Death of a State: Politics, Nationalism and the Collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia.

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Introduction

"Why did we have to have war? The women ask. What did our sons get killed for? For nothing, they answer. For fear, homelessness and bloodshed.... We were supposed to end up in Serbia, united with our Serbian brothers. That was what we fought for..."[1]

The Wars of Yugoslav Succession of 1991-1995 were a horrific event that closed the long history of national and ethnic violence that occurred in Europe during the 20th century. The wars took place because of many different factors, and were a conclusion to an economic and political crisis that began in the early 1980's. Nationalism was used during the crisis by the political elite of Yugoslavia, and Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Bosnian Muslim, and Albanian nationalists all attempted to further the political aspirations of their nations. This would result in the dismantlement of the Yugoslav federation, with the political elite in each republic adhering to some form of nationalist ideology. These politicians, acting within the limits of the Yugoslav political structure until 1990, would successfully rally or intimidate most sectors of society to support their new nationalistic doctrines. This thesis argues that nationalism was used as a political ideology by the leaderships of each respective republic to increase the power or autonomy of that republic. Political forces in each republic took up the nationalist ideology in opposition to the Titoist regime, which had actively tried to prevent nationalist sentiment from entering the public discourse. Although the political elite did not solely develop the new nationalist ideologies created during the 1980's, they did seize control of the national movements and used them for their own political ends.

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[1] Wojciech Tochman, *Like Eating a Stone: Surviving the Past in Bosnia*, trans Antonia Lloyd-Jones (London: Portobello Books, 2008), 73.

This thesis also argues that at the end of the 1980's the domination of public discourse by nationalist rhetoric exacerbated the tensions between the different national groups. The radicalisation of politics between the leaderships of each republic and the use of increasingly radical nationalist ideologies resulted in the breakdown of inter-ethnic relations, particularly between Slovenia and Serbia. The eventual breakdown of political attempts to reform Yugoslavia's economy and the failure to repair relations between the republics made the federation unfeasible. The end result of this, of course, was an explosion of xenophobic hatred, distrust, and violence in the multi-ethnic state. By examining the history of Yugoslavia prior to the conflict in 1991, focusing predominately on the period from 1986-1991, this thesis unpacks the dynamic relationship between institutions, politics, and nationalist discourses in the Yugoslav context. Limiting the scope to before the military conflict allows for a greater analysis and understanding of the historical development of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the radicalisation of politics along national lines.

This thesis will examine several topics. Firstly, it will examine concepts and paradigms of nationalism and nations. By examining general concepts of nationalism and national movements, a better analysis of the nature of these nationalisms and how they were able to dominate public discourse can be achieved. National identity would become the predominant identifier of an individual once the crisis turned into an armed conflict. Secondly, the thesis will look at the creation of the Yugoslav state and the modern Serbian and Croatian national movements and provide a historical overview of the formation and nature of Socialist Yugoslavia. This section will argue that the

institutionalisation of national groups and the relative autonomy given to them in Yugoslavia's political structure was an attempt to control national dissent, but this allowed for a relatively weaker centralised government and stronger regional governments based on national groups. When dissent did occur, Socialist Yugoslavia tried to make constitutional compromises to appease the institutionalised national groups, but this became increasingly inefficient in the 1980's as the economic crisis led to political crisis. Thirdly, it will examine the rise of nationalism in Serbia during the 1980's, focusing on how nationalist ideology became the dominant ideology of Slobodan Milošević and the Serbian League of Communists. It will argue that Milošević's use of Serbian nationalist ideology, supported by nationalistic dissident intellectuals and grass root Kosovo Serb organisations, allowed for his domination of the political elite in Serbia, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro. Fourthly, the development of Slovenian and Croatian nationalist ideology in reaction to Milošević and his attempts to dominate Yugoslavia in the late 1980's will be discussed. In both Slovenia and Croatia, nationalist ideology dominated political discourse, and the defence of their republics was of utmost importance. Lastly, this thesis will conclude by explaining how nationalism as a political ideology would radicalise the elections in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, allowing nationalist politicians to come to power and bid to secede from the Yugoslav federation. By 1990, nationalist politicians held the interests of their national group as more important than maintaining the federal structure, and any attempt to find a political solution to the economic stagnation and solve the disagreement over constitutional change failed.

The scholarship on the Wars of Yugoslav Succession is quite divided as to why the wars occurred and what prompted the extreme level of violence. The historiography of the crisis that occurred in the 1980's and 1990's is quite politicised, as most historical accounts written share a close proximity to the conflict and have different, sometimes opposite, interpretations on it. Sabrina Ramet states "that scholars in the field of Yugoslav studies have some serious disagreements with each other and that these involve both substantive questions and questions related to research methodology."[2] Scholars, ranging from journalists to historians, political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists, have argued many different factors as the key to explaining the violent collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia. Dejan Jovic argues that most of the scholarship falls into seven main arguments regarding the causation of the wars.[3] Jovic depicts these arguments as the "economic," the "role of personality," the "nationalism," the "cultural," the "fall of empires," the "international politics," and the "ancient ethnic hatred" argument.[4] According to Jovic, most of these arguments are very important to explaining the nature of the conflict and the crisis that preceded it, none of them can stand alone as a complete explanation. Jovic argues "that the disintegration of Yugoslavia had many

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[2] Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 305. Ramet's work is summarised in a thirteen page article she wrote in 2000: Sabrina Ramet, "Revisiting the Horrors of Bosnia: New Books about the War," *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 14 no. 2 (2000): 475-486.
[3] Dejan Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 4 no. 1 (2001).
[4] Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," 101.

causes, not a single one" and that more comprehensive and encompassing analytical methods need to be employed.[5]

The only argument that Jovic has major problems with is the "ancient ethnic hatred" argument, promulgated mostly by western media and journalists during the war. It argues that ethnic tensions were always present under the surface, ready to be freed once the repressive rule of communism failed. Ramet gives a scathing review of the "ancient ethnic hatred" argument, which she claims affected the decision making of western politicians and policy-makers while the war occurred.[6] The other six arguments all identify important, and rather self-explanatory, factors responsible for the violence in Yugoslavia. This thesis focuses on the role that nationalism had in the mobilisation of populations for political and ultimately violent means. In this way it is centered on the nationalism argument, which Jovic describes as the argument that national interests won out over all other interests in the political realm by the outbreak of conflict.[7] However, this study also examines the role that economic and constitutional factors played prior to the conflict and the means by which central political figures, namely Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tudjman, were able to capitalise, more or less, on the unique historical situation to benefit their nationalist agendas. This thesis does not argue that nationalism was more important than any other factor in the causation of the conflict, but examines how nationalism became established as the primary ideology in high politics by

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[5]Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," 101. See Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* for her interpretation of Jovic's discussion of how "unicausal theories" are too simplistic to address the complex history of the collapse of Yugoslavia, 70.

[6]Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*, 3.

[7]Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," 104-105.

prominent political actors and how national identities were thrust to the forefront in social interaction prior to the war.

One: Nationalist Concepts and Paradigms

The crisis that Yugoslavia faced in the late 1980's was defined by the principal actors in the crisis as a nationalist conflict between different national groups. To gain a better understanding of the nature of the crisis, it is important to discuss conceptual issues surrounding national identities and nationalisms. As defined by Anthony Smith, a nation is a "felt and lived community, a category of behaviour as much as imagination, and it is one that requires of the members certain kinds of action."[8] Nations, according to Smith, are different from an ethnic community or an *ethnie* as he terms it. *Ethnies*, while having similar attributes to a nation, do not necessarily occupy a certain homeland, "usually [have] no political referent, and in many cases [lack] a public culture."[9] Smith employs what he calls an Ethnosymbolic paradigm, using ethnic myths, memories and symbols to further the understanding of nations and national identities.[10] Montserrat Guibernau argues that nations and national identity are made up of five dimensions, psychological, cultural, territorial, historical and political.[11] He describes national identity as "a collective sentiment based upon the belief of belonging to the same nation" which includes "belief in a common culture, history, kinship, language, religion, territory,

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[8]Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History* (Cambridge: Polity Press; Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2001), 10.

