

**The Orjuna in Vojvodina:
A Case of Fascism in a Multi-ethnic Environment**

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Abstract

This is a study of the ideology of the Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna), that examines the impact of its ideology on the population of Vojvodina. The period it covers are the first years after the First World War when the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was establishing its governance over this region. The study analyses the ideological concepts on which the Orjuna was based and the implementation of these ideas in Vojvodina. The focus of the study is the reflection of the ideology on the multi-ethnic relations in the region. In that manner, the focus has been placed on the notions of unity and the heroic cult in the construction of Orjuna's national self-image. Additionally, the thesis analyses the relations of the nationalists towards the non-Slavic minorities and their role in the post-war society. The results of the study have shown that in its core, the ideology of the Orjuna in Vojvodina had an anti-Habsburg character.

Table of Contents

• Introduction.....	1
• 1. Several Considerations Concerning Nationalism, Fascism and Yugoslav National Ideology.....	7
1.1. On Nationalism and Fascism.....	7
1.2. Previous Works on the Orjuna.....	13
1.3. The Yugoslav National Idea.....	18
• 2. Orjuna's Ideology.....	27
2.1. A Short History of the Orjuna.....	27
2.2. Nationalism as a Self-defining Concept.....	29
2.3. On Martyrs and Heroes.....	34
2.4. Fascist elements.....	39
• 3. Concerns about Vojvodina.....	50
3.1. The Contested Region.....	50
3.2. Tribal Separatisms.....	56
3.3. Anational Elements.....	65
• Conclusion.....	73
• Bibliography.....	76

Introduction

The beginning of the research of a fascist movement starts with a delineation of its basic characteristics. This includes the ideas they promoted, territory they covered, their leaders and their members, their role in a society and the time period during which they existed. For every fascist movement, one of the most significant characteristics is the national identity and the national ideology. It is hard to imagine a fascist movement without a nationalist context. The call for a rebirth, regeneration or a palingenesis of a nation is one of the most common ideas among the various fascist movements and a rallying point for the masses who support them. This promotion of a national rebirth became one of the principal issues through which they attracted their followers and gained strength.

The focus of this thesis will be on the impact of the ideas of the Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna) on Vojvodina's multi-ethnic community in the period from 1921 to 1927. This region, characterized by its various ethnic groups, became a place of activity of this organisation. Soon after the First World War finished, this region was acquired by the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSHS). Over the centuries, this territory became a destination for many colonization projects. Many Serbs, Hungarians, Germans from Swabia, Slovaks and Ruthenians were settled in this region over the years. This made the ethnic composition of this region diverse and for this reason it was impossible to delineate its ethnic borders.

The problem proposed at the beginning of this research was how to explain the

ideology of a fascist movement with an integrative nationalist program in this region. The very nature of the Orjuna was nationalist. However, their nationalism contained an integrative component in itself. The notion of unity between southern Slavic people became their leading national program. Everyone who belonged to the Croatian, Serbian or Slovenian population was considered a Yugoslav. For this reason, part of the program and the activity of the Orjuna was to convince the inhabitants of the new state that they belong to the same nation, if they already did not feel that way. In that sense, activities of the Orjuna were different in various parts of the country.

The case of Vojvodina thus presents itself as a peculiar one. Hungarians and Germans represented together more than a half of the Vojvodina's population. Neither of them was considered as Yugoslav. Furthermore, the numerous Croatian and Serbian population did not have a developed Yugoslav identity. Besides them, various groups of Romanians, Slovaks and Ruthenians lived there with no actual connection to the Yugoslav identity. This would mean that the members of the Orjuna that started the organisation in Vojvodina in 1922 were actually propagating their ideology to a minority.

The general goal of the thesis is to demonstrate the behaviour of a fascist movement in a multi-ethnic environment. Therefore, the attitudes of the Orjuna towards various ethnic groups will be accentuated. Since the thesis is dealing with the fascists and inter-ethnic relationships in this region, the attitudes towards the communists are not covered. The beginning of the Serbian rule in Vojvodina was initially characterized by the lack of administrative and police control over the region. The emergence of such a fascist movement that offered its services for the purposes of the crown initially influenced the state to rely on this movement and consider them allies.

For this reason, the analysis of the texts published by the Orjuna, related to

Vojvodina and its population, is going to demonstrate their vision of the region in the newly created country. The components of their fascist ideology, such as military principles, anti-parlamentarism, anti-clericalism, anti-conservatism, and the creation of a “new man,”¹ created in the region a specific atmosphere which inspired violence against their opponents. These opponents were usually identified through the national identity. Hence, the study analysed in what way the publications of the Orjuna related to the multi-ethnic environment.

Consequently, sources used for this study were newspapers and books published by Orjuna's most renown members. Firstly, I used two editions of the *Statute and Program* of the Orjuna, one published in Split in 1923, and the other one published in 1924. Secondly, I used articles published in the newspapers *Vidovdan*, which was published in Novi Sad since 1922. Until 1927, this newspaper was an official organ of the Orjuna in Vojvodina and in the numbers that are still remaining today, I found a number of articles relating to the questions of minorities and the political life of the country. The authors of these texts were usually anonymous. Some of the authors were signed by the name, but for the most of them I was not able to determine their identity. Hence, for most of the texts from *Vidovdan* the author remained unknown to me.

Nevertheless, most probable author of most of the texts was Dobrosav Jevdjević, the editor of the newspaper. He was the first president of the organisation² in Vojvodina who was at that time one of the most influential men in the movement. He was elected member of the Belgrade section of the Directorium which was one of the highest positions in the movement. In 1925, the role of the leader of the Vojvodina branch took Dušan Kovačević, while members of the governing board became Franja Malin, Jevdjević with some others.³

1 See chapter one, page 11.

2 First, he was a president of the Yugoslav Progressive Nationalist Youth (JNNO – Jugoslovenska Napredna Navionalna Omladina), and later of the Orjuna.

3 Niko Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine do Orjune: Istorijat omladinskog pokreta* (From the Revolutionary Youth till Orjuna: History of the Youth Movement) (Split: Splitska Društvena Tiskara, 1925), 125.

Later, Jevdjević assumed the leading position again and kept the position until the end. He came to Vojvodina from Bosnia after the war and was mostly known as the editor of *Vidovdan*. During the years after he left the Orjuna he was a member of the Independent Democratic Party and its representative in the parliament. During the Second World War, he was a member of the Chetnik movement and a man responsible for the Chetnik cooperation with the Italian occupation forces.⁴ Jevdjević was of the utmost importance for my research. In 1925, he published a book with collected articles, which he published in *Vidovdan* and some other Orjuna's newspapers. His writings represent an example of the fascist influences in the new Yugoslav state and their transformation to the specific South Slavic environment.⁵

Additionally, in this study, it was analysed the book of Franja Malin, *Yugoslavism through History*, which was published in 1925.⁶ About Franja Malin, other than his participation in the Orjuna movement, I was not able to find much. The only thing I found was that he came to Novi Sad from Dalmatia, and that he was the first Croat who became a member of the board of Matica Srpska.⁷ His book represents an example of a historical construction of the Yugoslav national identity. His concerns were mostly identity related and among all authors I used, his writings had the least fascist character.

Finally, my work relied on the book of Pavle Jurišić, *Through our National Crisis*.⁸ Colonel Pavle Jurišić supported the development of the organisation and soon became one of the most important associates and an honorary president of the movement.⁹ He was a

4 For further reference on his participation in World War Two, see: Matteo Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 70-181; Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, 1941-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 68-105.

5 Dobrosav Jevdjević, *Izabrani članci* (Selected articles) (Novi Sad: 1925).

6 Franja Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju* (Yugoslavism through History) (Split: Tisak Hrvatske Štamparije, 1925)

7 "Posle 99 godina, prvi Hrvat član glavnog odbora Matice Srpske" (After Ninety-nine Years, First Croat Became a Member the Governing Board of Matica Srpska), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 1, 5 January 1925, 1.

8 Pavle E. Jurišić, *Kroz našu nacionalnu krizu* (Through our National Crisis) (Belgrade: 1924).

9 Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 97; "U borbi protiv mračnjaka i nepoštenja" (In the Battle

regular guest at every gathering of the Orjuna, but was more involved in the organisation of the National Defence. His death in April 1925 was commemorated by the members of the Orjuna, since he was considered a hero of the movement.¹⁰ Special attention needs to be given to him, because he was the only candidate for the assembly Orjuna supported. During the parliamentary elections in 1923, he was a candidate of the nationalists, on the list of the Democratic Party. However, the initiative failed due to inner misunderstandings within the movement, and his candidacy was withdrawn.¹¹

The analysis of Orjuna's texts has shown that the development of a fascist ideology in Vojvodina happened as a response to the ongoing social and political problems of the region. The central point in the publications of the Orjuna was the construction of the new unified national identity. During their existence, the activity of the members of the Orjuna was mostly directed towards the build of the Yugoslav national identity. In this process, the study has shown that all the people who did not consider themselves Yugoslav, whether they were of the Slavic or non-Slavic origin, were considered potentially dangerous for the national interests. The absence of a religion as a unifying factor, and a disappointment in the parliamentary system, influenced the creation of a mythical self-image, upon which the national identity was built.

In Vojvodina, these problems manifested in a peculiar manner. The situation was developed in such a manner after the First World War, that the new authorities, to secure their sovereignty, replaced the previous administrative elite of Austria-Hungary. Orjuna's ideologues propagated the complete removal of all the signs of the previous Habsburg rule. This consequently resulted in the prosecution of the citizens of the Hungarian and German

against the Darkness and Dishonesty), *Vidovdan* II, no. 9, 25 January 1923, 1.

¹⁰ Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 127.

¹¹ "Kandidacija g. Pavla Jurišića" (Candidacy of Mr. Pavle Jurišić), *Vidovdan* II, no. 14, 8 February 1923, 2; Gligorijević, *Orjuna*, 362-363.

origin who refused to subordinate to new authorities. The goal of its ideology was the transformation of the society that would not resemble the previous Habsburg rule. Consequently, the members of the minorities were considered keepers of the previous order, and were for this reason suspected of plotting against the new country.

For the end, I should mention that all the translations from the Serbo-Croatian were translated by myself. Transliteration from the Cyrillic letters was done according to the Serbo-Croatian grammar and all the letters were transformed to their Latin equivalent.

1. Several Considerations Concerning Nationalism, Fascism and Yugoslav National Ideology

1.1. On Nationalism and Fascism

The twentieth century brought new elements in the sphere of political struggle. The heritage of the nineteenth century left a plethora of political ideas that people of the 1900s developed to the extremes. Specifically, the period immediately after the First World War, at least in Europe, was characterised by the existence of extreme political factions that considered violence legitimate. In this sense, communism and various kinds of nationalisms and conservatisms, developed a high level of intolerance towards other ideas. On the other hand, the call for reforms was present and the idea of the world that has to be changed through some sort of revolution became popular.

The situation in the post-war Yugoslavia followed similar patterns. Soon after the country was created, a number of political parties and organisations of both leftist and rightist orientation were formed. The country was new and it needed an identity. In this atmosphere of identity searching, various political programs were developed, based usually on some of the ideas coming from Europe. Among the extreme nationalist groups, emerged the Orjuna, an organisation of nationalists that shared certain aspects of rhetoric and actions with the Italian Fascist. Among its most representative features was a strong national ideology based on the Yugoslav identity.

My analysis of the Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna) is placed within the framework of recent studies on nationalism and fascism. Since the main goal of

the research is to analyse the existence of a fascist movement in a multi-ethnic environment, the main target of the research were ideas of a nation, ethnicity, minority, society and state in publications of the Orjuna. The ideology of the Orjuna contained several elements in its ideology that can be described as fascist, and one of the tasks of this research is to point out their apprehension of Vojvodina's multi-ethnic society.

Firstly, there is a need to define the character of Orjuna's integrative Yugoslav nationalism. What makes one movement nationalist and how can its ideology be defined as such? The Yugoslav idea can be described within Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism: "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent." Further, he observes that "[nationalist] sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind."¹² Although for Yugoslavism we cannot define one congruent set of ideas, it can be said that it constituted the idea of a joint political unit of all the southern Slavs. Nonetheless, through history the image of who those southern Slavs varied. By the time of the First World War this idea generally contained the concept of unification of all the Serbs and Croats in one political unit, which usually included the Slovenes and sometimes the Bulgarians.

When the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSHS) was constituted at the end of 1918, all the plans for unification were finally realized and all hopes were turned towards a brighter future. However, by 1921, the first disagreements created an atmosphere of tension within the state. This new situation influenced the transformation of the nationalist programs. The location proposed for this research, Vojvodina, is a good ground for the analysis of the evolution of nationalist ideas. The reason for this is the existence of a large number of minorities in this region. This way, the ethnic situation in the region

¹² Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 1.

challenged the nationalist concepts intended for the building of a national identity.

“The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all the members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners; or it can fail in both these ways at once, ...”¹³ In Gellner's observation we can find a starting point for the analysis of multi-ethnic issues of Vojvodina. The large number of the so called “foreigners” or “minorities” posed a problem for the new state that still did not have institutions and men that could establish state supervision over the territory. The change of government from the Habsburg rule to the reign of the Karadjordjević dynasty was a significant change. Since the Habsburg Empire had developed mechanisms to organize a multi-ethnic society and to incorporate minorities into the state, the shift of power meant a shift into an administrative system of a different kind. First of all, the Kingdom of Serbia was a small state with a mostly homogeneous population and no real experience with minorities.

Rogers Brubaker makes a distinction between the “nationalizing” nationalisms of the “newly independent (or newly reconfigured) states”, the “transborder nationalisms” of what he calls “external national homelands” and the “national minorities”. Brubaker sees the national minorities caught between these two nationalizing processes, where they have to define their own identity. “‘National minority,’ like ‘external national homeland’ or ‘nationalizing state,’ designates a political stance, not an ethnodemographic fact.”¹⁴ Hence, following Brubaker's ideas, the goal of this thesis is to analyse Orjuna's reflection on the multi-ethnic situation in Vojvodina, considering national identity as a designation of a political stance. Because the Yugoslav identity was the basis of Orjuna's ideology, I put an emphasis on the question of national identity. Since the identity itself was construed as a

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4-6.

kind of political stance towards the monarchy, and I mean in this sense both the Habsburg and Karadjordjević monarchy, the choice of acceptance of the Yugoslav identity in contrast to other identities can be perceived as a question of loyalty to the crown.

Therefore, the relationship of the Orjuna leadership with the crown may be significant. Because the movement lacked a strong charismatic leader, this role was assigned to King Aleksandar himself. One of the questions posed in this research is how this role was related to the national question and Yugoslav identity in Orjuna's ideology. The loyalty to the crown, as already mentioned, could be related to the national question and the explanation of the national ideology of the Orjuna is searched for in the interaction between “loyalty” and “identity.”

The second thing to determine is the nature of Orjuna's fascist ideology. The term *fascist* itself is vague and over the years various definitions have been given to closely delineate which movement or party can be described as fascist. Ernst Nolte defines fascism through what Payne called six “anti” statements: anti-Marxism, anti-liberalism, anti-conservatism, the leadership principle, a party army and the aim of totalitarianism¹⁵. This attempt to define fascism is wide enough to incorporate many different rightist movements. If we adhere to Nolte's wide delineation of fascism, the Orjuna can be easily qualified as a fascist organisation. It contained all of the six characteristics Nolte suggested. In Orjuna's ideology and its activities strong notion of anti-liberalism, anti-Marxism and anti-conservatism can be found. The ideology was based on a strong leadership principle, although the authority was sought outside of the organisation. Furthermore, the Orjuna possessed its own party army and in its ideology, the tendency towards totalitarianism can be recognised.¹⁶ This will be further elaborated later in the chapter about Orjuna's ideology.

