”, *Prosvjetni rad* 11 (1970)

somewhat hysterical accusations Banjević answers that the whole concept of thinking that since Njegoš wrote about the Serbs that made him a Serb is erroneous. In this way Shakespeare would be Danish or Roman writer, “but a writer cannot, even if he would like to, not to belong to the national and social organism that he does belong to”.³⁰⁶ He concludes saying that it is not his fault that “science has surpassed or is surpassing positivism, that our revolution has adopted a Leninist solution of the national question in Yugoslavia, and that ideology from which it starts and by which it regulates this society is self-managing”.³⁰⁷

The reassurance for his thought Banjević found in the anthology of thoughts by Marx, Engels and Lenin on language, published by Belgrade “Kultura” in 1970. After quoting at length to show what the classics of communist thought had to say about language and nation he confidently states:

“Hence, the language is an aspect of every society’s existence. What would some of our linguists that allow themselves to pull the language out of or put in the mouths of some of our nations³⁰⁸ because of some positivist scheme of theirs say about this? That existence is not given by any divine force or any earthly power, especially not by any linguistic statement or agreement. The existence of a nation, i.e. of its language, is a result of the “will” of historic events. (...) A nation cannot use a foreign language since that foreign language contains foreign relations. (...) Individuals, social layers or even whole classes of a nation can be alienated from the language but a nation cannot forget its language since it exists by [speaking] that language. An attack on the essence of a nation goes by the way of an attack on its language. (...) In the language of one nation something cannot be incorrect because it is different in the language of another nation. A nation cannot learn its language by the norms of a foreign language. (...) Language of the national poet of one nation cannot be unnormative because it is not by the norms of a different nation. A nation cannot have its greatest national [literary] work in a language of a different nation”.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Branko Banjević, “Mračno o Luči”, *Prosvjetni rad* 10 (1970)

³⁰⁷ *ibid.*

³⁰⁸ The word Banjević uses throughout this article is *narod*, not *nacija* with an intention of presenting the fight of the “people” for their rights, which are here the national rights. Since it is obvious that he is not speaking of any group of people and not any language I translated the term as “nation” which I hold is closer to what the author meant.

³⁰⁹ Branko Banjević, “Jezik i društvo”, *Stvaranje* 9 (1970): pp. 847-848

The reasoning is clear: Montenegrin is not a provincial dialect but a separate language with its own rules, which can seem as irregularities only from the outside. Forcing a foreign language onto people and not allowing it to call it by its name is contrary to democratic rights of the nation.

In claiming that Montenegrin is a different language the most extreme standpoint was taken by Vojislav Nikčević. This was a consequence of his burning wish to have a revolutionary say in the field of which he had only a vague knowledge. According to him, Montenegrin variant/language was developing steadily and without any significant influence from the outside from 12th c. onwards. In contrast with Serbs and Croats, Montenegrins have for centuries back spoken and written according to vernacular. The language introduced by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić is not Serbian or East Herzegovinian (as the other linguists called it) but is a Montenegrin language. Since the Serbs and Croats took Montenegrin language as theirs now it seems like Montenegrins are borrowing it from them, while it's the other way round. The reason why the Serbs switched to ekavian (instead of Montenegrin ijekavian) pronunciation is because they found it distant since it "reflected the spiritual essence, moral and other relations of Montenegrin people". Calling Montenegrin language by any other name is hegemonistic and used to negate the existence of Montenegrin language.³¹⁰ Nikčević's radical and rarely

³¹⁰ Vojislav Nikčević, "Jezikoslovna politika doktora Mitra Pešikana", *Kritika* 8. (1969): pp. 588-593, „Čiji je takozvani Vukov jezik?", *Kritika* 12, (1970): pp. 370-385, "Ko laički gleda na probleme jezika?", *Stvaranje* 10 (1970): pp.931-947. The most ardent supporters of the Montenegrin language found their way of expressing themselves through the magazines "Jezik" and "Kritika" in Zagreb. "Kritika" dealt with linguistics and culture but mostly in a nationalistic manner whose toleration was symptomatic for Croatia between 1968 and 1972, the exact dates of the magazine's start and the end. Rarely there was a number of the magazine that didn't deal with some Montenegrin issue, all of them discussed by a small number of younger and not very known scholars (such as Radoje and Danilo Radojević or Vojislav Nikčević).

scientifically backed claims were mostly ignored. The answers he received clearly based them and their author on the verge of scientific recognition.³¹¹

The promoters of the Montenegrin language and literature were intellectuals working in or with the cultural and educational institutions in their republic. As most intellectuals, they were as well the members of the LC, but though on many occasions closely connected with some of the high officials, they themselves ranked quite low. Their scientific credentials were not impressive, but as best men went onwards to larger cultural centers they were left over as the elite in their own republic. Though in essence they took the question emotionally they also had a lot of interest in promoting a separate identity. Commenting on the deficiency of many works on Montenegrin literature, M. Stojović adds “Literary critics and scientific workers therefore have in front of them a huge job to be done on new researches, periodization and systematization of our literary legacy, on the revalorization of opinions stated in relation to Montenegrin literature and culture”.³¹² Disregarding previous work or at least its valorizations opened new prospects for local intellectuals. Furthermore, new institutions that would be in line with those in other republics would be open only to them. If we return to the thoughts of M. Pešikan from the start of this debate in 1967 that the lifting of linguistic barriers will only lead to careerism and monopolism in each of the separated units,³¹³ we see them as good description of what was set in motion.