[9]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 12. Another definition of *ethnie* defined by Smith can be found in Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2000), 65.

[10]Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 66-68.

[11]Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations* (Cambridge; and Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2007) 11-25.

founding moment, and destiny."[12] Not all these factors, as Smith points out, are present in every national identity, and in his view every individual has multiple layers of identities that they negotiate and reinterpret.[13] Thus, it is important to note that identities are constantly in flux and changing. In Yugoslavia, as shall be discussed, national symbols, myths, history and territorial claims were used to redefine individuals' national identity.

In studying national conflict in Yugoslavia, it is beneficial to view nationalism as an ideology used primarily for political purposes. From the French Revolution to the present, European nations have partaken in national movements of varying degrees, and the nationalist ideologies that were attached to these movements had obvious political or territorial demands.[14] Nationalism as an ideology has some universal properties as well as particular properties unique to each nationalism espoused by a group of nationalists. The universalistic view of the nation puts the nation as the sole possessor of political power, claims that individuals can only be free if they belong to a nation, and states that nations must have the utmost autonomy.[15] Smith's "working definition" of nationalism defines it as "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential 'nation.'"[16] John Breuilly offers a helpful interpretation of nationalism, viewing nationalism as a strictly political phenomenon arguing that "the exigencies of political

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[12]Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, 11.
[13]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 18-19.
[14]Hedva Ben-Israel, "Nationalism in Historical Perspective," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 45, no. 2 (1992): 369-372. Ben-Israel examines briefly the historiographical debate about the role of nationalism in history in Europe.
[15]Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 72-74.
[16]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 9.

action, whether of opposition movements or governments, disciplines ideas and points them to practical goals."[17]

Smith describes four major paradigms, modernist, perennialist, primordialist and ethnosymbolist, which offer different perspectives and interpret nationalism and the nation differently.[18] The two paradigms that are relevant to this study of nationalism in the Yugoslav crisis are primordialism and perennialism, because it was through these paradigms that the main political actors defined and articulated their nation and national movement. Primordialism views the nation as existing before everything, often being placed alongside God in order of existence. It views the nation as a natural and everlasting entity built on common ancestry, history or shared memories, religion, language, and culture.[19] While similar to primordialism, perennialism differs in that it does not view the nation as an "organic" or "naturalist" entity, but portrays the nation as having "existed from time immemorial" or just for a long period of time.[20] Smith divides perennialism into two forms that include "continuous perennialism", which asserts that particular nations can draw their lineage back to the Middle Ages or antiquity, and "recurrent perennialism", which views certain nations as appearing and disappearing throughout history and changing over time.[21]

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[17]John Breuilly, "Approaches to Nationalism," chapter five, in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan, (London; New York: Verso, 1996), 163.
[18]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, See chapter 3, pages 43-61, for Smith's description of paradigms. He lists post-modernist or social-constructionist as a possible fifth paradigm, but argues that it is too "fragmentary... to merit the designation of 'paradigm'", 57.
[19]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 51-53.
[20]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 49-50.
[21]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 50-51.

These concepts of national identity and of nationalism help us to understand the framework with which nationalists espoused their political demands and how nationalism in this context was a powerful ideology within the political theatre. The nationalist ideology articulated by Slobodan Milošević and Serbian nationalist intellectuals was framed within a primordial or a continuous perennial paradigm, viewing the Serb nation as an ancient or organic entity. They recreated and embellished historical events to create the argument, or myth, that the Serb nation was a victim of repression from the other nations within the Yugoslav federation. As David Archard points out, national histories, which he calls historical myths, have cultural value and when mutually expressed have an important impact in social interaction.[22] The ideology developed by Croatian nationalists, whose central public ideologue was the first president of Croatia Franjo Tudjman, was structured within a recurrent perennialist paradigm. Serbian, Croatian, and to a limited extent Slovenian, nationalists created new forms of nationalisms in opposition to the ideal of Communist Yugoslavia. These new nationalisms were based on national identities but were reinterpreted and rearticulated to fit the political needs of the 1980's, and they would continue to change over the course of the conflict. They were expressed as a continuation of the historical nation that they derived from, and appealed to romantic and emotional notions of national identity.[23] In this way, the new Serbian and Croatian nationalisms were able to successfully mobilise populations for political purposes in the crisis that transpired in Yugoslavia in the late 1980's.

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[22]David Archard, "Myths, lies and Historical Truth: A Defence of Nationalism," *Political Studies*, vol. 43, no. 3 (1995): 475.
[23]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 29-30 and 34.

Two: The Creation and Development of Yugoslavia:

"The crisis that hit Yugoslavia has brought about national divisions, but also social, cultural, religious and many other less important ones. Among all these divisions, nationalist ones have shown themselves to be the most dramatic. Resolving them will make it easier to remove other divisions and mitigate the consequences they have created."[24]

Yugoslavia's collapse in the latter half of the 1980's and the 1990's occurred for many different reasons. Although largely economic and political in nature, its participants and political elite framed the crisis as between different nations and as a nationalist conflict. Slobodan Milošević, quoted above, was not unique in describing the tensions and ensuing conflict along nationalist lines or putting nationalist divisions as the most important cause and effect of the trials that faced Yugoslavia. As the crisis escalated in the 1980's Serbian and Croatian nationalists increasingly viewed the conflict along national lines and expressed more radical forms of nationalism. However, this thesis will first address how the federation of Slovenians, Croatians, Serbians, Bosnian Muslims, Montenegrins, Kosovo Albanians and Macedonians came into existence, and why the federation was sought out in the first place. The bloody events of the Second World War and the historic conditions that led to the establishment of Communist Yugoslavia after the war would provide ammunition for nationalists four decades later and would set the backdrop to the 1990's conflict. Examining this historical process will aid in understanding the background to the crisis that developed in the 1980's.

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[24]Slobodan Milošević, *St. Vitus Day speech in Kosovo Field June 28, 1989*. http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/spch-kosovo1989.html

The creation of Yugoslavia was essentially a result of the First World War. Regions and people who had no living memory of belonging to the same state were united on the basis of sharing a common ethnic background. While both Serbs and Croats had once had their own kingdom of sorts, both had been lost by the 14th and 12th centuries respectively.[25] The regions of Croatia and Slavonia would become the frontier zone between the Austrian, and later Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires, which corresponds to the Croatia's present day borders with Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Yet, prior to World War One, there was no shared version of the relationship between the nations of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, or even a common view that they were three unique nations.[26] Modern Serbian nationalism can be attributed to the Serbian uprisings against the Ottomans which led to the establishment of the Serbian principality in 1830 under Miloš Obrenović, and to the standardisation of the Serbian language by the intellect Vuk Karadžić, who wished to issue forth a Serbian renaissance.[27] A similar Croatian experience was commencing, with the intellectual Ljudevit Gaj creating "a modern, codified language." In 1841 Gaj became the leader of the Illyrian party. The name, Illyrian, was a throwback to antiquity. The party fought for greater Croatian rights within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and 1841 is "generally taken as marking the beginnings of modern Croatian nationalism."[28]

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[25]Leslie Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 3-4.

[26]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 2 and 5.

[27]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 1-3.

[28]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 5.

The Serbian principality grew humbly during the 19th century, and it was not until

the 20th century that the Serbian nation would become important on the world stage. In

the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the notion of creating a unified state of southern Slav

peoples was becoming prevalent, but it was not the only or dominant idea. It attracted

much attention from outside of the Balkan region, most notably from the British who

thought that a strong Balkan state would bring stability to Europe.[29] However, the

aspiration to create a united south Slav state was not widely held among the majority of

the population or the political elite of the different national groups. In Slovenia and

Croatia, the "Trialist" solution, the idea that the Austro-Hungarian Slav lands should be

its own kingdom and the empire should become a tri-monarchy, was adopted by

intellectuals in prominent positions, such as Bishop Josip Strossmayer.[30] In Serbia, the

most prominent state building aspiration was to create a Greater Serbia, a state that

included all Serbs or regions partially populated by Serbs. Vesna Drapac argues that the

concept of creating an integrated Yugoslav nation, which was promoted by foreign

observers, had a very strong influence on the formation of a Yugoslav state after the First

World War, but that outsiders believed the nationalist movement was stronger on the

ground than it actually was.[31] Most of these outsiders were British intellectuals, such as

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[29]Vesna Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia, A Transnational History* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 60-64.