15 Stanley Payne, “Fascism: A Working Definition”, in *Comparative Fascist Studies: New Perspectives*, ed. Constantin Iordachi (London: Routledge, 2010), 99.

16 Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press,

The definition given by Roger Griffin delineated fascism mostly as a palingenetic movement seeking for a revolution that would create a “new man.” “Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythical core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.”¹⁷ In this definition special emphasis will be placed on the idea of “a mythical core”. His explanation of this mythical core is described as “an evocative force of the image or the vision of reality” which can be used for the purposes of mass-mobilizing¹⁸. Traces of a mythical core can be detected in Orjuna's ideology, which I intend to examine through their publications.

The definition offered by Stanley Payne does not stray too much from Griffin's and it extrapolates a somewhat more precise explanation. He defines fascism as “a form of revolutionary ultra-nationalism for national rebirth that is based on a primarily vitalist philosophy, is structured on extreme elitism, mass mobilization, and the Führerprinzip, positively values violence as an end as well as means and tends to normalize war and/or the military virtues.”¹⁹ This definition provides a good starting point for the analysis and in combination with Griffin's definition and Nolte's six principles, it will be used in the analysis of the ideology. Specific conditions in which the Orjuna developed made it difficult to classify it. Hence, I will use studies of these three scholars to delineate the fascist elements in its ideology.

The nature of Orjuna's ideology cannot only be placed within the international studies on fascism. Considering the specific traits it developed due to its emergence in the specific time period and the specific socio-cultural environment, this movement could not be easily compared and classified with other fascist, nationalist or what Payne calls “radical

1980), 5-6.

17 Roger Griffin, “Fascism: General Introduction”, in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, 118.

18 Ibid., 116-118.

19 Payne, “Fascism: A Working Definition”, 106-107.

right” movements.²⁰ All the general theories of fascism have been developed mostly through analysis of the Italian and German types of fascism. The situation in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes differed largely from the German and Italian problems. Hence, the comparisons should be made with caution and generic definitions combined with notions that suggest new elements characteristic for the region.

In the thesis of Stevo Djurašković, the author made a comparison with generic forms of fascisms extrapolated by the previously mentioned authors. His analysis proves that through the existence of the movement their character changed. He determines that in the period of 1923-1925 the movement displayed clear signs of a fascist organisation. However, in the beginning and after its decline, he finds that the Orjuna could be described more as a nationalist right movement.²¹ For this reason, static definitions or classifications of fascism cannot be applied completely to this organisation. As my study of Orjuna's ideology will show, this organisation bore some elements of fascism and in some others it resembled more the “radical right.” However, the conditions in which it developed depended on the character of the Yugoslav national idea and the socio-cultural problems of the new country, which determined a specific way of its development and its short existence.

The special interest of this study is the material published in Vojvodina. The focus is placed on the notions of myth, palingenetic and rebirth elements in its ideology, the creation of a “new man” through revolution and the vision of the state and its citizens in the light of national identity. Gentile's emphasis on the mythical core of the Fascist movement is used in the analysis of the perception of the national identity in Orjuna's publications. My goal is to trace the elements of myth in their heroic ideology. Myth, according to Gentile, played a crucial role in the populist propaganda of the Fascists. It was used as a construct in the

²⁰ Payne, *Fascism*, 15-21.

²¹ Stevo Djurašković, *Fascism in Central Europe: The Organization of the Yugoslav Nationalists – Orjuna, 1921-1929*, MA thesis, CEU Budapest, 2007.

formation of an Italian identity, which was again utilized for the creation of a collective community by “nationalizing the masses”. Gentile thus claims that the myth of the nation was combined with the myth of the revolution.²² This notion of a revolution that would incite the rebirth of a nation and create a new society with a “new man” as its constituent became the standard element in recent studies of fascism and became important for the analysis of the construction of the Yugoslav identity in Vojvodina.

However, my goal is not to compare the Orjuna with other fascist movements, but more to place it in the wider theory of fascism. Therefore, I will consider it a fascist movement, although with a notion that its specific development makes the classification improbable in some points.

1.2. Previous Works on the Orjuna

Historical research on the Orjuna started in 1963 with an article published by the Belgrade historian Branislav Gligorijević. This article presents the chronological outline of Orjuna's existence and covers the entire territory of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. His thorough research makes this article a reliable source for considering facts and chronology. His position, however, was based upon the Marxist perspective and focus directed mostly on the conflict between the Orjuna and the workers' movement. Consequently, he describes the Orjuna as a nationalist and terrorist organisation which

²² Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 1-8.

evolved as a bourgeois reactionary movement with the purpose of pressuring the workers and national minorities in Yugoslavia.²³ In his second article about the Orjuna, he redefined his position, calling it a “pro-fascist” (profašistička) organisation and pointing out fascist elements in their activities and ideology. However, in this latter article, more than in the former, he remains attached to their relations with the labour movement.²⁴

One article, published in 1990 dealt with the literary works of Niko Bartulović, the main ideologist of the Orjuna. The author, Branimir Donat, gives an analysis of the ideological origins of Bartulović's novels, written in the inter-war period. The article makes a connection between Bartulović and the Chetnik movement's ideological program which was developed during the Second World War. In doing so he makes an anachronistic link, giving the Chetnik origin to Bartulović's works even before the Chetnik ideology was created. He insists on the anti-Croatian character of Bartulović's engagement and generally attacks the integralist Yugoslav ideas.²⁵ In his view, the Orjuna's and the Chetniks' ideologies are the same, although all the connections presented are indirect. He often ascribes ideas to Bartulović, which cannot be clearly associated to him. For example, Donat presents letters written by two Chetnik ideologists, Moljević and Vasić, and associates their content with Bartulović by stating that Bartulović was present at the Chetnik congress in Ba in 1944, although these letters were not related to the congress and Bartulović probably had no knowledge of their content.²⁶ Although Bartulović's opposition to Croatian nationalism seems obvious, and his connection with the Chetnik movement before and after the war

23 Branislav Gligorijević, “Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)” (The Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)), *Istorija 20. veka* 5 (1963): 315-396.

24 Branislav Gligorijević, “Profašistička organizacija 'Orjuna' i revolucionarni radnički pokret Jugoslavije” (Profascist Organisation “Orjuna” and Revolutionary Labour Movement of Yugoslavia), *Revolucionarno delavsko gibanje v Sloveniji v letih 1921-1924* (Revolutionary Labour Movement in Slovenia During the Years 1921-1924) (Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga – Znanstveni tisk, 1975), 123-134.

25 Branimir Donat, “Niko Bartulović hrvatski pisac – apologet Orjuna i četničke ideologije” (Croatian Writer Niko Bartulović – Apologist of the Orjuna and Chetnik Ideology), *Republika* 7-8 (1990): 183-234.

26 Ibid., 194-200.

undeniable, the definition of the Orjuna as a Chetnik organisation is an oversimplification of its ideology.

More attention to the Orjuna has been given within recent scholarship. Ivan J. Bošković published a study on the Orjuna in 2006 and an article in 2007.²⁷ His work is more related to literature, analysing several writers from Split who were connected with the Orjuna. He looks upon their works and seeks connections between their novels, stories and poems and the ideologies they propagated as either members or supporters of the Orjuna. His study considers the Orjuna's ideology as extremely anti-Croatian and anti-national, claiming that they worked against the interests of “the nation.”²⁸ The focus of his research is directed on Split and its surroundings, leaving out regions outside Croatia. Bošković describes their notion of Yugoslavism as religious and their mission as sacred. However, he equates the notion of “unitarian” with “greater Serbian,” leaving no space for the distinction of those two terms.²⁹ In the article he analyses the politics of the Orjuna towards Croatian peasants and their attitudes towards Stjepan Radić, leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, presented in the Split newspapers *Pobeda*.³⁰ In both works his intention is to prove the anti-Croatian attitudes of the Orjuna and the pro-Serbian character of the organisation, which he does not define clearly. This gives the impression that he is describing a conspiracy against the Croats. Although he rightfully recognised the tendencies in the movement that were strongly against Croatian nationalism, he failed to recognise other “anti” elements in their ideology, which were directed against any non-Yugoslav nationalisms.

This topic has received scholarly attention in Serbia as well. Mladen Djordjević

27 Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna – Ideologija i književnost* (The Orjuna – Ideology and Literature) (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006); Ivan J. Bošković, “Splitski orjunaški list *Pobeda* i Stjepan Radić” (The Split Orjuna Newspapers *Pobeda* and Stjepan Radić), *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 39, no.1 (2007): 117-132.

28 Bošković, *Orjuna*, 456.

29 Ibid., 456-462.

30 Bošković, “*Pobeda*”, 117-132.

made a study on the Orjuna, which was published as an article in 2006 in one of the political magazines (might want to footnote with the name of the magazine). This article dealt with the entire territory in which the Orjuna were present and covers its entire time span. Djordjević deals mostly with political history and describes the course of events and the most important features of the movement. His approach is chronological and his narrative reports thoroughly on the development of the movement and places it in the context of the political events of the country. Despite the fact that this is a meticulously made historical description of the Orjuna, it does not bring anything new to the study of the movement. Djordjević does however sort out the data he collected in a comprehensible manner, presenting one well structured summary of the present knowledge about the Orjuna.³¹

One MA thesis written at Central European University, has shown that the Orjuna can be analysed within contemporary fascist studies. The author, Stevo Djurašković, performed an analysis of the movement which was based on the international studies of fascism. Definitions given by George L. Mosse, Roger Griffin, Stanley Payne and Emilio Gentile made the basis for his explanations. Hence, he defined the Orjuna as an organisation propagating a “palingenetic revolution based on a new integral national culture as the only remedy to overcome the perceived state decadence.”³² His focus is directed at the organisation and evolution of the movement. In his thesis, the evolution of the movement is divided into three stages, depending on the character of its ideology. The first stage, from 1921 to 1923, was described as the stage of development of the movement characterised by the plans of a nationalist revolution within the existing parliamentary system. The second stage, from 1923 to 1925, is expressed by the plan to replace the existing parliamentary

31 Mladen Djordjević, “Organizacija Jugoslovenskih Nacionalista (ORJUNA): Istorijat – Ideologija – Uticaji” (Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA): History – Ideology – Influences), *Nova srpska politička misao* XII, no.1-4 (2006): 187-219.

32 Djurašković, *Fascism in Central Europe*, 68.

system with the corporative society dictated by an omnipotent state and is identified as fascist for this reason. The last phase after 1925 Djurašković identifies as the period when the movement shifted more toward the radical conservative right, with a moderated and less violent language, due to the lost of support from the government. His contribution with this study is that he placed the research on the Orjuna within the framework of the international studies of fascism.³³

It will be worth noting one short article published in the journal *Krovovi* in 2001, by Predrag Bajić, as the only study dealing specifically with the Orjuna in Vojvodina. However, its main goal was to present two issues of the Orjuna's newspaper *Princip* that still survived and the entire story presented in this article is made only to accompany the description of the newspaper issues. Bajić's work is limited in scope and relates only to the circumstances related to *Princip*.³⁴

From 18 April till 10 May 1991, a series of articles were published under the name *Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo* (The Orjuna of Dalmatia) by the Croatian historian Tonči Šitin in the daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija*. This feuilleton was, due to the time limits, inaccessible to me and all the information about this feuilleton I received from the study of Stevo Djurašković. Also, some of the studies relating to the inter-war period of Yugoslavia and studies relating to fascism deal with some of the Orjuna's history, but I focused here solely on the studies that made a thorough analysis of the Orjuna's existence.

My intention is to analyse how the Orjuna's ideology was construed relating to Vojvodina's specific ethnic composition. Hence, this work introduces a new perspective on the concept of Yugoslav nation and its integrative character. Consequently, the study dwells

³³ Ibid., 68-70.

³⁴ Predrag Bajić, "Delatnost Orjuna u Subotici i prikaz primerka subotičkog orjunaškog lista "Princip" u muzeju Vojvodine" (Activities of the Orjuna in Subotica and an Example of an Issue of the Orjuna's Newspaper *Princip* in the Museum of Vojvodina), *Krovovi* XV/XVI, No. 50/51/52 (2000/2001): 62-65.

on politics that the Orjuna propagated in this region and its relation towards national minorities and the constituent population of Yugoslavia. Previous studies dealt with the Orjuna's activities in Vojvodina only within a broader scope and focused on its political practice. My intention is to analyse the ideological implications of the Orjuna's existence in Vojvodina, considering that the organisation exercised more violent politics there than in any other region. The ethnic composition of Vojvodina was more diverse than in any other region of Yugoslavia. For the nationalists, this area was of special interest mostly because the majority of the population was not of Yugoslav origin. Hence, plans developed for this region had to deal with its multi-ethnic population and its future in the newly created country.

1.3. The Yugoslav National Idea

The development of the Slavic national ideas on the Balkan Peninsula was a long process. Yugoslavism was one of the national ideas that emerged during the nineteenth century. As such, it formed a basis of the Orjuna's program. In a newly formed state, the necessity for development of a unified national identity became one of the tasks of Orjuna's ideology. In 1918 Yugoslavia was formed (although not named that way yet), it was necessary to form a Yugoslav consciousness. The problem with this kind of national idea was that it was not uniformly developed. It was conceived in two different conditions and was promoted along the separate South Slav nationalisms – Croatian, Slovenian and Serbian.

It was difficult for anyone to predict the creation of a unified Yugoslav state at such a fast rate. One prediction made in 1911 envisioned the existence of a unified Yugoslav state

in May of 2011. It is plausible that intellectuals at the turn of the centuries imagined and propagated Yugoslav nationalism without actually considering the unification possible in their life times. The author of this predicament was Stojan Novaković, who in 1911 considered that unification of all the South Slavs into one state would seem highly improbable and that there can only be hope that in the distant future the goal could be achieved. As Prime Minister and Minister of Education, philologist and a historian, he had influence in the creation of policies that promoted Serbia's national program. Despite his outright engagement in the promotion of Yugoslavia, he could not have anticipated the creation of a South Slavic state in only seven years from the day he wrote, but instead in one hundred years.³⁵

The concepts of a Yugoslav nation were mostly based on language similarities. These similarities gathered intellectual elites to think about joint national programs which, envisioned as early as the mid nineteenth century, proposed a common origin of all the Southern Slavic tribes. One of the reasons of this proposed similarity probably lay in the circumstance that they were surrounded by non-Slavic speaking nations. In Austria-Hungary, the power in the state lay in the hands of the German and Hungarian speaking elites. Although the access to the highest ranks of administration, education, culture and army was more or less open to all the ethnic groups, the knowledge of German or Hungarian was still a hindrance to many non-speakers in their career advancement. Slavic intellectuals of the Habsburg Empire looked for allies in their fellow Slavic compatriots who shared the same problems.

Actually, it was Ernest Gellner who proposed that the development of the educational system of the industrial society led to the emergence of national movements.

35 Stojan Novaković, "Jugoslavija u godini 2011: Nakon sto godina (Yugoslavia in the Year 2011: After One Hundred Years), *Slobodna Tribuna* III, no. 514, 15 December 1923, 4.

The state needed a unified administration system which required the usage of a spoken vernacular. In a state with multiplicity of spoken languages, the process of modernisation was followed by the recognition of local particularities and their need to develop education in their own languages. The problems that emerged relating to politics and advancement in career, the growing demand for social mobility, migrations from cities to towns effected the self-positioning of the ethnic groups, which resulted in their slow self-identification as nations.³⁶ Similarly, German and Hungarian became languages of the administration which enhanced their usage in the everyday businesses. The languages spoken by Slavs differed from these languages, which consequently made them even more difficult to adapt to modernizing processes.