As in many cases when unity was endangered, it is hard to distinguish between individual defending Yugoslavia and those who were worried about Serbdom. The argumentation of both groups related to the question of language was quite similar, with the distinction that the first

³¹¹ For instance Aleksandar Mladenović, “Još jednom povodom nekih nenaučnih tumačenja o narodnom jeziku prednjegoševske književnosti”, *Jezik* 5 (1969/70): pp. 150-158

³¹² *Stvaranje* 2-3 (1968): pp. 231-237

³¹³ *Stvaranje* 4 (1968): pp. 350-361

considered it from the state aspect, the others from the position of Serbs in (or related to) Montenegro. In both cases they were trying to maintain the provisions of the Novi Sad Agreement. This position came partly from better positions they enjoyed in comparison with their opponents, some of them in instructions in Belgrade, which all made them less willing to institute changes that were leading into unknown. Since they saw the avalanche of consequences that their changing can have they stuck to it, though it was obvious to them that with Croats demanding their own language and many political and cultural factors in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro demanding an equal status that their stand was interpreted as unitarist or etatist and thus left open to attacks. Their biggest argument was that since the vernacular is essentially the same in all four republics, the literary language shouldn't be split either. After all, as professor Jovan Vuković explains, the linguistic situation did not evolve from 1954 and the provisions of the Agreement are still scientifically valid.³¹⁴ They were also trying to separate the notions of nation and language, that the existence one does not automatically imply the need for the other. Anyway, the dialects are dying away and one should not conserve them as this would be artificial stopping of progress. Nevertheless, as they still had the normative side in their favor and were in many cases opposed by nationalists, they enjoyed (though not unanimous) support of the Party. The LC was afraid of too sudden moves and it will remain in support of the status quo until the decision to continue with cultural decentralization was reached at the top.

Things were somewhat different in the dispute on Montenegrin literature. The “Yugoslavs” were not an interested party and the discussion was waged solely in Montenegrin-Serb relations. As it was impossible to imagine giving up on such national classic as Njegoš for the sake of equal rights of all nations, the Serb side had no other way then to consider

³¹⁴ Dr Jovan Vuković, “Naša lingvistička situacija u svetlosti bosanskohercegovačke stručne i političke aktivnosti”, *Prosvjetni rad* 13 (1970), pp. 6-7

Montenegrin literature as emerging from Serb one only in 1918 or 1945. Pressed beyond that, they would turn to argumentation that science should not slave to political solutions, which was negation of Montenegrin nationhood. Since one nation could not infer with the rights of another one, when Montenegrins decided to call all of the writers from their cultural sphere “Montenegrin”, the winner of this outwitting was known. It became impossible for any writer to belong to more than one nation – or to all Yugoslav nations that could read him in original - each had to be classified in one of five (or six) compartments.³¹⁵

It is beyond doubt that at the beginning of the studied period due to its size and underdevelopment Montenegro was easily overseen if one would take a general Yugoslav view. It is also certain that in its push for modernization it was under much influence of the larger Serbia and that many a Montenegrin looked upon Belgrade to decide how to dress, what to listen or even how to speak. However, living in a closely knit union with five other republics was bound to bring in many new influences in both high and everyday culture. That is exactly what all nationalists feared. Perhaps the biggest wrongdoing to Montenegro was that it seen as a provincial region that did not have the capacity to go beyond a status of local importance. Those who left the Republic for Belgrade or Sarajevo saw it as a “natural” order of things but those who stayed in Titograd were offended by paternalizing. The effort to promote Montenegro into an equal partner in terms of culture was soon taken by nationalists who used the phrases of equality to obtain each and every item on the list of national prerequisites, the move that was bound to clash with the order of things up till then. Once the floodgates were opened by the “Declaration” the current of nationalizing cultures could not be stopped. If Croats and Serbs are allowed to call their language(s) by their names why this right shouldn’t be protracted to Bosnia

³¹⁵ The same problem led to another debate waged in the same period. In it literary historians and historians from Belgrade and Zagreb were arguing whom does the literature of the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) belong.

and Montenegro? If there is a specific nation with its specific culture it is self-evident that it must have a literature of its own and moreover, a history of that literature. That in this effort is soon showed impossible to have one poet belonging to two or more nations proved that nationalist exclusiveness of small nations is equally dangerous and aggressive as that as of the large ones.