[30]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 14-15.

[31]Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia, A Transnational History*, 64-66.

the historian and activist R.W. Seton-Watson, who influenced policy makers during and after the war, and it is their version of Yugoslavia which ultimately saw the light of day.[32]

On July 20th 1917, representatives of Austro-Hungarian Slavs in exile who claimed to speak for the Croatian and Slovenian people signed the Corfu agreement with the Serbian government in exile agreeing to create an independent constitutional monarchy of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.[33] Consequently, after the war and the defeat and dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the precursor to Yugoslavia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was created. The royal family was from the Serbian Karajordjević dynasty. Croatian politicians immediately boycotted the parliament as they viewed it as little more than an expansion of Serbian power. Indeed, as Benson notes, "the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes could hardly have gotten off to a worse start."[34] National identity became a prevalent political factor as political parties were based along national lines, and because of this, no mutually shared Yugoslav identity was created during the inter-war period. The Kingdom's inability to legitimise itself as the representative of all the member nations would influence the following Communist regime, which wished to maintain the Yugoslav state ideal. The Communists did this by trying to neutralise nationalism by replacing it with Communism and the memorialisation of the sacrifice of the multi-national Partisans.

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[32]See Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia, A Transnational History,* for more information about how British and French notions of the South Slav people influenced their decision to partition the Austro-Hungarian Empire and create a Yugoslav state.
[33]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition,* 23.
[34]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition,* 37.

The Second World War devastated Yugoslavia, and the atrocities in this conflict were part of the legacy that the Communists would have to overcome to create a new Yugoslavia. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was politically divided, and after signing a tripartite agreement with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, the government was overthrown by a military coup on March 26 1941.[35] The new military government, led by Serbian General Dušan Simović, tried to remain neutral and rejected the tripartite agreement.[36] Nazi Germany responded with a speedy invasion that began on April 6. In just under two weeks Yugoslavia was defeated and surrendered on April 18. The government and the King fled to London and were in exile for the rest of the war.[37] The occupiers divided Yugoslavia into many different administrative zones, all of which had a different wartime experience. Slovenia was directly annexed into the Greater German Reich. In Croatia, Ante Pavelić was set up as the president of the Independent state of Croatia (NDH), and his fascist Ustaše immediately began a campaign of killing Orthodox Serbs and Croats. However, the Ustaše never enjoyed anywhere near the support of the majority of Croatia's citizens, and most of the deaths by Ustaše hands occurred at the beginning of the conflict.[38] Serbia and present day Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia were divided into Italian and German zones of occupation. In these two regions two movements of resistance took place. The first was the Serbian Chetnik movement under the royalist Colonel Draža Mihailović, and the second was the Communist Partisan movement led by Marshall Josip Bros "Tito." While the Partisans

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[35]Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia, A Transnational History*, 154-155.
[36]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 71.
[37]Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia, A Transnational History*, 154-156.
[38]Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia, A Transnational History*, 161-165.

and the Chetniks both fought the occupiers, they fought each other just as much or more. Leslie Benson points out that "Yugoslavs slaughtered each other in greater numbers than they killed the Axis occupiers" and that the victorious "Communist Party seized power at the war's end by force."[39]

In Communist Yugoslavia the Second World War would become known as the Peoples' Liberation War. Benson states that "most of the history of the Peoples' Liberation war... remains to be written."[40] During the war roughly one million Yugoslavs died, about half of whom were Serbs. Ramet calls breaking the casualties down "The Numbers Game" as, although members of all the nations within Yugoslavia suffered, Serb and Croat nationalists would use the sentiment of disproportionate suffering at the hands of the other in the late 1980's and 1990's.[41] At the end of the war the Partisans were victorious, and their inclusiveness and trans-national appeal, compared to the xenophobic nature of the Chetnik and Ustaše movements, allowed for the ideal of Yugoslavia to be resurrected. However, as Ramet points out, "the war scarred a generation and left the country with a huge reservoir of sorrow which could be tapped, at any point, for political purposes."[42] This did not mean that the Yugoslav state was doomed to unravel because of these 'underlying' anguishes left over from the war, as Ramet may suggest, but the collective memory of national suffering could, and would, be

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[39]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 73.

[40]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 73.

[41]Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 160-162. Ramet cites the work of Croatian demographer Vladimir Žerjavić who concluded that 1,027,000 people died during the war, 530,000 of whom were Serb, 192,000 were Croatian, and 103,000 were Muslim. Žerjavić puts the majority of these deaths in the NDH, with 307,000 Serbs, 184,000 Croats and 80,000 Muslims dying in the territory of the NDH.

[42]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 162.

used by opportunistic politicians and propagandists to mobilise people for political, and eventually military, ends in the 1990's.

Communist Yugoslavia attempted to be far more multi-national and aware of nationalist sentiment than its predecessor. Tito and his companions were willing to compromise and change. The fact that they wrote four constitutions and made hundreds of amendments speaks to their effort to create a framework that equally included all the member nations.[43] By framing their state as a Socialist Federation with six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia), the Communists sought to balance power equally between the republics by decentralising the economy and centralising political and military power in the federation's capital of Belgrade.[44] Initial post-war relations with the Soviet Union were disastrous, and the Soviet policy of collectivisation of agricultural land proved to be a failure. Therefore, the 1946 constitution, which was based on the Soviet constitution, did not last long, as Tito, along with Milovan Djilas and Edvard Kardelj, the main theorists of Yugoslav socialism, wished to distance themselves from Soviet policies, doctrine and administrative practices.

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[43]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, The first Yugoslav constitution was implemented on January 31, 1946, following the Soviet model, 89. The second constitution in January 1953 tackled the problem of the failure of collectivisation and the first Soviet styled Five Year Plan. It brought in the decentralised economic and democratic model that would become known as the "self-management" system, 97-100. The third constitution in April 1963 saw the name change of Yugoslavia to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as well as attempts by Tito and political reformers to deal with animosity and competition between the republics. It furthered the decentralisation of economic decisions and was a political move by Tito and reformers in retaking control of the party, 109-110. The resulting infighting led to the removal of the Serb centralist Aleksandar Ranković, who was head of the Yugoslav secret police, the UDBa. The fourth and final constitution came in 1974 and provided the political construction that would be the constitutional framework of the political crisis in the late 1980's. The constitution led to greater economic interference by the Federal government and more control given to each republic, and only delayed the economic crisis that Yugoslavia faced, 127-130.
[44]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 96-99.