The idea of a language as the unifying factor was not new. Andrew Wachtel finds a relationship in the previous unifications of Italy and Germany, where the language was one of the major unifying factors, although in neither of these countries was there a universally recognized vernacular.³⁷ The similarity of the South Slavic languages was therefore an obvious direction for the national movement's ideological background. Although language similarities were the reason for the idea of a common origin, the notion of a Yugoslav varied over time mostly because of the language differences. Depending on who propagated the idea, the term Yugoslav could have incorporated Slovenes, Bulgarians, Croats and Serbs or only Croats and Serbs.³⁸

Before 1912, people who spoke South Slavic languages lived in five different countries. The Habsburg and Ottoman Empires had the largest population of people who spoke those languages. Serbia and Montenegro gained independence in 1878 and Bulgaria

36 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 58-62.

37 Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 24.

38 Ljubinka Trgovčević, "South Slav Intellectuals and the Creation of Yugoslavia", in *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea 1918-1992*, Dejan Djokić (ed.), (London: Hurst & Company, 2003), 224-227.

in 1908. While the Serbian population spoke mostly a dialect called Shtokavian (Štokavski), the Croat population spoke three different kinds of dialects – Shtokavian, Kajkavian (Kajkavski) and Chakavian (Čakavski). These dialects had different sub-dialects as well. All these dialects and sub-dialects were mutually intelligible, which led intellectuals of the nineteenth century to believe that they all made one language. Slovene and Bulgarian languages differed from Serbo-Croatian too much to be regarded as different dialects of this language. This made the notion of a Yugoslav not precisely defined and depending on the time period and the person who asserted the “identity,” the notion changed.³⁹

For this reason, in 1918, ongoing debates over the unification included a question of whether the Bulgarians should become part of the new state. Some of the Croatian politicians, like Stjepan Radić, believed that they belonged in the Yugoslav community, but Serbian politicians disagreed. Hence, Croatian politicians and Serbian politicians saw the Yugoslav identity differently. This difference resulted in ongoing misunderstandings which lasted through the entire existence of the Yugoslav Kingdom.⁴⁰

By 1918, it was readily accepted that Slovenes belong to the Yugoslav nation. Nonetheless, the issues that remained between Serbs and Croats posed a problem more than any other. The major problem lay in the circumstance that they imagined Yugoslav identity in a different way. Basically, on both sides, the perception of the Yugoslav was made in an integrative manner. However, in Serbia, there was a tendency of equating the Serbian and Yugoslav identity and therefore considering Croats to be Serbs of Catholic religion. One study by Charles Jelavich proved that the image of the Yugoslavs in the Habsburg monarchy and Serbia differed in the time before the First World War. He analysed primary and secondary school textbooks to see how the perception of a nation was constructed, assuming

³⁹ Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, 25-27.

⁴⁰ For further reference see: Dejan Djokic, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 12-39.

that attitudes presented in textbooks reflected in the creation of public opinion.⁴¹

Jelavich analysed the language textbooks and grammars, then history and geography textbooks used in the Habsburg Empire and Serbia. His findings showed that the vision of Yugoslavia was radically different on the two sides of the border. The Habsburg textbooks, written for the purposes of the Austrian-Hungarian educational system, emphasized the common origin of the Serbs and Croats, underlining the differences and generally promoting the Yugoslav name. On the other hand, in Serbian textbooks, the common origin was mostly explained as if Croats were just an ethnic subdivision of Serbs who prefer to use the term “Croat” to identify themselves.⁴²

One of the traits of the construction of the Yugoslav identity was that all of the constituent national identities remained. Although Yugoslavism promoted the unity of all the South Slavs, the separate Croat, Serb and Slovene identities endured. Actually, Slovene, Croatian and Serbian national programs developed independently, and in both cases, the Yugoslav idea was an extension of an already existing national program. The differences emerged because of the different position from which these national ideologies started. In one summary, Ivo Banac explained the basic differences in these two perceptions of the national movement: “The Croat national thinkers embraced the wider Slavic world in an attempt to foster the integrations of heteropolar Croatian lands. Unlike the Serbs who had their common church organisation, the sole institutional instruments of Croat national integration were the Sabor (Assembly) and the office of the Ban (Lord), both visible expressions of Croatia's historical and state right.”⁴³

The nineteenth century national identities in Croatia were constructed in the context

41 Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms – Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1990).

42 Ibid., 8-54.

43 Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 75.

of the Austrian-Hungarian administrative system. Hence, both Croatian and Serbian programs there reflected their need to reaffirm their position in the existing administrative constellation of the empire. For this reason, in the negotiations with the imperial government or the Hungarian assembly they looked at each other as natural allies. Yugoslav national ideology was therefore propagated mostly in the Habsburg lands. Rusinow pointed out that this ideology was mostly propagated by Croatian “intellectual classes” and that the social strata to which they belonged was actually narrow. Nonetheless, he underlined that even among them, the notion that they belong to Croat, Serb or Slovene identity was present at the same.⁴⁴

For Serbs, this question was from the start associated with the small Serbian principality, whose independence and enlargement were at the roots of the national idea. The Serbian national program had no real need for Yugoslavism. The major goal of the Serbian elite was independence, and after 1878, the “liberation” of all the “Serbian lands.” This goal however, had to be ideologically explained. Basically, the idea that was widespread assumed that all who were considered Serbs should unite into one national Serbian state. However, the clear distinction of whom one can consider a Serb was not entirely defined. One idea, presented by the language reformer Vuk Karadžić, became popular among the Serbian intellectuals and with various modifications formed a basis of the Serbian national program. The idea was that all people who speak the Shtokavski dialect are actually Serbs. The strength of the argumentation was simple and purely language related. The linguist saw nothing wrong with it and suggested it in his 1849 study *Srbi, svi i svuda* (Serbs, All of them and Everywhere).⁴⁵

However, the response to this claim was not well received among the Croats. It soon

44 Dennison Rusinow, “The Yugoslav Idea Before Yugoslavia”, in Djokić, *Yugoslavism*, 13-15.

45 Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*, 72-76.

became the main trait of the “greater Serbian” ideology. The main problem in it lay in the fact that the majority of the Croatian population spoke the Shtokavski dialect. If Karadžić’s claim was correct, this would mean that most of the territories of Croatia and entire Bosnia were Serbian. Therefore, the matter became a source of dispute over identities. Nevertheless, in Serbia it became popular among intellectuals and the claim that Croats are actually Catholic Serbs became the basis of the Serbian version of Yugoslavism.⁴⁶ This concept was a reflection of the problems that the principality had over the years. The political and cultural leaders of this state that was developing during the nineteenth century focused on the ideas that could have been used for the territorial claims. Hence, depending on the political situation, Serbian foreign policy assumed position which suited their interests.

In 1914, when the war started, conditions were made that previously conceived ideas of a South Slavic unity become actual again. The initiative came from the Serbian side. In desperate need for an ally against the Austria-Hungary, Serbian government looked for anyone ready to assist it. One group of politicians and intellectuals from the Habsburg lands formed a committee in London that promoted the unity. During the war period they remained in contact and discussed the possible union after the war. That option seemed more and more appealing to the Serbian side and Serbian ideology was readily replaced by the Yugoslav. In the same time it was a means to weaken Austria-Hungary and a way to legitimise territorial claims and get help from the allies.

When the war ended, Serbia found itself on the winning side. On the December 1, 1918, Serbian king received a delegation from Zagreb which asked him for a union of the Habsburg South Slav territories with Serbia. Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was born this day and although both sides readily approached the unification, the differences

⁴⁶ Rusinow, “The Yugoslav Idea”, 20-21.

were not yet resolved. In Zagreb, many were sceptical about this unification. The agreement was not entirely made and lot of things relating the state polity and administration remained to be resolved. As the Serbian army and police took over the former Habsburg territories, scepticism turned into fear. Prevalence of the Serbian elements in all spheres of life in this new country persuaded many of the Croatian and Slovene leaders that this new kingdom was just another expression of the “greater Serbianism” and that unification was a mistake.⁴⁷

In this context, the emergence of the Orjuna in the former Habsburg lands can be seen as a reaction to the failed compromise. After the constitution was made without the consent of the Croatian politicians, the politics of the Serbian majority in the state were secured, and the dissatisfaction in Croatia started to grow. When the Yugoslav Progressive Nationalist Youth (JNNO) was formed in 1921 in Split, its main goal was to defend the union from all of the enemies. The emphasis was placed on the enemies from the inside and the enemies from the outside. Hence, the promotion of the unity and the reprimand of all separatisms became their prime directives. When the organisation changed its name to Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists in 1922, the organisation gained its full affirmation by including not only youth but all the “patriots” and even received some support from the state.

The nature of their ideology is consequently tied to the Yugoslav national ideology. One of the most striking facts about its existence was that it existed mostly in the regions that were somehow contested either by another country or by a potential separatist movement. Hence, the strongest organisations of the Orjuna developed in the former Habsburg lands. Their goal to enforce the Yugoslav unity was hindered by the circumstance that the notions of the Yugoslav idea were different in Serbian and Croatian perspectives. In its essence, the Orjuna's concept of Yugoslavism was based on a different ideological basis.

⁴⁷ See Djokic, *Elusive Compromise*, 40-60.

It encompassed both the Serbian and Croation visions of Yugoslavia, but it contained the tendency to erase previous differences and to rely on the authority of the king as the unifying factor.

2. Orjuna's Ideology

2.1. A Short History of the Orjuna

The first organisations of the Yugoslav Nationals were formed in 1921, when the disputes between Croatian and Serbian politicians became more intense. The enthusiasm over the creation of a new state was still strong, but the dissatisfaction of certain parts of society made people question the purposefulness of unification. Stjepan Radić, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (and in the new constellation of power the leader of the Croats in the parliament), did not recognise the state's constitution and questioned the position of Croatia in the new state. What troubled most Croatian intellectuals and politicians was the unequal status of Croatia in the new country. Dominance of Serbs in the political sphere of life convinced some of the Croatian leaders that the change from the Habsburg monarchy to the Karadjordjević monarchy was not for the better. In both states Croats were in the minority and were politically dominated by another nation.⁴⁸

The emergence of the Yugoslav Progressive Nationalist Youth in March of 1921 can be interpreted in two ways. One is as the reaction to the territorial disputes with Italy over Dalmatia, and the second lies in the strengthening of Croatian nationalism. The situation in Dalmatia at that time was not secure. The entire country suffered from the aftermath of the Great War, and the situation in Dalmatia seemed far more complicated. The fear of possible Italian occupation, still a perceivable possibility in the re-establishment of the Habsburg

⁴⁸ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 214-237.

Empire, coupled with growing Croatian nationalism, convinced some Yugoslav nationalists that their new country was endangered.⁴⁹ Although initially formed as a youth organisation, the Yugoslav Progressive Nationalist Youth's membership became wider over time. Most of its members were not young people, and the word *youth* became more of a reference to the previous revolutionary youth. In 1923, the organisation changed its name to Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists, which was kept until its end.⁵⁰

The Orjuna existed from 1921, when it was formed as JNNO, till 1929, when the dictatorship was established and it was officially forbidden along with all other political organisations. During that period, this group performed numerous attacks against their political opponents in the entire territory of the Kingdom. However, three major centres can be distinguished. The first was in Dalmatia, especially around the city of Split, where the movement was formed and developed. The focus of their activities in Croatia was against Croatian nationalists and clericals, as well as against the Italian territorial ambitions in Dalmatia. The second was in Slovenia, where the organisation formed as a reaction to the territorial disputes of the state with Austria and Italy. The third major centre was in Vojvodina where it took one of the most extreme forms. In Vojvodina, its members mostly attacked offices of Hungarian and German newspapers and shopkeepers who kept signs in Hungarian. Activities of the Orjuna in other parts of the country were not that significant. Its membership in central Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo was not that numerous and they made little impact on life in those areas.⁵¹

The organisation was loose and every region had its own branch that worked almost independently. During its entire existence, the organisation failed to establish firm control over the regions and the central Directorium never exercised complete power over the

49 Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 188-190; Gligorijević, *Orjuna*, 316-322.

50 Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 94-98.

51 Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 188-206; Gligorijević, *Orjuna*, 357-371.

periphery. Initially, the centre where the Directorium resided was in Split, to be moved later to Belgrade. Nonetheless, regional centres remained strong and the movement started dissipating after 1926. A good example is the Vojvodina branch, which acted independently until its leader decided to close it down by his own will.⁵²

The problem of the Orjuna's leadership lay in the fact that they had too many intellectuals presented as leaders. Most of them were writers and poets wishful of transforming the society. However, their tie with the Democratic Party and its leader Pribićević made the organisation dependant on this party and its position towards the government. When in 1927, three of the most important leaders of the movement, Ljubo Leontić, Niko Bartulović and Dobrosav Jevdjević practically abandoned the movement and joined Pribićević's Independent Democratic Party, the remaining part lost its power and functioned as a minor movement until it was forbidden in 1929.⁵³

2.2. Nationalism as a Self-defining Concept

Members of the Orjuna never called themselves “fascist”. Instead they preferred to be considered “nationalists.” This word can be found in their initial name – Yugoslav Progressive Nationalist Youth (JNNO), and after 1922 in their second name, which made them popular throughout the country. The word *nationalist* was printed as part of their official slogans in their journals and newspapers.⁵⁴ If we look through their publications, members of the Orjuna usually designated themselves as “nationalists”, “Yugoslav

52 Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 188-206; Gligorijević, *Orjuna*, 357-371.

53 Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 205.

54 *Vidovdan* (Novi Sad) had its slogan “Nezavisni organ nacionalista” (Independent voice of the nationalists); *Jugoslavaia* (Belgrade) - “Nacionalistički organ” (Nationalist voice); *Jugoslavija* (Skopje) - “Organ jugoslovenskih nacionalista Leskovca i Skoplja” (Voice of the Leskovac and Skopje nationalists) and *Pobeda* (Split) - “Organ nacionalista” (Voice of the nationalists).

nationalists” and “Orjunaši” (Orjuna members).

As it was presented in the second chapter, the notion of a Yugoslav was perceived differently in different areas. A nationalist movement that wanted to define itself through this notion needed a population with a more unified adherence to the nation. Basically, the idea of a South Slavic nation was old enough to be supported by the majority of the population. Nonetheless, this idea was still not accepted by everyone, and in most parts of the country, those who were considered Yugoslavs, identified themselves as well through what were then called - “tribes.”

These “tribes” were none other than constituent elements of the Yugoslav identity. Since the Yugoslav idea was mostly present in intellectual circles, it was not entirely accepted by the population. Most people identified themselves as Croats, Serbs and Slovenes rather than Yugoslavs. Even in cases where someone adopted the Yugoslav designation, the “tribal” name still remained. Hence, nationalists tried to encompass the notion of a Yugoslav over the entire country and unify all the separate national and religious identities into one.

The initial idea of the founders of JNNO was to assist the building of Yugoslavia. The established state unity had to be confirmed. People whose national identification was still not Yugoslav had to be persuaded to acknowledge their Yugoslav affiliation. Unity was endangered and they proclaimed their adherence to the goal of unity. “JNNO perceives even today, after the national unification, as a primary ideal, a free and united Fatherland.⁵⁵ Consequently, it will not allow anyone to experiment with or compromise the already established unity in any form. Because of that, it will participate in the submission of anything that conceals within itself any sort of tribal, religious or class separatism.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The capital letter was in the original.

⁵⁶ *Resolution of JNNO on 23 March 1921*, quoted in Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 81.