* * *

The summer of 1974 in Montenegro was not quite like those before it. Several summers ahead of it have been changed by the arrival of tourists to whom the cultural production adapted moving many of its biggest events in this time of the year, previously labeled “the dead season”. But this summer was exceptional – it was filled with historic cultural events. Two of them outshined all the others, “less by the glare of the spectacle and more because of the social importance and the lasting cultural significance”.³¹⁶ The first one was the opening ceremony of the Njegoš mausoleum, the other the opening of the opening of the Titograd University. On the same day the University was inaugurated, April 29th, Dobrosav Ćulafić handed over to the workers the new up-to-the-minute building of “Pobjeda” newspaper that was from now on going to function as a proper daily. These two events were connected in a “wider concept of scientific and cultural development of Montenegro”.³¹⁷ From now on Montenegrins will be reading their own newspaper, they will not have to leave their home republic in order to pursuit higher education and they will be proud of a grandiose monument that their generation built to their national poet. From 1974 Montenegro will not be ashamed of being less culturally developed

³¹⁶ Slobodan Kalezić, “Toplo ljeto 74.”, *Ovdje* 64 (1974): p. 3

³¹⁷ *ibid.*

than any other republic and will be creating its own future. The fight for the full fledged nationhood could now be waged through the existing national institutions.

Conclusion

What everyone would like to know after reading the title of this thesis is whether the Communists invented the Montenegrin nation or not? The answer to this question is not that simple that it can fit in a sentence. In my thesis I have tried to present this problem from several different aspects and now I will try to sum in a few passages the answer to question was there and what kind of nation-building was there in Montenegro between 1964 and 1974?

Nations, no matter how “engineered”, do not appear out of the blue. However, the reasons for their appearance and their ties to the previous conditions from which they emerged could vary greatly. The reemergence of Montenegro in 1945 had its reasoning on historic and administrative grounds; much more importantly it followed the CPY’s rhetoric of “national subjugation” from before the war and was suiting the practical needs of the communist regime at the moment. In order to reconcile diverging opinions on such a tricky subject as the Montenegrin national question, the Communist Party adopted a middle line that left it as an ever-needed arbiter: because of their different historical and political background Montenegrins have turned into “Serbs different from all other Serbs” (M. Djilas) and for this reason they have been given back their national republic, which was their *differentia specifica*. In the first two decades of its existence the Republic of Montenegro had to deal with many immediate challenges that did not leave too much room for the debates on national question. Most of the politicians as well as people, considered it solved in a happy compromise in which nation was equated with republic but did not show any more specifics, all covered in a thick layer of sincere Yugoslavism.

When in early 1960s a new course of decentralization and of the promotion of “political peripheries” was set by the Party the question of Montenegrin national identity gained importance. The decision to make Montenegro an equal player in inter-republican politics

demanded cutting of its traditional and current close relations to Serbia. This opened more space and allotted more support for those who were up to then dissatisfied with the idea that Montenegro is a “little bit less equal” than the other republics when it came to national culture. The idea of forging a stronger Montenegrin cultural and national identity was looked upon benevolently by the new, younger leadership of the Republic that came to power in mid-1960s. By far the most outspoken in favor of a stronger national identity among the high officials was Veljko Milatović while the others were more precautionous though supportive of the trend. Politicians opened new themes that were then exploited by a heterogeneous group of Montenegro-based writers, historians, linguists and cultural workers whose opinions often went way beyond the Party line. From occasional (unwanted) outbursts we see that the LC directly stood behind many of their actions. Though officially they remained united, there were many members of LCM who were hesitant if not outright opposed to this process so that there was enough space in media for the other side to contest it. It is hard to believe that people from the official institutions in such a small environment as Montenegro would allow themselves to make a move that did not have support at some higher level, be it from one side or the other.

The Party was, however, united on one question - that it should remain in charge of the process. Whenever some of the national activists transgressed the officially set borders of promotion of nation, Party intervened *ex cathedra* calling for the scientific and Marxist reexamining of the question. There was a thin difference between ardently defending national rights and advocating nationalism and that line was determined by the Party. Though Party paid lip-service to saying that separatism and unitarism were equally erroneous, its determination to again and again reexamine the national question and its actions spoke louder than words.

All of this could not be possible without a different, more tolerable atmosphere in the country that lived in the atmosphere of expectations on how far the instigated reforms would go, especially during the passing of the new amendments to the constitution (1968-71), the period that coincides with the nationalist offensive. Nationalists all over the country were probing how far could they go with their demands, and often they were tolerated by their republican LC. Most of the questions raised by Montenegrin nationalists were actually only echoes of those set in other republics, as was their rhetoric. They were utilizing the positions already achieved by other nations and demanded equality with them. When Croatian nationalism became too massive and too organized, threatening to become a rival to the LC, it was cut down. The nationalists in other republics went quiet but in Montenegro, whose “small” nationalism could be used against greater ones, the push for cultural/national equality continued, just with much less fuss now.

LCM had a lot of plans, the national activists had even more, but the resources were scarce and, since most of the people remained silent, so was the number of people to utilize them. Still, several very important steps were made in institutionalization of Montenegro and its national culture. Though the people who staffed these institutions were by no means all nationalist activists (though many of them were), the sole existence of institutions guaranteed a more solid base for the national movement in the future.

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PERIODICALS

Pobjeda
Ovdje
Politika
Prosvjetni rad
Titogradska tribina
Novosti
Danas
NIN
Jezik
Kritika
Stvaranje

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