The second constitution in 1953 created the famous self-management system, where a share of economic decision making and management was given to regional and factory leaderships. The powers given to the governments of each republic were initially small and they did not have very much autonomy, but the third constitution in 1963, and the many amendments that followed, gave the republics a greater share of economic and internal policy making. The construction of independent republics and the division of limited economic decision-making across society differed greatly from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, where national groups were not institutionalised in an ostensibly equal system.[45]

The Communists also memorialised the Partisan movement as a multi-national force of "Brotherhood and Unity" and tried to accentuate the point that it was through collective sacrifice that they, the Yugoslav people, had been able to rid the country of German and Italian as well as Croatian Ustaše and Serb Chetnik fascists.[46] Relations between Communist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union improved after Stalin's death, and Yugoslavia enjoyed a world position of neutrality and a prominent place in the non-aligned movement. This allowed Yugoslavia to enjoy advantageous economic relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union, and artificially buttress the economy. Socialist Yugoslavia legitimated itself by its Anti-Fascist achievements associated with World War Two, its unique Cold-War position in Europe, and its economic success, which was aided by foreign currency. However, by the mid 1970's economic problems

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[45]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 97-99 and 108-109.
[46]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 185-186.

were already surfacing as the self management system proved financially wasteful and foreign aid could no longer support the Yugoslav economy.[47]

During the late 1960's and 1970's challenges to the central government appeared in the form of a student protest in Belgrade in 1968, a protest for political rights by Kosovo Albanians in also 1968, and the emergence of a nationalist movement of sorts in Croatia in 1970-1971. After police violence towards a group of Belgrade students on June 2, 1968 and further physical measures to stop subsequent student protests, the students and teachers of Belgrade University went on strike. Negojša Vladisavljević observes that the students made "programmatic demands, disapproved of growing social inequalities, unemployment, and demanded an extension of the self-management system."[48] After a charismatic appearance on state television by Tito, who made promises to the students and told them to end the strike, the strike ended. Just as serious of a threat to Communist authority were protests in Kosovo and Macedonia by Albanians, demanding their own republic and making many other demands. Tito also promised Kosovo protestors some of their moderate requests, and the protest ended.[49] In 1970, members of the League of Communists of Croatia (the new name of the Communist parties in Yugoslavia were "Leagues of Communists," a decision made to further distance Yugoslav Communism from Soviet Communism) began voicing their dissatisfaction with the disproportionately low number of Croats in the lower ranks of the armed forces and the police forces, as

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[47]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition,* 114-117.

[48]Nebojša Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution: Milosevic, the Fall of Communism and Nationalist Mobilization* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 41-42.

[49]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution,* 42-43.

well as their disapproval of attempts by Serbian Communists to reform and centralise the economy. The debate entered the public realm and lower ranking party officials and students led the charge of fighting for greater political power and economic liberalisation. This divide within the party was unacceptable to Tito, and he cracked down and purged the Croatian party in December 1971 and restored central control. Tito and his colleagues then began working on the final constitution of Yugoslavia, the 1974 constitution, to address these economic and political problems.[50]

Yugoslavia's nationality policy can be compared to the Soviet Union's nationality policy. In both Tsarist Russia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, one ethnic group, Russians and Serbs respectively, were given the dominant positions in society above other ethnic groups.[51] In the Soviet Union, official theorists and policy makers, often the same people, defined their populations along ethnic lines, and "accorded ethnic phenomena greater substance, consistency, and autonomous casual power."[52] The Soviet Union created indigenous cadres in the designated ethnic homelands in order to control the use of nationalism for political mobilisation.[53] In Socialist Yugoslavia, a similar set-up was created to control nationalism as a mobilising force. Each republic had a League of Communists that governed and represented their national group, and controlled any nationalist group that developed outside of the League. When the League of Communists

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[50]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 121-124.

[51]Teodor Shanin, "Ethnicity in the Soviet Union: Analytical Perceptions and Political Strategies," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1989): 416. This comparison is a bit farfetched, as Russians had a far more hegemonic position in the Russian Empire than Serbs did in the brief Kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, it is a useful comparison for analysing how policy makers in both states defined society along national lines.

[52]Shanin, "Ethnicity in the Soviet Union: Analytical Perceptions and Political Strategies," 415.

[53]Philip G. Roeder, "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilisation," *World Politics* , vol. 43, no. 2 (1991): 7-10.

of a republic was unable to control dissent or was itself the source of dissent, the Federal

League of Communists would remove those responsible, as occurred in the Croatian

party in 1970-1971. Like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia had constitutionalised systematic

beneficial and negative discrimination for certain national homelands.[54] Unfortunately for

both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, this institutionalisation of different national

identities hindered the development of a Soviet or Yugoslav identity. Yugoslavia's 1974

constitution also gave republics increased economic autonomy, and when economic

failure became visible in the 1980's, the League of Communists had increasing difficulty

in maintaining its control of nationalism in the republics.

Yugoslavs showed a massive amount of support for Tito and his legacy after his

death in 1980, and his funeral gathered a large amount of foreign dignitaries. The League

of Communists decided that "'After Tito- Tito!'", agreeing to govern as if Tito was alive.

They created a party presidium with a rotating position of president with a term that

lasted one year.[55] While the rotating presidency was initially successful, the 1974

constitution did not solve the problems of economic decay and inter-republic tensions.

Increasingly as the 1980's went on, nationalist sentiment entered public discourse and

was used for mobilising support for political means. It is important to understand, as

Vladisavljević argues, that up until late 1988 and 1989 the demands of nationalist

movements were almost predominantly framed within the Yugoslav federation and were

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[54]Sener Akturk, "Regimes of Ethnicity: Comparative Analysis of Germany, the Soviet Union/Post-Soviet Russia, and Turkey," *World Politics*, vol. 63, no. 1 (2011) 126-127.
[55]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 329.

not necessarily against the Yugoslav federation.[56] It is also important to recognise that the issues of contention and debate, reforming the economy and the struggle over political control between the republics and the autonomous provinces, were unresolved issues stemming from the Tito era. Nationalism was equally used by grass roots protesters as well as the political elite, and as the decade concluded, radical nationalist politicians gained more power and cemented their control over moderates and others who wished to remain within the Yugoslav federation.

The Yugoslav Communist leadership weakened considerably after the death of Tito, and while Tito had not been able to keep the country completely out of crisis, as was evident by the challenges the League of Communists faced while he was alive, his prestige, the respect he enjoyed and the cult of personality that surrounded him definitely aided the League in overcoming any internal dissent. The first challenge to the post-Tito government came in the form of protests by Kosovo Albanians in March 1981. Student protests began within two weeks in the Kosovo capital Priština. The protests grew dramatically to include thousands of industrial workers who eventually called for a Kosovo republic. The government acted quite differently than it had against the 1968 and 1971 protests, sending in the armed forces and declaring a state of emergency.[57] The protesters were mostly aggravated by the poor living conditions and uncertainty of employment security. Benson poetically states that "Kosovo became the burial ground of the Yugoslav ideal," yet it was to be another decade before the federation truly was

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[56]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution.* The basis of Vladisavljević's argument can be found in his introduction.
[57]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition,* 136.

untenable.[58] While the Kosovo protests in 1981 demonstrated a shift in government policy towards those who challenged it, the nationalist ambitions of ordinary Kosovo protesters for a separate republic within the Yugoslav federation, or even independence from Yugoslavia, was a new threat to the League. The Kosovo protests brought unprecedented change to the inter-republic relationships within the federation. The Yugoslav government's decision to crack down on Kosovo Albanians ultimately was a debacle, and "the activities of the State Security Service... in Kosovo ignited mass Albanian resistance."[59] Nevertheless, the situation was stabilised for roughly another five years, and the other republics viewed the situation as an internal Serbian issue, as constitutionally Kosovo was an autonomous province of Serbia.[60]

By the mid 1980's the party presidium had stagnated, and relations between the different republics were deteriorating. This was mostly due to economic disaster, as by 1983 Yugoslavia had fallen twenty and a half billion dollars US in debt, and there was a lack of centralised economic planning. Each republic sought to protect its own economy, and the federal government was expected to pay when ends did not meet.[61] Thus competition between the republics reigned over cooperation, and republics actually traded more with foreign countries than with fellow republics. Each republic and the two autonomous provinces in Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo, had a veto on the eight member party presidium concerning any policy that would directly affect their region. Therefore, economic reforms that would have reduced the central government's debt were vetoed

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[58]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 136.
[59]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 137.
[60]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 138-139.
[61]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 132-134.

when they would have damaged a republic's economy. Slovenia, the most industrially developed of the republics, was the greatest opponent to centralised attempts to reform the economy, as these would have damaged the prosperity of its citizens.[62] This strange form of decentralised authoritarianism left "the fate of the multi-national state squarely at the mercy of unaccountable regional leaders," who refused to cooperate to reform Yugoslavia's economy.[63] Thus, regional leaders in the republics from the mid 1980's onward would gain more control within their respective republic as political competition between the leaderships of the republics intensified.