This notion of unity was recurring in the Orjuna's texts and it reflects the perceived absence of the national state identity in the years after the war. It was connected with the notion of creation and rebirth of a nation. In most texts the assumed position was that South Slavs were one nation which had over centuries been enslaved by non-Slavic conquerors and the long period spent under foreign rule separated them geographically and made them forget about their common origins. They were under the influence of the foreign countries from the east and west and were hence divided. Now that the state was created, it was time to rebuild the Yugoslav greatness through emulation of heroes from the past.⁵⁷

After the political unification, it was time for renewal. The notion of a national rebirth and a “new man,” a new Yugoslav who will emerge after the recreation is finished, required sacrifices which only the most dedicated patriots were ready to make.⁵⁸ Once political unification had been achieved, it was necessary to defend it from all kinds of inner enemies who would aspire to destroy the union. Inner separatisms were presented as major problems. In the first *Statute and Program* of the organization it was stated that one of the goals was “to fight against all phenomenons that reflect the aspirations of tribal or religious separatism; to help building of the unified racial-national Yugoslav type and distinct Yugoslav Nation.”⁵⁹

Although the origins of the nation were considered ancient, even among the Yugoslav nationalists, national consciousness was recognised as something new. As Malin explained in his notion of a national identity: “National consciousness, as well as the

57 The best example for this could be found in: Franja Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju* (Yugoslavism through History) (Split: Tisak Hrvatske Štamparije, 1925) 15-56.

58 See chapter one, page 11. Griffin's notion of a palingenetic revolution, seeking to create a “new man,” can be identified here.

59 *Statut i program Organizacije jugoslovenskih nacionalista* (Statute and Program of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists) (Split: Hrvatska štamparija, 1923), 3. The capital letter on the “Nation” was in the original. In the *Statute and Program* from 1924, the word “racial” is missing, and instead it is only “national Yugoslav type.” See *Statut i program jugoslovenskih nacionalista* (Statute and Program of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists) (Belgrade: 1924), 1.

consciousness of [belonging to] political and interest associations of people who speak the same language, became real only in the last one hundred years.”⁶⁰ Hence, part of Yugoslav ideology envisioned the gradual development of a national consciousness. This left room for improvement and redevelopment of national concepts.

The core identity of the Yugoslavs was attached to Serbs and Croats. Even the notion of *Serbocroats* was created as one word to describe their unity.⁶¹ Around this core notion, a union of other South Slavs could have been performed. Ethnic groups, such as the Muslims, the Bunyevac and the Šokac, who retained their identities within the *Serbocroat* ethnic stock, had to be “lured” back to the “national community and get into the national consciousness.”⁶² The core of Yugoslavism was embodied by Serbs and Croats, but the idea incorporated Slovenes and Bulgarians as well. Slovenes joined the community in 1918, and one of the proclaimed missions of the Orjuna was to incorporate Bulgarians into the Yugoslav program.⁶³

One of the expressions used by Colonel Pavle Jurišić to describe the newly formed state was “proširena zajednička otadžbina” (extended joint fatherland), which mostly expresses his point of view, which is of a Serbian army officer.⁶⁴ The word “extended” actually refers to the expansion of the Serbian Kingdom after the war. From his perspective, Serbia extended its borders and liberated their enslaved brothers. This liberation enabled the creation of a “joint fatherland,” implying again a common origin. However, his notion of a common origin was still attached to the notion of Serbia. He perceived its extension after the war and unification as the expansion of Serbia, making the notion of a Yugoslav equal to a Serbian.

60 Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo*, 17.

61 Ibid., 44.

62 Ibid.

63 “Misija Južnosrbijansko-Makedonske Orjune i Bugarsko Jugoslovenstvo” (Mission of the Southern Serbian-Macedonian Orjuna is Bulgarian Yugoslavism) *Jugoslavija* (Skopje) I, no. 19, 22 May 1927, 2.

64 Jurišić, *Kroz nacionalnu krizu*, 23.

In one peculiar explanation of the Yugoslav origin, Franja Malin equated the opinions of Vuk Karadžić and Ante Starčević. In both cases, the notion of Serbian and of Croatian respectively, were used to encompass the entire South Slavic population. Karadžić's perception of Serbs included all speakers of the Shtokavian dialect,⁶⁵ while Starčević included the entire Serbian population into Croatian ethnic stock. Although these ideas were mutually exclusive, Malin found in them an expression of Yugoslav unity which demonstrated the Slavic strive for unification. Nonetheless, he wanted to show that Croatian and Serbian nationalisms were not mutually exclusive and that they were actually propagating the same idea.⁶⁶

Consequently, unity was an imperative and all strengths of the movement had to be employed, now that the state was created, to ensure that the entire society developed the same cultural and political unity. "The purpose of the organisation, with the help of all moral, intellectual, and if necessary physical strengths of its members, is to be a defender of the political, cultural and economical heritage the Yugoslav people achieved through its unification."⁶⁷ The "Ominous trinity" of three separate national identities threatened to destroy old dreams of unification. Orjuna's members proclaimed that they would not only defend the union, but build a new society from it.⁶⁸

The primacy of nationalism was therefore established. It was an ideology that was supposed to enable the unity of the nation. The general belief was that only the rightful nationalists were aware of the real state interests. One of the articles in *Vidovdan* presented examples of successful nationalisms the author had found abroad. The cases of the United States, France and Switzerland were supposed to exemplify the state unity of various ethnic

⁶⁵ See chapter one, page 21.

⁶⁶ Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo*, 24.

⁶⁷ *Statute* (1923), 3.

⁶⁸ "Kobno trojstvo" (Ominous trinity), *Jugoslavija* (Belgrade) II, no. 34, 1 December 1928.

groups who gathered for the sake of the country. The best examples were however found in Italy, Germany and Turkey. The author, Vojin Puljević, was pleased that in the KSHS, the parties still had not accepted this kind of ideology and a movement was formed instead. His example of Switzerland was significant in this case. The author argued that in that country, even though they spoke French, German and Italian, everyone declared himself Swiss. In the context of Yugoslav diversities, the article wanted to show that even the language cannot be an obstacle towards national unity.⁶⁹

These attitudes about national unity reflected the concerns over the future of the state. Creation of a new national identity, which would rise upon the old one, resembles some of the palingenetic features identified by Griffin in fascist movements. What can be observed from the Orjuna texts is awareness that there were still some “tribal separatisms.” The unity achieved was only political and administrative, and it had to be completed through the cultural sphere as well. The consciousness of the people had to be rebuilt, so they could be aware that they belonged to the same nation.

2.3. On Martyrs and Heroes

The Orjuna formed its ideology on the basis of mythical concepts of heroes and martyrs. Members of this movement tended to draw their origins from the pre-war revolutionary nationalist youth. This origin cannot be clearly defined since there was no official organisation of this kind. However, one clear ideal stood at the forefront of this notion – the Sarajevo assassins. Gavrilo Princip, Vasa Čubrilović and other members of “Young Bosnia” became heroes and martyrs for the new generation of Yugoslavs. One of

⁶⁹ Vojin Puljević, “Nacionalizam” (Nationalism), *Vidovdan* II, no. 42, 21 April 1923, 2. I was unable to determine the identity of this author of this article. This is his only publication that I have managed to find.

the images the Orjuna fostered was the heritage of the assassins. They wanted to represent themselves as fighters for the national unity who were the remaining few that suffered for the good of the people.

Niko Bartulović, the main ideologist of the Orjuna and the vice-president of the movement from 1923, wrote a book in 1925 with the intention of making a connection with the revolutionary youth from the Habsburg times. *Od Revolucionarne omladine do Orjune* (From the Revolutionary Youth till Orjuna) is a political and historical pamphlet that legitimises and propagates Orjuna's activities and politics through historical argumentation. Historical connection was for Bartulović significant because in his view it legitimises all the ideas and activities of the Orjuna. Strength and authority of the Orjuna were in this way based on great deeds of the people from the past who sacrificed themselves for Yugoslavia. Hence, his intention to speak in the name of the dead and for the good of the living was intended to set his authority on the truth.⁷⁰

“Because today only the Orjuna remembers the names of Princip, Čabrinović, Ilić, Jenko, Endlicher, Mikačić and others; because their promise, pure and insistent Yugoslavism is guarded only by the Orjuna; because only the Orjuna follows their path and their toil, suffering and unselfish efforts for Yugoslavia.”⁷¹ Bartulović developed a story of a nationalist heritage which was established during the Habsburg period. The story tended to demonstrate all the toil and sacrifices nationalists endured in the past and that only the Orjuna preserves in the present period that heroic effort. Nationalists were arrested, prosecuted and their press was forbidden. The notion of this nationalist youth movement was for him cultural and political. He identified it in various literary journals and cultural

⁷⁰ Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*.

⁷¹ Ibid., 5. Gavril Princip, Nedeljko Čabrinović and Danilo Ilić were main participants in the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. Jenko, Endlicher and Mikačić were young revolutionaries who participated in the resistance towards the Habsburg Empire.

societies and saw it in the youth political revolutionary organisations that planned assassinations of the Habsburg officials. He described the whole history of various “patriots” who united their strength to battle the empire. Bartulović's goal was to prove that the Orjuna descended from them and had kept their notions of honour. This link he established was spiritual and the term “nacionalni rad” (national effort) received an almost sacred meaning.⁷²

Dobrosav Jevdjević, one of the Orjuna leaders, wrote an article about the Sarajevo assassins (later published in a book in 1925) where he called everyone to honour their spirit. “Superhuman ardour of all spiritual and physical strengths during the World War exhausted the nation. We are all equal in poverty and misery, and we observe like women helplessly with our own eyes the destruction of all the heritage from our past heroic times by the undignified.” He found the country enslaved by the “poison of spoiled and worthless souls.” The present was compromised by the deeds of the unjust and a solution could be found only in the heroic past. Because the majority was astray, he found the solution only in the heroic spirit of the people who die whenever they wanted to.⁷³

Here, it will be worth noticing that members of the revolutionary youth who participated in activities before the war did not all agree with the politics of the Orjuna. For example, Nikola Princip, brother of Gavrilo Princip protested because the newspapers in Subotica used his brother's name for promotional purposes. He disagreed with the use of violence and asked them to cease invoking his brother's name for political gain.⁷⁴ The journal *Nova Evropa* that promoted the integral Yugoslav national idea published articles against the Orjuna and its activities.⁷⁵ In this journal, one of the leaders of the revolutionary

⁷² Ibid., 7-79.

⁷³ Dobrosav Jevdjević, “Čuvajmo uspomene nacionalnih revolucionara” (Keeping the Memory of National Revolutionaries), *Izabrani članci* (Novi Sad: 1925), 49-50.

⁷⁴ Bajić, “Delatnost,” 63-64.

⁷⁵ Č., “Orjunaška lojalnost” (The Loyalty of the Orjuna), *Nova Evropa* 10 (July – December 1924): 278-280.

youth from the time before the war, Vasa Stajić, denounced any connection between the two movements.⁷⁶

The theme of heroic martyrs was recurrent in the writings of the Orjuna and is used to demonstrate various kinds of sacrifices patriots performed. Invoking of the pre-war nationalist youth and the assassins from Sarajevo had the purpose of forming a bond with the past. The cult of the dead was present in their culture. One of the major holidays celebrated by the Orjuna was *The Day of the Sacrifice*, which was invented by them.⁷⁷ Dead heroes were supposed to represent the past spirit of the nation which was belligerent and uncompromising. To contrast the heroes, images of foes were used to represent enemies oppressing the nation and committing injustice and atrocities against the people. These heroic narratives supported the idea of a unity of the people, this time against the ones who wanted to commit crimes against them.

For example, one article from June 1925 commemorated the death of a Chetnik leader and his men in 1905. The article was published as the first text on the first page of *Vidovdan* and in the long narrative the author depicts the patriots who had no regret for their lives and went “into enslaved lands to relieve [the pain] to the suffering Serbian people.”⁷⁸ The author pondered on whether their heroic death should be commemorated in tears or in songs. He concluded that it should be by both, because of their “sacrifice and heroism” and because “we lost the most ideal, the most patriotic national toilers.”⁷⁹

What was demonstrated with this story was an example of patriotism that the author hoped would inspire others. The war and the battle became ideal expressions of this type of

76 Vasa Stajić, “Predratna vojvodjanska omladina i nacionalistički pokret” (pre-war Youth of Vojvodina and the Nationalist Movement), *Nova Evropa* 12 (July-December 1925): 70-73.

77 Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 109.

78 Živojin Trifunović, “Dvadesetogodišnjica od pogibije čete Lazara Kujundžića, učitelja” (Twenty Years since the Death of Lazar Kujundžić the Teacher and his Squad), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 23, 14 June 1925, 1. The author was signed as “the teacher.” I did not manage to find anything else about him other than that.

79 Ibid.

heroism and the recurrence of death in the narrative was frequent. Deaths of the brave had to show to future generations ideas to follow. “They died, but with firm hope that their idea will one day become real, that the scream of our enslaved people will be replaced by a merry song, because one day, the golden freedom will shine even upon that suffering people.”⁸⁰

The movement frequently organised events which commemorated the dead. These were performed during special commemorations, on important dates and national holidays.⁸¹ These commemorations were dedicated either to some fallen soldiers or Chetniks from the previous wars or to some recently deceased members of the movement. The feeling of the mission and the purposefulness of their deaths was meant to inspire the living.⁸²

Sometimes, heroes who served as role models could be intellectuals, usually engaged in the literature that celebrated heroes from the past, as well as linguists, historians and politicians. For example, Malin was inspired by names, such as Strossmayer, Franjo Rački, Ivan Kukuljević, Hristifor Žefarović, Jovan Rajić, Vuk Karadžić, Zaharije Orfelin, Dositej Obradović, Hanibal Lucić, Primož Trubar and others. They contributed to the cultural strength of the nation which had developed in large part to their intellectual effort.⁸³ Hence, the emphasis was not placed solely on the soldier cult, but simultaneously on the cult of a patriotic intellectual.

The cult of the dead and the reliance on the past contributed to the creation of a mythical core. The organisation started celebrating their own dead and producing a story the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ For example, during the congress in 1925, one such ritual was performed. See: “Orjuna na parastosu za svoje žrtve” (The Orjuna Organising a Requiem for its own Casualties), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 22, 11 June 1925, 1.

⁸² For example, a commemoration of an uprising in Serbia during the First World War: “Proslava desetogodišnjice Topličkog ustanka” (Celebration of the Ten Years of the Toplica Uprising), *Jugoslavija* (Skopje) I, no. 9, 8 May 1927, 1.; As well, a commemoration for all the citizens of Split that died for Yugoslavia: Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine*, 111.

⁸³ Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo*, 18-32.

Orjuna as the victim of the regime. In a delicate game of opposing the regime, especially Pašić, and at the same time being a diligent supporter of the crown, Orjuna's writings show how the movement balanced between the role of an enforcer and a victim. In that narrative, the cult of the dead was supposed to give a heroic and martyrising character. The goal to match those heroes from the past can be noticed in their narratives. Jevdjević spoke about the war from which “like a phoenix, our spirit from the fire renewed” returned.⁸⁴ Greatness was at hand now that the unification had occurred and in such narratives the national spirit was cleansed through battles and it was a sacred duty to respect the dead who sacrificed their lives for the benefit of everyone. Those who inherited that national heroic spirit were meant to lead the country.⁸⁵

We can recognise here traces of what Griffin called the mythical core of fascism. Gentile emphasized the role of myth in the populist propaganda of fascists and in the narratives through which the Orjuna presented its ideals, myth performed a significant role.⁸⁶ In most of the Orjuna's publications, myth was used for mass mobilising. It was used to inspire people who would create a common front against enemies, who conspired from all sides to destroy the newly created homeland. Such reliance on myth depended on a successful creation of the image of oneself which Orjuna's thinkers based on the images of fallen patriots.

2.4. Fascist elements

In this section, I will demonstrate some of the fascist elements in Orjuna's ideology and point out as well, several features which were not fascist. Several fascist characteristics

⁸⁴ Jevdjević, “Orjuna i Vojvodina”, *Izabrani članci*, 16.

⁸⁵ “Orjuna ima svetu dužnost” (The Orjuna has a Sacred Duty), *Jugoslavija* (Belgrade) II, no. 34, 1 December 1928, 1.