Three: The Rise of Nationalists and Nationalism in Serbia

Political stability waned as regional leaderships engaged in "debates over policies, principally those aimed at tackling the economic crisis; over proposals for constitutional reform and the gradual relaxation of repression."[64] Beginning in the 1980's the old guard of the League of Communists within each republic was rapidly fading, and a younger generation of communist officials began to take power who were unafraid to use new means of political expression. As Vladisavljević describes it, "the main implication of generational change was that close personal ties among representatives of republics and provinces in the highest federal party and state organs, which had been forged before, during and after the war... broke down."[65] These new communist officials, frustrated from the lack of tangible results of the debates among the Federal Party Presidium, began to

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[62]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 134-135.
[63]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 49.
[64]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 43-44.
[65]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 45.

use forms of mass politics such as rallies, media and public pressure to further their own careers or the aims of their respective republics. The use of state television and radio to attack rivals within the leadership of a republic or the leaderships of other republics was a novelty in Yugoslav politics. Prior to the mid 1980's, the League of Communists, like all communist parties around the world, had maintained a public face of solidarity and stability. The most prominent case of this transition from internal politics within the party to mass politics is the rise to power of Slobodan Milošević.

Slobodan Milošević was a career communist who had risen to power by climbing up the rungs of the communist party, replacing older communists.[66] He went to university studying law in the 1960's, had become a director of a factory in the early 1970's, and then became a director of a prominent bank in Belgrade by the end of the 1970's.[67] During his time at university he had become good friends with Ivan Stambolić, who had risen in the party apparatus because of his connection with his uncle, Petar Stambolić, an influential communist whose career began before World War Two. Under Ivan Stambolić's wing Milošević was guaranteed good positions and jobs, and in 1986 Stambolić was able to obtain the post of President of Serbia's Party Presidency for Milošević.[68] Stambolić was able to get many people into prominent positions, like Milošević, and thus created a retinue of supporters within Serbia's League of Communists who owed their jobs to him. By 1986, Stambolić was the most powerful

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[66]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 53-54.
[67]Aleksa Djilas, "A Profile of Slobodan Milosevic," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (1993): 84.
[68]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 53-56 And 63.

communist official in Serbia.[69] But Milošević turned on his former protector and was able to outmanoeuvre Stambolić and his supporters, forcing them to step down slowly but surely by 1987 through public political pressure and a purge of the Serbian League of Communists.[70]

Milošević appeared as a new and different type of communist politician. He used and controlled opposition against him by appealing to and aggrandizing the fears of Serbs, a style of politics that one author at the time called "the politics of fear."[71] Initially he was a bureaucrat rather than a politician, but this changed when he went to a party meeting in Priština on April 24 1987.[72] Kosovo Serbs had long felt that they were discriminated against by Kosovo Albanians within Kosovo. After the removal of communist hardliner and minister of the interior Aleksandar Ranković in 1966, who had ruthlessly repressed Albanian rights, Albanians had grown in population and power within Kosovo. The Serb population in Kosovo from 1961 to 1981 decreased from 27.5 percent to 14.9 percent of the total Kosovo population, while the Albanian population grew from 67.1 to 77.4 percent. This was mostly due to Serbian emigration and higher Albanian birthrates. After the 1974 constitution and the declaration of Kosovo as an autonomous province, more Albanians came to positions of power in the party, replacing Serbs.[73] Serb-Albanian relations were exacerbated even more after the 1981 Albanian protests in Kosovo and the crackdown by the largely Serbian Yugoslav People's Army

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[69]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 59.

[70]For more information about how Milošević was able to beat Stambolić politically and control the Serbian League of Communists see Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 69-73.

[71]Djilas, "A Profile of Slobodan Milosevic," 87.

[72]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 343.

[73]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 82-84.

(JNA). The Kosovo Serbs' fear of Kosovo Albanians was valid, as Kosovo Albanians did express desires for greater political autonomy, but it was also exaggerated, as Serbia had the upper hand in being able to politically and militarily control Kosovo.[74] Thus when Milošević came to Kosovo in April 1987 to meet with 300, mostly Albanian, party officials, roughly 15, 000 Kosovo Serbs came to protest and tried to force their way into the meeting hall.[75]

Although the police were able to hold back the Kosovo Serb protesters, Milošević ordered everyone to stop and let the protesters into the meeting hall where he discussed their grievances with them for roughly fourteen hours. While Ramet writes that Milošević "emerged from that night a changed man", Vladisavljević merely states that after this event he took up the cause of Kosovo Serbs for his upcoming political battle against Ivan Stambolić.[76] Warren Zimmermann, the last Ambassador to Yugoslavia from the United States of America, describes Milošević his memoirs as a calculating and opportunistic politician, stating that "I don't see Milošević as the same kind of ethnic exclusivist as Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman... or Bosnian Serb politician Radovan Karadžić."[77] This image of Milošević as a cold and calculating politician rather than an emotionally driven nationalist is prevalent in the scholarship on the Yugoslav conflict. Regardless of whether Milošević took the complaints of Kosovo Serbs to heart or not, he gained a

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[74]Anthony Oberschall, "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 23, no. 6 (2000): 990-991.

[75]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 343.

[76]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 343-344; Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 67-68.

[77]Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its destroyers – America's last Ambassador tells what happened and why* (New York: Times Books, 1996), 25. See pages 18-27 for Zimmermann's analysis of Milošević.

valuable set of allies and was aware of the power that Serbian national sentiment had in post-Tito Yugoslav politics. He also began to use the fear of aggressive Albanian nationalism, a fear held by Communist officials as well as by Kosovo Serbs, to his advantage, gaining wise support within Serbian society. As Marko Zivković puts it "whether he [Milošević] was genuinely moved by the plight of Kosovo Serbs, or whether he cynically recognised the potential of nationalism, from then on Milošević used his new status as a 'Tsar of Serbs' to oust his mentor, Ivan Stambolić, and rise to be ultimate power in Serbia."[78]

Kosovo had a special place in the Serbian nationalist imagination. The battle of Kosovo Polje (Kosovo Field) in 1389, the most infamous event in Serbian history, was where the medieval Serbian Kingdom was defeated by the Ottoman Empire, and was thus incorporated into the empire from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The battle plays a crucial part in Serbian national myth making. Serb nationalists memorialise it as their sacrifice against Islam to protect Western Europe, and view themselves as the "'Shields of Christianity.'"[79] This continuous perennial version of the Serbian nation took center stage in the latter half of the 1980's in Serbian public discourse, viewing the Serbian nation as a martyr for Europe and Christianity.[80] Serb nationalists viewed their nation as a natural entity stretching back to the medieval Serbian Kingdom and as being based on kinship, language and religion, or as Smith defines it, they described their nation in a primordial

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[78]Marko Živković, *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milosevic* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 170.
[79]Živković, *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milosevic*, 63.
[80]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 49-51.

or continuous perennial paradigm.[81] Serbian nationalism had been all but removed from Yugoslav public discourse following World War Two, but the economic crisis and political lethargy of the 1980's encouraged intellectuals to express grievances along national lines. A section of the Serbian intelligentsia would, starting in 1986, begin to promulgate a new form of Serbian nationalism. Although initially viewed as "dissident intellectuals" and persecuted by the Communist government, including Milošević himself, these intellectuals would become supporters of Milošević once he took up the nationalist cause.[82]

These "dissident intellectuals" publicised their views of the situation in Yugoslavia in a dramatic fashion. One of the most prestigious institutions in Belgrade, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, wrote a draft memorandum, parts of which got leaked to Belgrade media sources in October 1986.[83] As Anthony Oberschall argues, most factual knowledge known by regular citizens is given to them by experts and sources of authority, such as academic institutions or the government. He argues that, in Yugoslavia's semi-authoritarian style, intellectuals and the media had a fair amount of power in affecting how and what citizens knew, often making conclusions for them.[84] Although he does not mention the Academy's memorandum, his notion of the power experts have in a semi-authoritarian society is relevant to the Academy's memorandum, and important in understanding the affect such a memorandum had on an aggrieved

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[81]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 100-101.
[82]Živković, *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milosevic*, 169-171.
[83]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 146.
[84]Oberschall, "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia," 993-994.

population. The memorandum expressed an openly pro-Serbian view of the problems

facing the economy, the constitution and the national question in Kosovo.[85] Initially it

starts by criticising the economic reform attempted by Yugoslav politicians, criticising

economic policy made in the 1970's as well as the economic philosophy of the League of

Communists and the attitude of regular citizens. It attacks the regime and its claim to

democratically represent the working class through the self-management system, stating

that "there is no real plan, no real market, no real government, and no real self-

management."[86]

However, while the memorandum criticised the regime's philosophy and

authority to rule, it also raised the prospect of Serbian nationalism and the victimisation

of the Serbian nation, which would prove to be the strongest ideological threat to the

Yugoslav federation. Using debatable claims the memorandum argues that Serbia and the

Serb nation had suffered to further the federation. It claims that "only Serbia made

genuine sacrifices for the sake of the development of the three underdeveloped republics

and the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo, helping others at the price of its own

economic stagnation."[87] The memorandum expresses identities, grievances, and motives

of the population in Yugoslavia along national lines, giving the reader a short history of

Yugoslavia that blames the Slovenian and Croatian republics for furthering their own

agenda at Serbia's cost.[88] It also defends the plight of Kosovo Serbs, claiming that the

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[85]The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts: Answers to Criticisms* (Belgrade: The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1995).
[86]The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Memorandum,* 103.
[87]The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Memorandum,* 124.
[88]The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Memorandum,* 121.

Albanians in Kosovo were conducting a "physical, political, legal, and cultural genocide" against the Serbs.[89] The memorandum concludes with a warning of a rise of radical Serb nationalism and calls for the resignation of Serbia's political leadership and amendments of the constitution.[90] It outlined the program of future Serb nationalists, namely Milošević. The intellectuals responsible were initially criticised and labelled as dissidents, and at first "Milošević was not ready to adopt the nationalist manifesto of the Academicians as his own."[91] That is until after his ideological shift that came following the night in Kosovo Polje, six months later, in April 1987.

Once Milošević tapped into nationalist ideology for his own political gains, nationalists saw him as their vehicle to enter the political arena and Živković states that "it was not so much Milošević who tried to attract the national intelligentsia but rather the intelligentsia who eagerly embraced Milošević."[92] One contemporary writer, Aleksa Djilas, claims that "the foremost creators of this bitter national ideology were the intellectuals."[93] With this new cultural and ideological support, as well as his increasing political support, Milošević was able to beat out Ivan Stambolić as mentioned above, and by the end of 1987 and the beginning of 1988 Milošević achieved a level of popularity uncommon to politicians of any republic in Yugoslavia at this time. Milošević got support from two further groups within Serbian society: the Belgrade media bosses, whom he controlled through political patronage, and a regional grass roots protest

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[89]The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Memorandum,* 128.
[90]The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, *Memorandum,* 138-140.
[91]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition,* 146.
[92]Živković, *Serbian Dreambook: National Imaginary in the Time of Milosevic,* 170-171.
[93]Djilas, "A Profile of Slobodan Milosevic," 93.

organisation called the Kosovo Polje group. The Kosovo Polje organisation was a group of Kosovo Serbs who believed that the Serbian and federal governments were incapable of protecting the rights of Kosovo Serbs.[94] Milošević's influence on the media began in 1987, but he would not control the dominant media center, the TV station RTV Belgrade, until fighting broke out in 1991.[95] However, from 1987 Milošević promised to reverse the ill fortunes of the Serb nation, and acted with his new allies, who were not entirely within his control, to replace the leaderships of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro with pro-Milošević Serb nationalists.

Vladisavljević produces convincing evidence that the protest movements that emerged in Kosovo started as a regional grass roots protest rather than as an elite organised and inspired movement.[96] This differs from other more elite focused arguments, which place Milošević as responsible for using nationalism to mobilise the population for political ends.[97] Vladisavljević argues that this elite centered argumentation is wrong and simplistic, and that the grass roots movements were not only a result of nationalist sentiment filtering down from the dissident intelligentsia.[98] Both these points are important to consider when discussing the relationship between the nationalist intelligentsia, the grass roots mobilisation of Serbs that began in Kosovo, and

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[94]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, see pages 89-90.

[95]Gale Stokes, "From Nation to Minority: Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia at the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars," *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 52, no. 6 (2005): 11.

[96]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, see pages 89-108 for Vladisavljević's interpretation and analysis on the Kosovo Serb movement.

[97]Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," see page 112-113 for Jovic's explanation of the "Role of Personality" approach, which places Milošević as the central actor in bringing about nationalist politics in Yugoslavia, which both Jovic and Vladisavljević argue is misleading and not factual.

[98]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 2-5.

the use of this nationalist mobilisation by Milošević in the new and ever changing political realm of Yugoslav politics. Essentially, all three of these elements were important for the transformation of politics in Serbia and for Serbian nationalism to overcome Yugoslav communism as the dominant ideology within Serbia. Moderate communist officials in Vojvodina and Montenegro as well as Albanian officials opposing the rise of nationalist mobilisation would be ousted by Milošević and Serb nationalists in a series of protest movements. This movement would become known as the Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution.

The Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution started with protest movements in Kosovo in September 1988, but expanded to Vojvodina and Montenegro by the end of March 1989. In September a series of protests by Kosovo Serbs in the Vojvodina capital Novi Sad called for the resignation of Vojvodina officials who opposed reforming the Serbian constitution. They also called for the removal of the autonomous province status for Kosovo and Vojvodina.[99] Obviously, the Vojvodina officials opposed this demand. The Federal Party Presidium demanded that the Party Presidium of Serbia forcefully halt the protests, but Milošević, who was now in charge of the party in Serbia, denied them and actually aided protests in Vojvodina. He organised public rallies in central Serbia that called on the Vojvodina officials to resign their posts, claiming that they were responsible for the economic and constitutional inequalities of Serbia.[100] Due to the protests, by October 6th 1988 a conference was held that agreed to replace Vojvodina's existing leadership with one that was more favourable to constitutional reform. Milošević was

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[99]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 152-153.
[100]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 154-159.

able to influence who would get the prominent positions, and pro-Milošević officials were then set up in Vojvodina.[101] A similar process occurred in Montenegro.

Although Montenegro was a constitutional republic, its population was overwhelmingly Serbian and its small population suffered particularly hard from the economic crisis relative to the other republics. There were two sets of protests in Montenegro, the first in October 1988 and the second in January 1989. The October protest was initiated by workers in Montenegro's capital, Titograd, and focused on economic grievances. It was repressed and ended by state police. However, it created a rift in the Montenegrin party leadership between the moderate older communist officials and the younger communist officials who were more inclined to support Milošević.[102] In January, a protest began that was aided by the Kosovo Polje group with logistical support from Milošević's party functionaries. This protest called for the resignation of Montenegrin officials, on the basis of discontentment with the economic conditions of Montenegro and the rising popularity of Milošević.[103] The result was "a demonstration of nearly 100, 000 on 10-11 January 1989 in a republic with a population of only 600, 000" and the immediate resignation of Montenegro's high officials.[104] As in Vojvodina, they were replaced by pro-Milošević officials who would support Milošević in his attempt to outmanoeuvre Croatia and Slovenia to gain control of the Yugoslav Federation.

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[101]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 160.
[102]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 162-164.
[103]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 164-165.
[104]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 166.