⁸⁶ See the first chapter, page 11.

can be observed in the Orjuna's narratives: severe criticism of the present political conditions, anti-clericalism, anti-parlamentarism, anti-Marxism, army concepts and the dependence on the authority. Some of the characteristics were not fascist, like the dependence on the king as the external authority for the movement, and their close connections with the army.

The Orjuna shared some common ground with Italian Fascism. They formed in 1921, only two years after *Fasci italiani di combattimento*, and their major activities begun at the time of Fascist arrival to power in 1922. Given the fact that one of the reasons for the emergence of the Orjuna lay in the Italian claims on the Adriatic Coast, attention given to Fascists was considerable. Yugoslav nationalists directly opposed irredentist politics of the Fascists and in the same time attempted to emulate their methods and ideology.

The aftermath of the Great War brought difficulties which parliamentary regimes where not capable to deal with. The situation in the newly created KSHS was difficult because the small Serbian state inherited vast territory of the Habsburg Empire which it was not able to control properly in the first years. Its parliamentary regime was troubled by constant party disputes and apparent corruption. Inner problems of the state persuaded some of the nationalists that the state has to be radically reformed.

The main Orjuna's ideologues dealt extensively with the problems that occurred after the Great War. Their severe criticism of current political conditions accentuated the deep moral crisis of the society and an example could be found in one article from *Vidovdan*, published by Vlasta Milutinović in 1922. The author asserted that people do not trust the government. Complete breakdown of political, economic, financial parties and groups; as well of the individual psyche was threatening the future of the country. According to him, Yugoslav masses were drawn into a psychological ecstasy, as a result of the inappropriate

coalition of heterogeneous political parties, “a parliamentary paradox, a parliamentary anomaly.” Therefore, the government was wrong by making a coalition of parties with different political programs.⁸⁷

Pavle Jurišić expressed in his book on the national crisis, published in 1924, a strong concern over the current problems of his time. In his analysis of the present situation he came to a conclusion that all difficulties originate in the psychological problems of the war.⁸⁸ For him, the war disrupted the reality and some “unknown forces” led the country into perdition. Following Gustave Le Bon's ideas, Jurišić claimed that humanity needs to master their own feelings and subordinate them to the laws of the community. He was hoping that “political psychology,” would be able to determine ways in which masses could be controlled.⁸⁹ Consequently, he contemplated the solution of setting an authority who would determine common goals and form, through education, the mentality of the people who will then recognise their real needs and feelings. He requested a new national ideology to unite all elements in the state and “tribal separatisms” will no longer pose a problem.⁹⁰ These criticisms, followed by the ideas of transformation of the society and a creation of a “new man” are one of the aspects of fascism recognised by Roger Griffin.⁹¹

References to fascism were made in an affirmative manner in a series of articles under the name “Fascism,” published in *Vidovdan*, by an author hidden under the pseudonym *M-ski*. In these articles, the author explained most of the elements of the Fascist ideology, claiming that the movement developed as a reaction to Bolshevism. An emphasis was put to the unifying effects of the movement and the progress Italy achieved as a

87 Vlasta Milutinović, “Politički momenat” (Political Moment), *Vidovdan* I, no. 37, 16 November 1922, 1. I was not able to determine the identity of this person.

88 Jurišić, *Kroz našu krizu*, 10-11.

89 Ibid., 13.

90 Ibid., 53-60.

91 See chapter one, page 11.

consequence of that.⁹² Such references were not made solely to Italy and the Italian type of fascism. For example, one reference was made about the Mexican fascists who offered their service to the state to protect it against the Bolsheviks.⁹³ These texts demonstrate that certain respect for the goals of the fascists existed, and through its program, Orjuna's ideologues certainly tried to emulate some of the elements of the fascist program.

Anti-clericalism in the writings of Orjuna's members was open and frequent. They perceived it as a feature of the Slovenian and Croatian nationalisms, but not Serbian. Strong anti-clerical feelings can be observed in various texts, where the main enemy was the Catholic Church, which was accused of working against the state interests and propagating separatisms. Beside the Catholic Church, the Muslim community was often criticised for the same reasons. Nonetheless, religion itself was not perceived as something perilous for state unity, but religious intolerance was. Religion was not supposed to divide people generally, and the movement propagated religious freedom.⁹⁴ Moreover, religious rituals were part of the Orjuna's ceremonies and most of the invocation of God was frequent in their speeches.⁹⁵

One of the good examples of the anti-clerical feelings can be found in the article of Dobrosav Jevdjević, *Klerikali* (Clericals). For him, they are a sign of a Habsburg culture that remained in the new state. He accuses them of plotting against the Kingdom, together with communists and republicans.⁹⁶ His language is vulgar as he pays no respect for the Catholic Church:

Modern Europe could not defend itself only from two relics of that [Medieval] age: syphilis and clericalism. Syphilis attacks in a more humane manner, and thousands of humanitarian institutions fight against it, leaving aside a more dangerous opponent, a

92 M-ski, "Fašizam" (Fascism), *Vidovdan*, 4-30 January 1923.

93 "Fašisti u Meksiku" (Fascists in Mexico), *Vidovdan* I, no. 3, 6 January 1923, 2.

94 Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo*, 56-59.

95 For example: "Osvećenje zastava beogradskih Orjuna u Voznesenskoj crkvi" (Lustration of the Flags of the Belgrade Orjuna in the Voznesenska Church), *Vidovdan* I, no. 22, 11 June 1925, 1; "Govor br. A. Bartulovića održan na ostrvu Korčuli" (The Speech of Brother A. Bartulović, Held on the Korčula Island), *Jugoslavija* (Belgrade) I, no. 34, 1 December 1928, 3.

96 Jevdjević, "Klerikali" (Clericals), *Izabrani članci*, 40-42.

Jesuit, who devours not only the body, but the soul as well, and all that is virtuous in a man.⁹⁷

One of the reasons why religious division was considered dangerous, was identified in the fact that religious centres were outside of the boundaries of the country.⁹⁸ For this reason, clericalism was equated with Slovene and Croatian nationalism. However, several critiques were issued against the Serbian Patriarch in Belgrade as well, for his strong influence in the society. One article, criticised the “pocket money” the Patriarch received from the Orthodox Church. The anonymus author found that the Patriarch is receiving too much money for no particular service.⁹⁹ Critiques against the Orthodox Church were not uncommon. *Vidovdan* stood on the side of Nušić, the famous playwright, when he was criticised by the church for putting church in a bad light in his play.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, this was far less than the attacks issued against the Catholic Church.

In the Orjuna's publications parliamentarism was equated with corruption and selfish party politics. Although politically dependent on the Democratic Party, the Orjuna criticised party politics and stigmatised it as “partisanship.” In many writings, parliamentarism was connected with the fall of morality which was caused by the unnatural coalitions of political parties who watched their own more than the nation's interests.¹⁰¹ The main target of the attacks was corruption. “The Orjuna underlined all phenomena in which ministerial offices, political honours, family ties, party membership were used only for the purpose of unscrupulous enrichment.”¹⁰²

However, involvement in party politics was almost unavoidable. Circumstances convinced most of the membership that some sort of cooperation with parties was

97 Ibid.

98 Jurišić, *Kroz nacionalnu krizu*, 25.

99 “Džeparac Nj. Svetosti Patrijarha” (Pocket Money of His Holiness the Patriarch), *Vidovdan* I, no. 2, 4 January 1923.

100 “On Dit”, *Vidovdan* II, no. 9, 25 January 1923.

101 Jurišić, *Kroz nacionalnu krizu*, 19-35.

102 Jevdjević, “Partizani kao apostoli” (Partisans as Apostles), *Izabrani članci*, 76.

necessary. Actually, the organisation was divided over this issue after the 1925. One group wanted more political participation and cooperation with other parties, mostly with Pribićević's Independent Democratic Party, while the other group wanted to avoid participation in parliamentary politics.¹⁰³ Members of the Orjuna were politically active and sometimes became members of political parties as well, and as dual members, of both their parties and the movement, they instigated a political conflict within the movement. The role of Pribićević is considerable in this story. Initially, the man who supported the foundation and the development of the Orjuna, he then led their leadership into a dissent over the participation in the party politics. Finally, when three of its leaders left the Orjuna to join his party, the organisation lost its momentum.

Instead of parliamentarism, the Orjuna promoted a different kind of social organisation. The new ideal was seen in the army and army organisation. The creation of the Action Squads (Akcione čete) in 1923 and insistence on army organisation and discipline in them, gave the movement one of its main features. In times of uncertainties, discipline of the army unit was seen as the only reliable virtue to which an individual can aspire. The Action Squads were designed to act against anyone suspected to work against the state. Its mission was to purify the society from defeatists and traitors. These enemies were usually recognised among communists, Frankists (Frankovci), various kinds of national minorities and clericals. The main common features of their activities were attacks on individuals, newspaper offices, workers who were on strike and party rallies.¹⁰⁴

Action Squads! That is the most potent argument used against the Orjuna by its enemies, that is the main reason, why many decrepit half-Yugoslavs avoid the Orjuna.

¹⁰³Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 109.

¹⁰⁴For example, one man was attacked because he had a picture of Franz Jozef in his house: "Isprebijan Franjin štovatelj" (Admirer of Franz Beaten), *Vidovdan* II, no. 3, 6 February 1923, 2. The most known action of the Orjuna's squads happened in Slovenia in Trbovlje, against the miners who were on strike. See: Gligorijević, *Orjuna*, 386-387. For further reference on Orjuna's actions against communists, see: Gligorijević, "Profašistička organizacija 'Orjuna' i radnički pokret Jugoslavije."

Nevertheless, exactly that part of our Chetnik¹⁰⁵ section makes an important part of our national-educational program, which makes the horrible stories about their organisation, purpose and means only a result of serious illness of our society, [...] Primary condition for the healthy functioning of a social organism lay in a diligent execution of the core principles of that organism by its members, in other words, in disciplined adherence to the social laws.¹⁰⁶

Dobrosav Jevdjević believed that the society can be purified through army discipline. He imagined Action Squads as educational centres where young people can escape from the temptations of modern life. They would build their character by performing patriotic duties at the same time. He described two types of discipline. The first one functions through force and the fear of the consequence drives the individual to be obedient. This type of discipline he ascribed to primitive beings who believe in the divine origin of the authorities. For the second type of discipline a full strength of intellect was required. He described it as sign of a fully developed consciousness. The individual subdues itself to a duty as a collective necessity. For this reason, he claims, in the Orjuna there is no time for pleasantries, there is only sacrifice. “When in an individual, after he spends some time in the movement and develops the belief that a salvation for Yugoslavia can be found only in the Orjuna, he sincerely desires to give even more for the fulfilment of the Orjuna's goals, and he joins the Action Squads.”¹⁰⁷

The Action Squads were created to secure the unity and stability of the country. Jevdjević stated that they addressed members of the political parties and tried to build their “moral and ethical duties towards the Fatherland.” Their goal, to “regenerate the parties” and lead them to the path of state interests failed, he admitted, and he stated that they learned a lesson and changed their attitudes. In the end, Jevdjević proclaimed: “We will never abandon our Chetniks and our aspirations to defend our beliefs by force, but we must

¹⁰⁵This word could be translated with the word “squad” as well.

¹⁰⁶Jevdjević, “Oružana snaga Orjune” (Military strength of the Orjuna), *Izabrani članci*, 10.

¹⁰⁷Ibid, 10-12.

not ignore the parliamentary action, not as a goal, but as a means.”¹⁰⁸

Military ideals propagated by the movement led them in close connection with the army. Many of the members and leaders of the movement were previous volunteers and Chetniks from the First World War. Both of these were disbanded after the war and its former members formed organisations which supported their interests and promoted their role in the society. Since the interests of these groups coincided, alliances were made.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the Orjuna cooperated with the *National Defence* (Narodna odbrana), which was an organisation of reserve army officers, the *Volunteer Alliance* (Savez dobrovoljaca), which consisted of demobilised volunteers from the previous war and the *Chetnik Association* (Udruženje četnika), which was a paramilitary unit created by the Serbian army for actions behind the enemy lines.¹¹⁰ All these organisations had strong military character, and often members belonged to more than one organisation. For example, Colonel Pavle Jurišić, was an honorary president of the Orjuna and one of the leaders of the National Defence. In a way they formed a social group which lost its importance after the war and tried to secure its position in the society. However, my goal is not to analyse the social structure of the movement, and I will leave it for some other study.

Unofficially, the Orjuna cooperated not only with the army, but with the government as well. Its relations with the police in actions against various groups was already mentioned by authors who previously dealt with the Orjuna and it is noted that during certain periods when Pribićević was member of the government, police acted leniently towards them.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸Jevdjević, “Naš kongres i budućnost Orjuna” (Our Congress and the Future of the Orjuna), *Izabrani članci*, 91.

¹⁰⁹Gligorić, *Orjuna*, 318-319.

¹¹⁰Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 99-104.

¹¹¹During my research, I tried to find some records about their attacks on minorities, party rallies or communists and for this reason I looked into the collection of documents of Ministry of Inner Affairs for the region of Banat, Bačka and Baranja in the Archive of Yugoslavia. However, there I found no mentioning of the Orjuna or any of its attacks in the archive. The only document that I found (14, MUP KJ, 100/136-137) was issued by an informant in Budapest and speaks about the Orjuna as “our” organisation.

However, this usually dependent on the government. Pašić saw an opponent in them and especially after 1925, they lost protection from the state. One government authority still remained more important for them than all others – the King; even though he did not support them for most of the time.

One peculiar trait of Orjuna's ideology was its reliance on the King as the major authority. In a situation where the movement is composed of men coming from various environments, and where the principle of equality of all constituent people must be exerted, the organisation of the movement depended on the regional autonomies of the local branches. The statute of the program predicted a hierarchy of local branches and representatives who were supposed to adjourn at central assembly and bring all decisions in a democratic manner. The president of the Directorium was not an authority powerful enough to issue orders everyone would obey.¹¹² During the entire existence of the movement, no charismatic leader managed to place himself at the top of the organisation. Instead, the movement addressed the King, who was assigned with that role. His authority was undisputed and in various texts, Orjuna's members glorified the throne and the entire royal family.¹¹³

In Orjuna's publications there was a clear distinction between the King and the “corrupt” government. During the Orjuna's congress in Belgrade, in 1925, *Vidovdan* tried to show how the regime deliberately tried to keep the manifestation that the Orjuna organised apart from the King. “*However, our noble ruler smashed all the intrigues.*” When he heard about the event [...] the King has summoned the leadership of the Orjuna in his summer residence in Topola and has sent the court automobiles to convey our Directorium.” The

¹¹²Statute (1923), 6-11; Statute (1924), 4-8.

¹¹³For example: “Živelo Nj. V. Naslednik Jugoslovenskog Prestola” (Long Live His Royal Highness Heir to the Yugoslav Throne), *Vidovdan* II, no. 82, 8 September 1923; “Kraljevo venčanje” (King's Wedding), *Pobeda* (Split) II, no. 43, 8 June 1922.

entire image became mythical, as his residence in the next paragraph became the “castle.”¹¹⁴ The delegation, after they spoke with the king, went to visit the two year old heir to the throne who was playing in the garden. “With his tiny hands, he was cheerfully saluting to the greetings of our Directorium.”¹¹⁵ The entire image of the king and his family had an almost romantic character. Like one of the heroic figures from the past, he was the one to know who are the people loyal to him. Even the little heir knew how to recognise real patriots, and like a future soldier he saluted to them. The King's mission was historical and he was meant to reflect the heroic spirit of the nation.