From the period of 1986 to early 1989 grievances in Serbia were expressed as national injustices that resulted because of the unfair treatment of Serbia by the League of Communists and the 1974 constitution. The supposed Serbian sacrifice for the betterment of other republics and the victimisation of the Serbian nation dominated public discourse in Serbia by 1987. Milošević was able to capitalise on this national sentiment by posturing himself as the defender of Serbia and the champion of Kosovo Serb rights. This allowed him to mobilise support for his own political aims, allowing him to overthrow Ivan Stambolić as the leader of the League of Communists of Serbia. This nationalist mobilisation culminated in a series of protests in Kosovo, Vojvodina, Montenegro and Serbia proper aimed at removing any leadership that was opposed to the strengthening of the Serbian position in Yugoslavia. In actual fact, it allowed Milošević to set up officials in each respective Party Presidium and League of Communists who were loyal to him, effectively giving him the veto votes of Serbia, Montenegro, Vojvodina and Kosovo in the Federal Party Presidium. By mid 1989, Milošević began to act on his promises of fulfilling Serbian nationalist desires by trying to reform the 1974 constitution and strengthen the position of Serbia in the Yugoslav Federation, a manoeuvre which was ultimately unsuccessful. As nationalism became the new legitimating factor in Serbian politics, Slovenian and Croatian nationalism entered into the political realm and would eventually become the dominant mobilising factor in their respective political theatres.

Four: The Rise of Nationalism and Nationalists in Yugoslav Politics

In Slovenia, the use of nationalism for political mobilisation grew out of a desire to protect the republics' economic and physical security. In 1986 the Slovenian leadership

was headed by Milan Kučan, the President of the Party Presidium of Slovenia, who led

the opposition against Milošević and the new Serb leadership's attempts to advance their

position in the Yugoslav Federation.[105] Slovenia was the most economically advanced

republic in Yugoslavia, and its population was almost homogenously Slovenian, a unique

situation compared to the other republics. While contentions were occurring in Serbia

over the Kosovo question, Slovenian intellectuals challenged the concept of Yugoslavia,

criticising the Federal Party Presidium, the military, and Serbia's repressive policy in

Kosovo. They called for reforming the constitution to further free Slovenia from binding

ties of having to give money to be redistributed to the poorer republics.[106] The Slovenian

leadership initially did not endorse the intellectuals criticism, but they did not condemn it

either, and "as in Serbia, the Slovenian party re-grouped around the national

intelligentsia."[107] Similar to The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts memorandum,

which was published in public media sources, the intellectuals in Slovenia also articulated

their criticisms in the public media. In 1987 the journal Nova Revija (New Review)

published its 57th issue which publicly stated the afore mentioned criticisms, as well as

arguing that Slovenia would be better off outside of the Yugoslav federation.[108]

This was the first time that anyone had publicly argued for a republic to secede

from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav federal government and the military reacted quickly and

arrested some of the prominent intellectuals. Meanwhile, the Slovenian leadership and

population tried ever harder to protect Slovenia in Yugoslavia, which took them into

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[105]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 147.
[106]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 364-366.
[107]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 150.
[108]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 150-151.

direct confrontation with Milošević and his newly found powerbase. While Slovenian nationalism was used to mobilise its citizens as well as the political leadership, it was not as outwardly hostile and aggressive as Serbian and Croatian nationalism was. Zimmermann writes in his memoirs of his meeting in 1989 with Milan Kučan, describing Kučan as wanting to defend Slovenia from the growing power of Serbia in Yugoslavia. He writes that "The Slovenes' quarrel with Yugoslavia was political as well as economic, and it gathered force with the rise of Milošević in Serbia."[109] Zimmermann portrays Slovenian nationalism, as articulated by its leaders, as being used to protect their position in Yugoslavia and to bring about democratic and open market policies.[110] They did not necessarily wish to secede from Yugoslavia. The Slovenian leadership did not have any problem in identifying itself as solely representing the Slovenian people and acting to ensure they were properly represented in the Yugoslav framework. They wished to reform Yugoslavia's constitution, economy and political system, much like in Serbia, but to different ends. However, they did threaten to leave Yugoslavia if this was not achieved.[111]

Croatia's League of Communist leadership would follow Slovenia's lead in opposing Serbia's bid to reform the Yugoslav constitution. However, Croatian politicians did not immediately use nationalist sentiment to mobilise their population. The Croatian leadership was mostly dominated by hard-line communists who were set up after the

[109]Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its destroyers*, 29.
[110]Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its destroyers*, See page 30-34 for Zimmermann's recounting of his meetings with Slovenian President Milan Kučan and Slovenian President of the Party Presidium of Yugoslavia in 1989 Janez Drnovšek. In both these meetings he describes their position against Serbian domination in a Yugoslav federation, but also their commitment to keep Slovenia within Yugoslavia.
[111]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 366.

1971 crack down on the Croatian League of Communists, and they did not wish to upset the status quo.[112] Ramet argues that Croatian nationalism came back to life in response to Serb antagonism and the mobilisation of the Serb minority in Croatia.[113] While a strong Croatian national identity was prevalent in Croatia, Croatian nationalism did not enter into public discourse until roughly late 1988 and early 1989. It was not until after elections had been called for that Croatian nationalism would be used for political mobilisation, notably by Franjo Tudjman and his party, the Croatian Democratic Community.[114] As the tension between Slovenia and Serbia escalated, and the economy still remained in a downward spiral, it became evident that Croatia's leadership had to act. Therefore, it must be seen that nationalism in Croatia was not well articulated at the grassroots or political level prior to 1989. The Croatian leadership opposed Milošević out of fear and in defence of their republic, and followed Slovenia's lead in trying to limit the growing political strength of Milošević's Serbia. Meanwhile, Croatians became ever more fearful of the new public rhetoric of Serb nationalists. This would eventually conclude with them declaring free elections.

However, it must be acknowledged that not all politicians in Yugoslavia contributed to the political isolation of the republics and the collapse of the Yugoslav federation. It must also be pointed out that a large portion of the population, although

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[112]Nenad Zakos, "Democratisation, State-building and War: the Cases of Serbia and Croatia," *Democratization*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2008): 591-592.

[113]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 368-369.

[114]Stokes, "From Nation to Minority: Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia at the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars," 10.

there is no accurate number or percentage,[115] opposed the radicalisation of Yugoslav politics along national lines.[116] There were many initiatives to repair Yugoslav unity at the grass roots and federal level. The most notable attempt was the economic reform implemented in 1989 by Ante Marković, the last prime minister of the federal government. By 1989, the Yugoslav economy was in complete shambles, relying on World Bank loans to be able to support the increasingly inefficient and unproductive state enterprises.[117] In 1988 Yugoslavia had roughly twenty billion dollars of debt to foreign countries. Marković attempted to reform the Yugoslav national bank, to reduce inflation and to reform Yugoslavia into a market economy. By early 1990, he had successfully lowered the interest rate, controlled the spending of Yugoslav enterprises, and brought hard foreign currency into the country.[118] However, it was too little too late, as he received almost no support from the leaderships of the republics, or even the Federal Party Presidium. This was because of the Serbian leaderships escalating tensions with the Slovenian and Croatian leaderships.[119] The moderate success of Marković's reforms would be undone, and the economy would once again become a victim to political instability and disunity.

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[115]Oberschall, "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia," 994-995. During the crisis in Yugoslavia in 1990, no vote or referendum was ever held asking its citizens who would like to remain within a Yugoslav federation. Anthony Oberschall argues that the elections in 1990 were flawed, as Yugoslavs were unprepared and unaware that the results of the 1990 elections would lead for the dissolution of the federation.

[116]Oberschall, "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia," 997-998.

[117]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, 282-283.

[118]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 157.

[119]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 157-158.