We want to see in him the sparks of our victories, greatness of our sacrifices, nobility and courage¹¹⁶ of our folk songs, racial pride of Meštrović's heroes. We deeply believe that historical mission is waiting for the present Yugoslav king; that allied with the independent nationalists complete the full spiritual, political and governmental gathering of the Yugoslav tribes by its necessity and against the will of the demagogues, who imposed themselves as national leaders.¹¹⁷

This creation of the myth about the King as the charismatic leader of the organisation was not entirely successful. King Aleksandar received them twice, once in 1922, while were still called JNNO, and the second time in 1925. Their attempts to reach support remained mostly unanswered. He remained “the one who is not today with us”¹¹⁸ in their speeches. However, he was still their central figure.

Finally, we can summarise the fascist and non-fascist elements of the Orjuna. According to the modern theories of fascism, we can distinguish several features of its ideology which belong to the classifications of generic fascism of Nolte, Griffin and Payne. First of all, Orjuna's ideology was based on the creation of the myth of the heroic past, from

114“Orjuna kod svog kralja” (The Orjuna Visiting its King), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 22, 11 June 1925, 2. Italics were in the original.

115“Orjuna kod svog Prestolonaslednika” (The Orjuna Visiting its Heir to the Throne), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 22, 11 June 1925, 2.

116Originally “knighthood.”

117Jevdjević, “Mi prema Monarhiji” (We and the Monarchy), *Izabrani članci*, 25.

118Dr. Ljuba Leontić, “Braće Leontić, Bartulović and Radojlović, govornici na beogradskom mitingu Orjuna” (Brothers Leontić, Bartulović and Radojlović, Speakers at the Belgrade Meeting of the Orjuna), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 23, 14 June 1925.

which was developed a request for a rebirth of the society. This rebirth was imagined as a state of unity where all the citizens are aware of their interests and duties and they cooperate towards the same goal. Secondly, the ideology was based on the strong social criticism which requested radical social reforms. The ideology of the Orjuna battled the ideas of clericalism, parliamentarism and Marxism.¹¹⁹ For these purposes, private army was organised and the movement was based on the military principles and used violence. However, the absence of the strong charismatic authority and the reliance on the authority of the King and the army, made them more close to what Payne called “radical right.”¹²⁰

In this chapter, I covered one part of the Orjuna's ideology, relating to the notions of nation and state. These notions are important for understanding their perception of the problems in Vojvodina. Since they propagated a national ideology which was based on an integrative concept, cultural and political differences were meant to be surmounted through creation of a new joint identity. Their understanding of the Yugoslav nation was largely inspired by the heroic myths which Orjuna's ideologues used to develop their own concept of Yugoslavism, which was full of mystical notions of mission and sacrifice. This approach was construed in an attempt to create a viable community with common goals and interests. To contest separatist tendencies, another vision of the past had to be construed, the one that could show historical mission of their ancestors who struggled through centuries to secure the unity.

¹¹⁹As already mentioned, due to the limited size of the study, the analysis of the anti-Marxist ideas was left out. It was not necessary, considering that the topic is dealing with the multi-ethnic society of Vojvodina, and that this element was formerly analysed in the works of Gligorijević.

¹²⁰See chapter one, page 12.

3. Concerns about Vojvodina

3.1. The Contested Region

Before addressing Orjuna's attitudes towards Yugoslavia's ethnic minorities, it is necessary to address the situation in which the Orjuna emerged as a political movement. The Orjuna came to existence when certain problems had already crystallised in Yugoslavia. The environment in which the Orjuna developed and worked was still in the process of restructuring after the government had changed. In a multi-ethnic environment like Vojvodina, the change of power meant the change of relationship between ethnic groups as well. The way the newly installed government in Vojvodina treated minorities influenced the development of tension between ethnic groups and assisted the growth of nationalism. For this reason it is important to see how the Yugoslav national ideology was constructed and how the perception of “others” was when the Yugoslav national program was already accomplished.

When the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSHS) was created, one of the most important issues was the establishment of the official state language to replace the previous use of German and Hungarian. The replacement of the administrative language of the documents, road signs and official place names, and probably most importantly the official language of education was done to establish the primacy of the Slavic speaking inhabitants. This was one of the signs of the dominance of the new elites was manifested in the beginning through the primacy of language.

On 31 May 1919, a committee for minorities at the Paris Peace Conference submitted a convention for the protection of minorities to the delegation of KSHS who

rejected it with the explanation that if accepted, that would mean that Serbia had not fulfilled its obligations from the Berlin Congress. These new regulations were regarded as an insult, and the delegation stated that there was no need to reaffirm the same principles again. Although, the Yugoslav delegation denied that it had anything against the principle of minority protection, they were reluctant to sign it for multiple reasons. The main argument was that state sovereignty was undermined through such blatant interference into the internal affairs of the state. The delegation claimed that through the agreement, the great powers were trying to enforce their control over the Kingdom. Another argument was that the new states were not treated equally, because states like France, Italy, Germany or Great Britain had never accepted similar obligations and that this was only a way to control small states.¹²¹

Representatives of Serbia wanted to avoid by any means the recognition of the minority right on the territories occupied after the First Balkan War. This included the territories of Kosovo and Macedonia. To reply to the requests of the committee, Nikola Pašić wrote a letter in August of 1919. In this letter he proclaimed that the KSHS is a mono-ethnic state where no necessity for the protection of the minorities was required. According to Pašić, since 1878 Serbia had religious equality, which had to demonstrate Serbia's willingness to treat equally all its citizens. Pašić asserted that these protection rights damaged the state sovereignty and accused the Great Powers of discriminating the small states.¹²²

France and Great Britain pressured the delegation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to yield to the requested obligations. The problem of minorities was not only a

¹²¹Zoran Janjetović, "Pitanje zaštite nacionalnih manjina u Kraljevini SHS na Konferenciji mira u Parizu 1919-1920" (The Question of Protection of Minorities in the Kingdom of SHS at the Paris Peace Conference 1919-1920), in *Istorija XX veka* year XVIII no. 2 (2000): 33-34; Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva: Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941* (Children of Emperors, Stepchildren of Kings: National Minorities in Yugoslavia 1918-1941) (Belgrade: Inis, 2005), 137-138.

¹²²Janjetović, "Pitanje zaštite", 34-35.

concern of the Yugoslav delegation. Czechoslovakia, Romania and Greece were as well dissatisfied with the proposed articles in the peace agreement that dealt with minorities. The instructions sent from Belgrade ordered that the delegation must not accept those requests, unless the territories occupied by Serbia before 1913 were exempted. We can see here, that the Serbian government was not that concerned with the Vojvodina region. In the end the agreement was signed, but its implementation of it was not to be exercised on the territories of Macedonia and Kosovo. Minorities in Vojvodina thus received their guarantees from the international community.¹²³

Nonetheless, the concerns of the government remained over the role of the minorities in the state. During the peace talks, the KSHS Prime Minister Ljubomir Davidović voiced the concerns he had in relation to ethnic minorities: “The domiciles were the agents of the foreign propaganda, people with suitcases in Bosnia, bandits in other territories, invented by imperialist propaganda of the defeated enemies in an attempt to damage the order. We cannot give protection to all of the domiciles. We need to have the power to get rid of some of them”¹²⁴ This statement could be connected with the events that happened in Vojvodina just after the Serbian army occupied the region. State officials were replaced by new ones and the previous officials were sometimes expelled.

After the 1918 unificatio, the government was led mostly by the previous officials of the Serbian Kingdom. They just exerted their authority over the larger territory. Practically, in all territories occupied by the Serbian army, the competences were taken over from the Habsburg officials and an inadequate number of functionaries appropriated those duties. They had to incorporate large populations that shared no common identities with Serbs.

¹²³Ibid., 36-40.

¹²⁴Ibid., 37. Janjetović does not quote from which source he took this statement. Originally in Serbian:

“Domicilirani su agenti strane propagande, kuferaši u Bosni, banditi na drugim stranama, koje je izmislila imperijalistička propaganda poraženih neprijatelja u cilju rušenja reda. Ne možemo dati zaštitu svim domiciliranima. Izvesne moramo moći odstraniti.” Here, the word “Domicilirani” which I translated as “the domiciles” is probably refering to the national minorities in Yugoslavia.

However, state politics did not make too many changes in internal affairs, continuing to behave as if the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was a mono-ethnic state.¹²⁵

Eventually, members of the non-Slavic nations who requested their political and cultural rights were considered politically dangerous. The political practice of the Serbian Kingdom was developed in such a manner that against the opposition members, government pursued all the necessary measures, which were sometimes even illegal. Hence, everyone who opposed the new government, and in this case that included the representatives of various nationalities who wanted to implement their national programs in this post-war period, were forced to deal with oppression from the Belgrade authorities. Previous elites were not eager to abandon their positions and the new elites wanted to assert their placements. In the first couple of years the change of power made the relationships between various ethnic groups tense. The territory of Vojvodina was in a dispute, and from 1918 the police monitored all the activities in the region, suspecting various men of subversive and spying activities.¹²⁶

Although the Treaty of Trianon was signed in the middle of 1920, the suspicious attitude of the Belgrade government towards all the non-Slavic citizens was continued. The question of loyalty was important for the building of state power in Vojvodina. The notion of “subversive elements” was used to describe primarily communists. Consequently, the presence of large population of Hungarians and Germans in Vojvodina, who potentially did not recognize the legitimacy of the Karadjordjević dynasty, made the authorities broaden the meaning of the term to any member of the non-Slavic population who was expressing sentiments of disloyalty towards the crown. According to Sajti, the joined number of Hungarians and Germans in Vojvodina surpassed the numbers of the rest of the

¹²⁵Janjetović, *Deca careva*, 121-133; Janjetovic, “Pitanje zaštite,” 40-42.

¹²⁶Janjetovic, *Deca careva*, 122-133.

nationalities.¹²⁷

In such a political situation, one group of nationalists formed the first branch of the JNNO in Vojvodina in March of 1922 in Subotica.¹²⁸ If there was a place in the country where the Yugoslav integrity was mostly contested, that was in Vojvodina. Soon, the organisation started spreading and by June of the same year, the central branch in Novi Sad (Újvidék) was formed by one of their most renowned leaders, Dobrosav Jevdjević. The movement was spreading quickly and soon a network of local branches was formed throughout Vojvodina.¹²⁹ Describing the first years of Orjuna's existence, Bartulović made a note on the Vojvodina branch: “Considering all organisations, the one in Vojvodina took the most belligerent attitude, and where it was found necessary, it took force. In that way, a strong respect for the state and for the organisation was successfully enforced into the Hungarian element.”¹³⁰

The first publications of *Vidovdan* started in the same year and from the start the editors declared that the newspapers were “primarily national-defending, directed against the Hungarians and Germans, and then anti-hegemony, for defence and promotion of Yugoslav integral nationalism and state unitarianism.”¹³¹ During its existence, the Orjuna published three newspapers in Vojvodina. Besides *Vidovdan*, that was published in Novi Sad, there were *Princip*, published in Subotica and *Predstraža*, published in Vršac (Versec). Only *Vidovdan* was successful and continued for several years, while *Princip* and *Predstraža* ceased after no more than one year of existence.

During its entire existence, the Vojvodina branch enforced pressure upon all their political opponents. The beginning of their activities was characterised by the physical

127Enikő Sajti, *Hungairans in Voivodina, 1918-1975* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 8-10.

128Bajić, “Delatnost”, 62.

129Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 97.

130Ibid., 98.

131Ibid.

attacks on people and their property, while later the movement slowly lost its impetus and their activities were mostly reduced to verbal criticism. The loss of support from the government, when their supporter Pribićević and his party went to opposition, affected the movement severely. The government of the Radicals started prosecuting them and their initial strength was diminished. Furthermore, Vojvodina became the competing ground between them and Srnao (Serbian Nationalist Organisation) who started taking over the membership of the Orjuna. This way, the Orjuna started losing its influence in the region and by the 1927 it reduced its activity to a minimum.¹³²

The organisation functioned normally until 1927, when, due to quarrels inside the movement Jevdjević decided to side with the Independent Democratic Party and to candidate on its list for the assembly in 1927. Since his activities became more dedicated to that party, in 1927 *Vidovdan* became the official newspaper of the Independent Democrats, after which the Orjuna did not have any newspapers in the region. This period was characterised by the large dissent within the movement in all parts of the country. The main point of dispute was related to the participation in the political life of the country, because some members actively supported political parties.¹³³ One side of the dispute was led by the Vojvodina branch which supported Pribićević openly, leading the entire branch against the central directorate. Jevdjević did not recognise the decisions of the general secretary of the movement and acted on his own will, which seriously undermined the authority of the Directorium. He was demoted from the position of president of the regional board in 1928, but as a reaction to that, he called for a congress in March, where officially that branch proclaimed full freedom of political thought, which allowed members to join political parties. The only remaining aspect of the movement was the Chetnik section. Soon, even

¹³²Bajić, "Delatnost", 62-65.

¹³³"Dva tabora" (Two Fractions), *Jugoslavija* (Belgrade) II, no. 28, 1 June 1928, 2.

that section was closed by Jevdjević in November, which ended the existence of the Orjuna in Vojvodina completely.¹³⁴

Their existence in Vojvodina, from 1922 to 1928, coincided with the time when the transfer of power from one state to another caused stirring in all levels of the society of Vojvodina. During its existence, the Orjuna tried to establish the domination of the Slavic speaking people in the region by enforcing physical and verbal violence over their enemies. Circumstances in the region supported the politics that promoted physical force. State policies and Orjuna's aims strived towards the same goal, which was the total diminution of the previous elites in Vojvodina, representing the former Habsburg rule. Changes were made usually by force, and the first years of the Yugoslav government in Vojvodina were characterised by the constant pressures of the German and Hungarian population and especially the members of the previous administration. Doubts over the future of the region persuaded many among the population that the new state was not stable and that disintegrating forces will tear it apart before the state managed to truly establish itself. Consequently, Orjuna's program identified three major threats that troubled the new country: "irredentism, separatism and corruption."¹³⁵ In this study, relating to the problem of a multi-ethnic society, I will analyse the first two problems.

3.2. Tribal Separatisms

Since in the Yugoslav national ideology it was assumed that all the South Slavs were members of the same nation, state policy created at the time of the unification considered

¹³⁴"Članovima Orjuna" (To Members of the Orjuna), *Jugoslavija* (Belgrade) II, no. 23, 16 November 1928, 2.

¹³⁵Jevdjević, "Orjuna i Vojvodina", 19.

Slovenes, Serbs and Croats members of three different tribes of a single Yugoslav nation. This formulation was developed according to the present need to acknowledge the existence of separate Croatian, Slovenian and Serbian identities among the population. As it was already mentioned, the Yugoslav national identity incorporated in itself separate identities of the constituent ethnic groups. When the state was created, these separate national identities had to be transformed and incorporated into a single one without losing any of its particular characteristics. Hence, the word “tribe” was used to describe the constituent identities within the integral one.

The ideological position of the Orjuna in this identification followed the general rules defined by state documents. The distinction between a tribe and a nation was present in their publications. Since the main goal of the organisation was to secure the state and national unity, tendencies among the Croatian and Slovenian political and intellectual elites, who begun doubting the positive outcome of the unification, startled the nationalists who mobilised against any separatist intentions. Attention to such tendencies was mostly given in Croatia and its major focus was directed at Radić and his Croatian Republican Peasant Party, that became the largest Croatian political party in the state. This problem was observed in Vojvodina as well. Nonetheless, Orjuna's program anticipated not only Croatian separatist politics, but Serbian as well.

One trait of the Orjuna's ideology was the organic concept of society, proclaiming that every element of the society has to be in a congruence with the rest. As it was already presented in the previous chapter, the goal of the movement was the unity of the nation in every aspect. This unity required discipline which required the total obedience of every individual who would assume his role in the society. The nation was also a racial category; the development of its inherent traits was a mission to which members of the nation were

obliged.

People¹³⁶, who are one, and who in the past did not have a chance to live like one organism¹³⁷, have as its main desire to enable life in such organic unity as soon as possible all the way to Slavic ethnic borders. And that can be accomplished through destruction of the all enforced maliciously grafted fences and tribal prejudices and through creation of an even greater cohesion.

The state, as an organisation, has to respond to the main desires of the people. To help the people to perform its specific racial mission, the state has to support the creation of an organism, that is capable of it. Hence, the state has, in the first place, to be united and as such, to influence the creation of that unified organism.¹³⁸

In a situation where political parties from Croatia refused the new constitution, and played an opposing role in politics, criticising the structural organisation of the country and requesting the separate and federate entities for the Croatian part of the country seemed like an act that was against the state. In Orjuna's case the organisation incorporated people from two different cultural spheres, Habsburg and Serbian, and tried to unite the state into a single organism, that would perform a mission which was inherently part of the nation's spirit. The idea was that this mission must ensure total discipline of the citizen. Any disruption would disturb the implementation of the old dreams of the free and unified state.

Consequently, the mobilisation on a large scale of the South Slavic population was designed to enforce the power over the previous Habsburg elites. In an atmosphere of anticipation of a possible resurgence of the Habsburg, Hungarian or German power, anyone could be suspected of plotting against the new state. Hence, signs of “second thoughts” among the Croats seemed like a serious alarm. Anti-state activities were anticipated from the Hungarians, but not from the Croats, which made it all more of a “blasphemy.”

Stjepan Radić was suspected of being a supporter of a Habsburg crown, an opportunist who used his political influence for personal interest. Therefore, his party

136Because in the language of that period there was no distinction between the “people” and “nation,” here could be used the word “nation” as well.

137Literally: “to live organically” (da organički živi).

138“Program Organizacije jugoslovenskih nacionalista: Integralni nacionalizam” (Program of the Organisation of the Yugoslav Nationalists: Integral Nationalism), quoted in *Statute* (1923), 27-28.

became the main target of Orjuna's critiques in Croatia and in other parts of the country, including Vojvodina. We can find in *Vidovdan* a large amount of texts directed against him or his party. These texts try to compromise him, generally representing him as an agent of the Habsburg propaganda.¹³⁹ Authors treated his attitudes as if he had serious psychological problems, because that was the only explanation for his “treacherous” behaviour. Psychological terms were used again. It seems that signs of political opposition to the Orjuna, or generally to Yugoslavism were regarded as signs of mental illness.¹⁴⁰

Colonel Pavle Jurišić, in his analysis of the present situation addressed the current problems from the psychological perspective. He observed a moral crisis which he ascribed to the psychological consequences of the war. According to him, the war changed the mentality of the population who in the after war period started losing its inner values and become subdued to the party politics. The special attention in his analysis was given to the mentalities of “winners” and “losers.” As an officer of the Serbian army, Jurišić observed the situation from the perspective of a side that won the war. In that perspective, former Habsburg lands and their citizens were once associated with the previous Serbian enemy. He believed that the feeling of being the defeated side still remained among the Croats, Hungarians and Germans and that their refusal to admit the defeat is the cause of all the quarrels in the after war period. Therefore, in this refusal, he identified the psychological effects that motivated Radić and the rest of the Croatian politicians to act as opposition.¹⁴¹

The name of Stjepan Radić thus became associated with the notion of separatism.¹⁴² His activities and speeches were criticised whenever possible; he was ridiculed and even public threats were issued on his account. “We are warning him most seriously to stop with

139“Avijatičar St. Radić” (Pilot Stjepan Radić), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 33, 25 August 1925, 1.

140“Ili je psihopatološki tip ili nacionalni zločinac” (He is Either a Psycho-pathological Case or a National Criminal), *Vidovdan* II, no. 1, 1 January 1923, 2.

141Jurišić, *Kroz nacionalnu krizu*, 10-24.

142“Tragikomedija zagrebačkih separatističkih svečanosti” (Tragicomedy of the Zagreb Separatist Celebrations), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 33, 25 August 1925, 2.

unnecessary provocations, that could lead to very unpleasant consequences for him.”¹⁴³ However, he was not the only concern of the nationalists from the Croatian side. More extreme versions of Croatian nationalism came from the Frankists and Hanao (The Croatian Nationalist Organisation) and the struggle against them had more violent consequences. Clashes between the Orjuna and the Hanao resulted in dead people on both sides.¹⁴⁴

Jevdjević ascribed the origins of the Frankists to the Austrian politics. It was a result of oppression and false beliefs inflicted by the monarchy which poisoned the minds of the Croatian youth. “Centuries of joint life, shine and glitter, terror and kindness tied forever one insignificant part of the Croatian tribe to the rotten Habsburg galley. A quite natural thing, because only due to their own racial and national strength can Croats thank, that they managed to keep their racial characteristics in such conditions.”¹⁴⁵ He believed that conditions of life in Austria-Hungary were harsher to Serbs, because of their different religion, which forced them to rally and “cultivate nationalism through centuries of slavery.” Therefore, Croats resisted the “polished” assimilation which Serbs never had to endure.¹⁴⁶

Since Orjuna's ideology was based on a heroic concept, it inherited myths from both the Croatian and the Serbian sides. The story of the Croatian King Tomislav became in this way a part of Orjuna's heroic mythical narratives. Celebration of the one thousand years of the Croatian kingdom was the chance to promote the myth and in the same time confront Radić, the Hanao or the Serbian nationalists.¹⁴⁷ In the same way the Serbian religious holiday Vidovdan was celebrated every year and as the name of the Novi Sad newspaper

143“St. Radić i Orjuna” (Stjepan Radić and the Orjuna), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 33, 25 August 1925.

144Bartulović, *Od Revolcionarne Omladine*, 119. In Vojvodina, clashes between them happened in Petrovaradin. See: Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 197.

145Jevdjević, “Frankovci” (Frankists), in *Izabrani članci*, 43-44.

146Ibid.

147Dobrosav Jevdjević, “Slava Tomislavu! - Živela Jugoslavija” (Hail Tomislav! - Long Live Yugoslavia), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 33, 25 August 1925, 1.

can show, it became a large part of the Orjuna's heroic and martyrising character. One additional circumstance contributed to the importance of this holiday: the assassination of Franz Ferdinand happened on that day.¹⁴⁸

Critiques of the behaviour of the Serbian politicians were present as well. The Orjuna consisted of all three constituent members of the new nation and its authors readily noted any signs of the tribal separatism. Authors who published in *Vidovdan* readily criticised all activities of the Serbian separatists or hegemonists.¹⁴⁹ Serbian dominance was closely monitored and the Serbian political elite was criticised for consciously excluded the Croats from the political life. Special attention was given to Pašić, who performed the role of a Prime Minister in the first years after the war. In Orjuna's writings he became a synonym for the corruption and Serbian hegemonism. In various occasions he was criticised for disrupting the national unity.¹⁵⁰

Similar to the Croatian case, the major opponents were the most extreme nationalists, the Srnao and the Serbian Party. Since the Serbian Party enjoyed very little political success, it did not attract Orjuna's attention.¹⁵¹ The conflict with the Srnao was more intense and was characterised by violence and murders. Since the Srnao was unofficially supported by the Radical Party, it received help from the government, which placed the Orjuna on an uneven position with them. Consequently, the Orjuna started losing their membership because of them. They both acted mainly in Vojvodina and as it turned out, most of the active members were more of the anti-Hungarian attitudes than pro-Yugoslav.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine*, 121.

¹⁴⁹“Propast Srpske Stranke u Somboru” (Downfall of the Serbian Party in Sombor), *Vidovdan* II, no. 2, 4 January 1923, 2.

¹⁵⁰“Položaj današnje vlade” (Position of the Present Government), *Vidovdan* II, no. 9, 23 June 1923, 1.

¹⁵¹“Kretanje antidržavnih elemenata: Među Ciganima” (Activities of the Anti-state Elements: Among the Gypsies), *Vidovdan*, 4 January 1923.

¹⁵²Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 196-197.

Jevdjević criticised the claims that the “Serbian identity is in danger,”¹⁵³ stating that such claims could endanger the existence of the state. “What is even worse, they do not even dare to approach conscious masses in Shumadia, who would chase them away, but instead they propagate throughout Vojvodina, where is our population surrounded by the relics and traditions of the former regime, who deliberately alienated Serbocroats and incited small tribal angers.”¹⁵⁴ Consequently, the reasons for the quarrels between Serbs and Croats were found in the Habsburg politics. The old enemy, whom they fought before the war and during the war haunted them again, when the unity and freedom were finally there. The existence of both Serbian and Croatian nationalisms was explained as a relict of the Austrian-Hungarian rule. The idea of the enemy who was defeated, but still does not want to admit its defeat, asserted by Jurišić, was present in the Jevdjević's texts as well. The ghost of the Habsburg Empire was still haunting the South Slavic nationalist revolutionaries, who anticipated the reappearance of the old enemy and the dissolution of the union.

Beside Serbs and Croats, in Vojvodina lived two ethnic groups who were considered South Slavic, but displayed distinct ethnic characteristic. The Bunyevac and the Šokac were originally belonging to either Serbian or Croat ethnic stock, but due to specific ethnic, cultural and historical circumstances they retained distinguished features. Both were Catholic and henceforth more closely related to Croats. They were among the first minorities to form their party in the new state and in Orjuna's publications, some concerns over their separatist tendencies can be noticed.¹⁵⁵ Because of their initial connection with the Radical Party, Orjuna's press paid special attention to their activities and role in the state. One part of the program of the movement tried to persuade them to abandon their identity

153“Srpstvo je u opasnosti”

154Jevdjević, “Srpski separatizam” (Serbian Separatism), *Izabrani članci*, 70.

155“Bunjevci rade na osnivanju autonomaškog bloka” (The Bunyevac work on the Establishment of the Autonomist Alliance), *Vidovdan* II, no. 41, 19 April 1923, 2.

and join the rest of the Yugoslavs.¹⁵⁶

Slovaks became a desired ally in the nationalists' propaganda, although originally not belonging to the South Slavic group of nations. Considering the fact that they belonged to the Slavic ethnic group, and that Czechoslovakia was an ally of the KSHS, as the member of the Small Entente, Orjuna's politics tried to make them an ally in the internal politics of the state. They started showing interest in Slovakian culture.¹⁵⁷ Articles published in Slovakian were frequent in *Vidovdan*. They mostly addressed the issues of the Slovak education and their participation in the elections. Accusations against the parties who privileged the interest of the Slovaks just because they need votes was underlined in Orjuna's writings.¹⁵⁸

During the manifestations that followed the 1925 congress of the Orjuna in Belgrade, presence of Slovaks was one of the main features of the parade. One uniformed squad of Slovaks and one group of Slovak girls from Vojvodina, dressed in colourful folk costumes joined the manifestation.¹⁵⁹ The role of the Slovaks in the ideology of the Orjuna was to make a legitimate connection with the rest of the Slavs in Europe and to secure one more ally among the non-Slavic population of Vojvodina. Belief in the existence of a "Slavic race" implied a connection between all the Slavic "brothers" needs to be established. Appearance of the Slovaks on the parade was supposed to demonstrate their participation in the South Slavic community and their brotherhood with the rest of the Slavs.

In this discourse, common issues Serbs and Slovaks had against the Hungarian government in Vojvodina were used as a motive to strengthen their cooperation. Jevdjević described the Slovaks as honest, quiet and industrious. Nonetheless, his concerns about the

¹⁵⁶Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo*, 18.

¹⁵⁷For example: "Istorija Slovačkih naselja u Vojvodini" (History of the Slovak Settlements in Vojvodina), *Vidovdan* V, no. 342, 27 June 1926, 2.

¹⁵⁸"Slovaci i Radikali" (Slovaks and Radicals), *Vidovdan*, 1 February 1925; "Slovaci i izbori" (Slovaks and Elections), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 7, 15 February 1925, 2.

¹⁵⁹"Povorka" (Parade), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 22, 11 June 1925, 1.

present were related to the behaviour of Serbs as a governing nation in Vojvodina, who led the country into corruption and crime, which damaged their life after the war. “The Slovak expected knights, but instead of them [knights], who just watched from a side, came party speculators. They have not seen in them people, but ballots.”¹⁶⁰

Political parties in this story about the ethnic divisions play a special role. All of these nationalities possessed their own political party. Most of them cooperated with the Radical Party. Since Pašić and his party remained until 1929 the governing party in the state, naturally, he was the main target of the most frequent attacks. The Party of Slovaks and the Party of the Bunyevac and Šokac joined in the coalition with the Radicals, but since the Radical Party rarely fulfilled its promises, the Orjuna tried to convince the audience that the Radicals should not be trusted. Serbian hegemony in the country was apparent and the minority groups tried to counterbalance that dominance in the political sphere without too much success. Henceforth, accusations against the Radicals for inflicting Serbian hegemony and nationalism remained as one of the recurring motives in Orjuna's publications.

One of the primary traits of the Orjuna's ideology was the persistent anti-Habsburg feeling. The relationship towards a different ethnic or political groups was built upon the previous status of that group in Austria-Hungary. Basically, members of the Orjuna were still battling the old empire and were still perceiving the relationships from the old times. Therefore, their perception of the Croatian, Serbian and Slovak role in the political life was reflecting the previous conditions in the Habsburg Empire, for which reason were the quarrels between the Croats and Serbs often ascribed as remnants of the Austrian politics. In the process of building of the new Serbian-Croatian relations, the anti-Habsburg feeling was in the vision of the Orjuna's ideologues a way to overcome the differences and unite against the common enemy.

¹⁶⁰Jevdjević, “Slovačko pitanje” (Slovak Issues), in *Izabrani članci*, 92-95.

3.3. Anational Elements

Unlike the Slavic population who possessed ethnic connections with the Yugoslav idea, the non-Slavic population could not be incorporated into the new state's national concepts. This was especially important for the Hungarians and Germans who represented the remnants of the previous Habsburg regime. It was not only the Orjuna that placed suspicion on them. Government developed a secret police system that enforced monitoring of the suspicious elements that might have been working against the country's interests.

One term keeps reappearing in Orjuna's publications - the anational elements.¹⁶¹ These anational elements were recognised as a threat towards the state stability and were identified as unreliable and potentially dangerous for the security of the state. One of the problems identified in the country was the dependence of the army on these “elements”: “[This] is not any more that wonderful, single spirited one national pre-war Serbian army, and not even the new Yugoslav army. We recruit in that army a lot of anational elements, who consider army service as a sign of force and slavery, and as well, a lot of them joins that army with particular mission to poison and destroy it [the army], according to the previously received instructions.”¹⁶²

Jurišić, who emphasized the Serbian position, identified three organised “fronts” who organised out of fear of Serbian domination: “anational, religious and tribal.”¹⁶³ He defined as anational the organisations of “Germans (Kulturbund), Hungarians, Bulgarians, Turks (Džemijet), Romanians, Arbanians [Albanians] and Bolsheviks.”¹⁶⁴ My findings

¹⁶¹“Anacionalni elementi.” I have translated the expression from Serbo-Croatian, although the term could not be clearly translated to English, because it is not a word that could be found in Serbo-Croatian dictionaries. However, I found it possible to simply transform the expression into English by using analogies with Serbo-Croatian (National – Anational).

¹⁶²Jevdjević, “Oružana snage Orjuna,” 13.

¹⁶³Jurišić, *Kroz nacionalnu krizu*, 39.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 41.

concerning this term show that by the “anational,” Orjuna's members usually distinguished people who could not belong to the Yugoslav national identity. The presence of the Bolsheviks among the non-Slavic national minorities is rather confusing, but I believe that in the construction of this notion, the main intention was to include all “elements” who could not adhere to the Yugoslav identity, either ethnically or politically.

I will recall here my observations from the previous chapter, where I demonstrated the mythical elements in the national ideology of the Orjuna. The image of a Yugoslav was constructed according to the heroic image of warriors and intellectuals who sacrificed themselves for the national cause. Hence, the term national could have been imagined according to that image. If one group of people could not identify themselves with such an image, and possibly even work against the nation's interests, they could not have been perceived as national, but its opposite – anational.

The relationships with the “anational” groups were different than with the “tribal” elements. National minorities had no organised paramilitary units and performed no programmed violence towards their political opponents. Their major points of expression were newspapers published in several cities in Vojvodina and cultural organisations who cultivated their national cultures. Their political parties were hindered by the state legislation from the start as Hungarians, Romanians and Germans had no voting rights before the 1925 elections.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, attention of the Orjuna members was directed mostly towards newspapers and against the usage of their languages in public inscriptions.

During September 1922, a journalist congress was held in Subotica. Members of the Orjuna caused a large disturbance and the police had to intervene. Attacks on the offices of

¹⁶⁵Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes refused to give voting rights to members of the German, Hungarian and Romanian population, with an explanation that they will opt to live in other country, most probably Hungary or Romania, and they do not want to give voting rights to foreign citizens. Until the opting period was finished, minorities had no voting rights.

the newspapers became a regular habit of the Action Squads and several attacks occurred during 1923. In January, the editor and the staff of *Délbácska* in Novi Sad were physically attacked and Jevdjević was arrested, only to be released soon after that.¹⁶⁶ The position of Jevdjević and *Vidovdan* was that the journal was working against the state and was an agent of the Hungarian consulate in Vienna.¹⁶⁷ These attacks continued and already on 30 January of the same year, offices of the *Hirlap* in Subotica were demolished, but these attacks were not directed only to Hungarian periodicals. German newspapers were attacked as well, and in March a bomb was thrown on the offices of *Deutsches Volksblatt*.¹⁶⁸

One of the main features of the Orjuna's activities in Vojvodina were campaigns against inscriptions in Hungarian and German. Targets of these campaigns were not only Hungarians and Germans, but Jews and Slavs as well. After the establishment of the government of KSHS in Vojvodina, one of the main issues was the replacement of languages used for official purposes. Nevertheless, inscriptions that were used in shops and in various public places, which were mostly of private origin, still remained in Hungarian. Even Serbs kept these signs and continued practising Hungarian language. For Orjuna's members, the continuation of the previous language practices was not acceptable. For them, when the government changed and Slavs came to power, there was no place for the use of the language of the previous rulers.

Although signs of the slavery are thoroughly removed throughout the city, there are some shops, and among them, some sorrowful Serbian, who still have not abandoned the rotten foreign stuff.¹⁶⁹ We state for the last time, the last deadline for the removal is the Orthodox New Year, i.e. 14 January. After this date, everyone will suffer his own consequences for the loyalty to the fallen regime.¹⁷⁰

Last night, several groups of bitter men demolished all the companies, who despite the desires of patriotic citizens, did not want to change the foreign inscriptions.

¹⁶⁶Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 194.

¹⁶⁷"Delbačka", *Vidovdan* II, no. 8, 23 January 1923, 1.

¹⁶⁸Djordjević, *ORJUNA*, 194.

¹⁶⁹"još se nisu otresele tudjinštine."

¹⁷⁰"Mađarske i Nemačke firme" (Hungarian and German Companies), *Vidovdan* II, no. 3, 6 January 1923, 2.

Diligent police arrested several people, but the captain who was on duty Mr. Djakov, decided to release them.¹⁷¹

The question of loyalty to the regime was one of the key features of the movement's program. The “fallen regime” had to be completely defeated and all the remaining traits of the Austrian-Hungarian government had to be removed from the country. This positioning of the movement was against the Habsburg government and against the people who were pro Habsburg government, although this government did not exist any more. This shows that the organisation was still battling the same enemy from before the war. The Hungarians and Germans still represented the old Empire, and their majority in the region made the Yugoslav nationalists fear they would lose the region.

According to Jevdjević, the damage was already done. Disastrous Panhungarian politics of the Habsburg government, enforced through the state administration, schools, the press and colonisation caused serious damage to the “national elements” in Vojvodina. Years of living together developed connections between the populations, which through intermarriages created a multi-ethnic community which cooperated culturally and economically. This society was not without contention. Long years under the Habsburg rule formed rivalries between communities which were the cause of a latent tension. Jevdjević tried to emphasize those tensions and argued against good relations between the Slavs and the non-Slavs.

Frequent blood mixing and joint social and economical enterprises, not only that they bettered strong national animosities, but they diluted a lot of our racial and national traits, and formed a new unique “Vojvodina” nationalism, based on purely materialist foundations. That phenomenon hindered, after the liberation, any prosecution of the subversive and irredentist elements in Vojvodina. Everyone of them was connected through business with the Yugoslavs, everyone of them had someone to protect him; large part of Vojvodina, and especially in the cities, felt more close to the non-Slavs, than to the liberators.¹⁷²

171 “Dole sa mađjarskim firmama” (Down with the Hungarian Companies), *Vidovdan* II, no. 6, 16 January 1923, 2.

172 Jevdjević, “Orjuna i Vojvodina” (The Orjuna and Vojvodina), in *Izabrani članci*, 14-15.

One of the fears of Orjuna's ideologists was that the previous financial elites will remain their positions. Jevdjević objected against the established economic connections, which he found mostly in the city. The only remaining part of the Habsburg higher classes that still hold their position were the members of the bourgeoisie who still possessed financial dominance over the Serbian newcomers. The capital was in the hands of the entrepreneurs who developed their businesses during the Habsburg periods. Although the aftermath of the war brought changes in the economic and social structure of the region, in the eyes of the Orjuna ideologues, this was not satisfying. “The losers laughed ironically at the winners, while clanking with the gold in their pockets, with which they bought our honesty and our honour.”¹⁷³

One part of concerns over the role of “anational elements” was the anticipated financial dominance of the non-Slavic minorities, which in combination with the national disputes created fears of the dominance of the German, Jewish and Hungarian financial elites. The role of German and Hungarian capital worried them and they started to question the motives for their investments in the region.¹⁷⁴ Besides the German and Hungarian capital, strong concerns were made against the Jewish capital as well. Consequently, strong anti-Semitism surfaced, and the anger towards the Jews became openly expressed. Since the majority of Jews were of the Hungarian origin, in Orjuna's texts special connection was created between Horthy and Jewish community.¹⁷⁵ Although in Orjuna's texts, one could recognise that the authors were aware of the anti-Semitic tendencies of the Hungarian

173“Jugoslovenski nacionalisti na pragu Nove godine” (Yugoslav Nationalists at the Beginning of the New Year), *Vidovdan* II, no. 1, 1 December 1923, 1.

174“Nedopuštena navala germanskog kapitala u Vojvodini” (Unallowed Surge of German Capital in Vojvodina), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 23, 14 June 1925, 1; “Jedna demonstracija madjarskih privrednika” (One Demonstration of the Hungarian Entrepreneurs), *Vidovdan* IV, no. 33, 25 August 1925, 2.

175“Madjarska i Jevreji: U pažnju Hortijevskim Jevrejima u Jugoslaviji” (Hungary and Jews: Attention to all Horthy's Jews in Yugoslavia), *Vidovdan* II, no. 55, 30 May 1923, 1.

clericals in Vojvodina, the idea of Hungarian Jewish conspirators who work for Horthy remained in their texts.¹⁷⁶

According to our sources, some of the Jews¹⁷⁷ are ready for an armed fight against the nationalist terror. We order to all the members, to beat on the spot that Hungarian loving anti-state dogs.

We consider company Komlós and Székely **personally** responsible for every direct or indirect attack on our organisation. So, if those guys do not have obstinance to become new Maccabean Martyrs, they should watch for what they are printing in their *Vajdaság*.¹⁷⁸

The fear of being overpowered by the non-Slavic communities was present in the political sphere as well. Considering the number of Hungarians and Germans, by 1923, when they received their political rights and formed their own parties, they could have amounted to a significant number of representatives on the local level. Since the Yugoslav nationalists anticipated the considerable damage minorities could cause if they gathered enough votes, they rounded up against the minorities, so they could defend the region from the possible irredentist claims.

We are determined enough to suppress the low and disgusting manipulations with national irredentisms and sentimental concerns [sic.], cause national minorities can and may vote only on the basis of constitutional Yugoslav program; in in [sic.] Yugoslavia there must not be German and Hungarian parties.¹⁷⁹

Consequently, parliamentarism was the means through which minorities could have disputed the Yugoslav claims to Vojvodina. Both the government and the nationalists were aware that the granting of voting rights to the members of minorities would show that the claims at the Paris Peace Conference were not legitimate. What troubled nationalists even more was that the “heroically conquered” land could have been lost by a simple election procedure.

176“Hortijevska jevrejska svadja” (Horthy's Jewish Wrangle), *Vidovdan* I, no. 37, 16 November 1922, 2.

177“Čifuti.”

178“Nekim jevrejskim ‘junacima’” (To some of the Jewish Heroes), *Vidovdan* II, no. 2, 4 January 1923, 2.

179“Jugoslovenski nacionalisti na pragu Nove godine” (Yugoslav Nationalists at the Beginning of the New Year), *Vidovdan*, 1 December 1923, 1.

Some dark and unknown factors made that all of the Hungarians and Germans must receive their voting rights, and their patriotism is well known, then possibly, the pride of our man will not allow to be defeated through ballots by some defeatists and traitors in his, by the sword taken Vojvodina.¹⁸⁰

The assumption was that if minorities received voting rights, they would not be loyal citizens and would work against the interests of the government. Furthermore, there was a possibility that they could plot a conspiracy to re-establish Hungarian or Habsburg rule again in the region or they could form an alliance with the separatists who wanted to destroy South Slavic unity. “[Internal enemies] are often in contact with our external enemies, who created their powerful irredentist organisations on our territory.”¹⁸¹ Hence, in the eyes of the Orjuna ideologists, the battle over Vojvodina was not yet over.

Before concluding, it is worth mentioning the absence of the Romanians from the Orjuna's texts. In my research I paid special attention to any mention of Romanians in the texts, but they were scarcely mentioned and usually in connection with the Romanian state. There were anti-Romanian feelings, but they were mostly expressed during border negotiations between Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and were not related to Romanians living in the country. My hypothesis, which at this moment I cannot prove, is that they were not considered opponents in the same manner as Hungarians and Germans were, due to the Romanian position in the Habsburg Empire. During the Habsburg government in Vojvodina, Romanians were not part of the elites in the same way Hungarians and Germans were. Romanian language was not in use as an official language and there was no Romanian governed administration in Austria-Hungary and therefore they were not opponents of the revolutionary nationalists.

Uncertainties over the dominance of the Slavs in the region troubled nationalist on

¹⁸⁰Dobrosav Jevdjević, “Za koncentraciju nacionalne snage u Vojvodini” (For Gathering of all the National Forces in Vojvodina), *Vidovdan* II, no. 2, 4 January 1923, 1.

¹⁸¹Jurišić, *Kroz nacionalnu krizu*, 26.

many levels. The new regime was characterised by corruption and national unity was not yet established. Orjuna's ideology, which emulated some of the fascist concepts, found in Vojvodina a political testing ground where the ideas of national unity and rebirth through battle could be asserted. The number of non-Slavic inhabitants, their financial dominance in the region and their potential political power in the elections, resulted in apprehension that the region could be lost. Mythical notions of heroic sacrifice, upon which Orjuna's ideology was based, inspired the followers to continue the battle even when the war was over. The notions of winners who sacrificed themselves for the better future of their nation, and the losers who had to cower and admit their defeat was not aligned with reality. The situation in Vojvodina was different from what the Yugoslav nationalists anticipated.

Conclusion

Political circumstances in the newly created Yugoslavia, which were different from the ones in other parts of Europe, influenced the development and the fall of the Orjuna in a way that was not applicable to previous classifications of fascism. However, due to these circumstances, the fascist elements in Orjuna's ideology were differently manifested. This study on the impact of Orjuna's ideology on the political situation in Vojvodina has shown several features of fascism which were present in its ideology and reflected the process of establishment of the Yugoslav government in the region. The crucial element in the ideology of the Orjuna, in the case of Vojvodina, was the construction of a national identity.

In the process of the establishment of the new government in Vojvodina, the question of the legitimacy of territorial claims was significant. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav national identity was not yet widely accepted among the South Slavs, and the chances that the newly acquired territories would be lost was present. In these circumstances, national identity became one of the crucial points of the political agenda of the most parties in the dispute, which for Orjuna's members usually meant that all the non-Yugoslavs were potentially dangerous for the state. The ethnic composition of Vojvodina did not corroborate with the epic claims of the “sword conquered Vojvodina.”

The absence of a unified state religion, and the adherence to three religions instead, left the national ideologues without reliance on the belief systems which would unite the nation religiously. Actually, the anti-clerical attitudes in Orjuna's ideology can be explained as an attempt to overcome the differences in order to accomplish state unity. Therefore, the

Catholic Church was suspected of distancing the Croats from their Orthodox brothers. The Orjuna called for religious tolerance and argued against the religious divisions among the South Slavs. In this program, religion was not excluded from national ideology. Instead, the Orjuna attacked the clergy, accusing them of compromising state interests.

Consequently, disputes between the Croats and Serbs present in the state parliament and in the political sphere in general, had to be overcome by any means possible. What the Orjuna proposed in its program was a heroic image of the past glory which emphasised the warrior spirit and proclaimed a racial mission to which all members of the “South Slavic race” were obliged. The mythical core of the fascist ideology, which the Orjuna adopted and transformed through the epic images of past heroes, who fell in the recent wars against Austria-Hungary, was used to promote state unity and create a joint image of the nation. Ideal images of national heroes and martyrs were stained by the deeds of the politicians who spoilt the glorious picture of heroism.

Hence, the Orjuna developed a goal to transform the society and eliminate the “bad” elements from the party politics; perceived the conflicts in the parliament as something unnatural. One of the most disturbing things in the political life for the Orjuna was that political parties gathered around the national programs which were usually not Yugoslav. The existence of Croatian, Slovene and Serbian parties disturbed the visionary image of the unified community of the South Slavs. Therefore, all the “tribal” nationalist parties had to be condemned. Through the appraisal of violence in politics, they organised paramilitary troops with the purpose of inflicting damage upon anyone who dared to stain the national unity. Discipline was the only means through which moral perfection could be accomplished and the national spirit could reach its fulfilment.

The anti-conservative ideas and the idea to create a new society, were jointly

connected with the national ideology that wanted to establish Slavic domination. The case study of the Orjuna in Vojvodina exemplifies the process of the change of power between the different ethnic communities. The previous elite, which were identified with the Habsburg hierarchy, had to be removed. This included both the political and economic elites. As a consequence, national identification was associated with the social strata, as was demonstrated in the third chapter; the transformation of the society and the removal of the former elites was perceived as the change of the power between the ethnic communities. Even symbolic things, like signs on shops which were written in non-Slavic language, were interpreted as a sign of disobedience towards the newly established order.

The question of loyalty became important in Orjuna's ideology. Any suspicious elements that could have worked against the state had to be identified and punished for their deeds. In such circumstances, national minorities were accused of working against the country. The concept of South Slavic national unity could not have been applied to them as they stained the perfect image of the unified country with the King as the supreme authority.

Orjuna's ideology was in its core anti-Habsburg. The perception of the multi-ethnic community of Vojvodina was based on the pre-war conditions in the region. Therefore, all the negative circumstances were described as the remnants of the previous regime. Consequently, the image of the relationships between the ethnic communities was built with the assumption that previous roles still remained. The only difference was that in the new hierarchy of power, the Slavs were the one who were rulers. The Orjuna continued to battle the Austria-Hungary, even though that empire did not exist any more, and accordingly, the national identity became a political stance through which the expression of loyalty towards the new kingdom was built.

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