In early 1989, protests by Kosovo Albanians had broken out and a state of emergency had been declared with Serbia sending in Serbian police forces.[120] The situation quickly escalated, with Milošević declaring the reformation of the Serbian constitution and ending Kosovo's autonomy in March 1989. This caused massive outrage from the Slovenians who publicly criticised Milošević and his Kosovo policy by holding a mass demonstration in Ljubljana in late February.[121] This exacerbated the relationship between Serbs and Slovenes, as Serbs reacted strongly against the Slovenian criticism. In May 1989, Slovenia held elections for its representative to the Federal Party Presidium. The winner, an independent named Janez Drnovsek, would go on to become the president of Yugoslavia, as it was Slovenia's turn to chair the one year presidency. Drnovsek would later say that during his one year term as president he tried to reach a compromise between the Kosovo Albanian leadership and Milošević, but that this proved untenable, as Milošević would not back down from his position, and the Albanians would not give up their autonomy and security.[122]

By the time of the St. Vitus Day ceremony on June 28 1989, the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje, the political arena in Yugoslavia was dominated by nationalistic rhetoric. An example of this is Milošević's speech on June 28th to over a million Serbs on Kosovo Field, most of whom came from Serbia proper. He did not publicly attack Albanians or Slovenians, but he spoke of the need for Serbs to be unified in a single state claiming that "words devoted to unity, solidarity, and cooperation among

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[120]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 192-193.
[121]Vladisavljević, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution*, 191.
[122]Janez Drnovsek, "Riding the Tiger: The Dissolution of Yugoslavia," *World Policy* Journal, vol. 17, no. 1 (2000): 59-60.

people have no greater significance anywhere on the soil of our motherland than they have here in the field of Kosovo, which is a symbol of disunity and treason." In a poetic language that would do any primordial nationalist proud, Milošević stated that future battles "cannot be won without resolve, bravery, and sacrifice, without the noble qualities that were present here in the field of Kosovo in the days past." This nationalist rhetoric is steeped in militaristic imagery and in comparisons of the present Yugoslav crisis to the battle of Kosovo. In this speech Milošević stated that Serbs "are being again engaged in battles and are facing battles. They are not armed battles, although such things cannot be excluded yet."[123]

When Slovenia declared it was amending the constitution of Slovenia in September 1989 to give itself more autonomy from Yugoslavia, Milošević did indeed show his commitment to "battle" against the Slovenians, and called for the Fourteenth Party Congress of the League of Communists. He "intended to bring the Slovenes to heel" and prevent them from implementing their amendments.[124] However, the relations between the Slovenian and Serbian Leagues were so poor that after two days the Slovenians left, followed by the Croats. Zimmermann duly notes that "the League of Communists of Yugoslavia became the first ruling communist party in the world to commit suicide."[125] Shortly after the Congress the Slovenian and Croatian leaderships jointly declared that they would hold democratic elections. The failure of the League of Communists of each republic to reach a compromise at the Fourteenth Party Congress

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[123]Slobodan Milošević, *St. Vitus Day speech in Kosovo Field June 28, 1989.* http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/spch-kosovo1989.html
[124]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition,* 154.
[125]Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its destroyers,* 54.

meant the effective end of political attempts to maintain Yugoslavia within its existing framework. The discussions between officials and bureaucrats had not achieved any form of success, and Yugoslav politics entered a new stage of aggression, displayed on the public stage in the media and in day-to-day life. Public appeals to nationalist sentiments for support of one's political position overcame the politics of individual communists at higher levels of the Yugoslav federal party and state apparatus. The democratic elections in every republic were hampered by the unprepared populations and the fact that radical nationalism reigned as the dominant political ideology. In Croatia and Bosnia in particular, nationalist rhetoric and the encouragement to fear members of other national groups ensured that individuals voted in solidarity with a nationalist party and for extremist rather than moderate nationalists.

Five: Multi-Party Elections, Independence, and the Framing of Identities along National Lines

The elections in Slovenia and Croatia occurred in April 1990. In Slovenia, Milan Kučan won a majority of the vote, and the League of Communists was no longer in power.[126] However, in Croatia and Bosnia things were more complicated. Elections in Croatia resulted in the outspoken nationalist Franjo Tudjman and the Croatian Democratic Union winning a majority. Because of the electoral system, Croatia's notable Serb minority, which comprised 14.5 percent of the population of Croatia, remained

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[126]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 155.

unrepresented in the political system.[127] This would prove crucial as the Serb minority would increasingly feel threatened by the new Croatian government. Although they did not immediately vote for radical nationalists, Serb radicals would gain more influence and would eventually dominate the leadership of the Croatian Serb population as the rhetoric of Serb fears appeared to be proven true by Tudjman's policies.[128] Tudjman's newly elected government evoked an aggressive form of Croatian nationalism, and very quickly alienated and aggrieved the Serb population. Gale Stokes notes that Tudjman publicly espoused his Croatian national dream, and he "moved to rehabilitate those who had served the fascist regime of the Independent State of Croatia, renaming streets and squares in honour of its supporters."[129] Like Milošević's rhetoric, Tudjman's rhetoric appealed to the historic continuation of the Croatian nation, or viewed the Croatian nation within a recurrent perennial paradigm. His use of Ustaše imagery and historical figures inspired fear and anger in the Serb public, especially those who had lived through the Ustaše death camps in World War Two.

The situation was even graver in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which held its election in November 1990. Oberschall argues that elections in all republics of Yugoslavia were compromised by the "bigotry, hatred and misinformation about nationality" that "reached millions of people nightly on television" and ultimately led to nationalists convincing "voters not to 'split the ethnic vote' but to vote as a bloc for the nationalists because the

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[127]Stokes, "From Nation to Minority: Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia at the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars," 14.

[128]Stokes, "From Nation to Minority: Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia at the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars," 5.

[129]Stokes, "From Nation to Minority: Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia at the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars," 10.

other nationalities would bloc vote and gain power."[130] This assessment is most pertinent

to Bosnia. The vote was split between the Croatian Democratic Union, the Bosnian

portion of Franjo Tudjman's party, which had 15 percent of the vote, the Serbian

Democratic Party, led by the future war criminal Radovan Karadžič, with 27 percent, and

Alija Izetbegovič's Party of Democratic Action, which represented the Bosnian Muslim

population, with 38 percent.[131] Izetbegovič would become president and his party would

make up the government of Bosnia. Holding elections in the Bosnian republic was

problematic in the environment of radical nationalist rhetoric, as voters voted for parties

espousing an aggressive, and soon to be violent, policy of protecting their national

group's interests. The nationalisms that were used prior to the elections in Slovenia,

Croatia and Bosnia created a high level of animosity between the national groups, and the

traditional means of mediation in Yugoslavia were inefficient. Therefore, when

democratic elections attempted to mediate the inter-ethnic tensions, the radicalisation of

politics along national lines was so extreme that the elections only furthered the process

of distrust and hostility. As mentioned above, Smith explains that the goals of protecting

the autonomy, security and territorial unity of one's nation are intrinsic elements to

nationalist ideology.[132] During the elections in 1990, it is evident that these nationalistic

demands had permeated public discourse in each republic in Yugoslavia.

Izetbegovič, accused by the Serb media of being an Islamic fundamentalist, was

in the difficult position of representing Muslims in Bosnia, who had little political power

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[130]Oberschall, "The Manipulation of Ethnicity: From Ethnic Cooperation to Violence and War in Yugoslavia," 995.
[131]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 156-157.
[132]Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 9-10.

or any strong notion of ethnic identity beyond belonging to the same faith.[133] Despite the obvious hardships of war that was about to strike Bosnian Muslims, they were also forced to redefine themselves as a national community and, for the first time in most of their living memory, to distinguish between themselves and other ethnic groups in their day-to-day lives. This process began in 1990 because of the radicalisation of politics and the defining of identities along national lines. They had to internally communicate on what it meant to be a Bosnian Muslim, and even renamed their identity, calling themselves "Bosniak" in 1993.[134] James Lyon succinctly states "unlike the Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes, most Bosniaks lacked a shared national ideology, program, or vision."[135] Bosnian Muslims had the most to lose if the Yugoslav federation fell apart violently, as they did not have powerful support from another republic like the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs did. After more months of political infighting and a complete failure of the Yugoslav federal government, Slovenia and Croatia held referenda to secede from Yugoslavia in December 1990, and declared their date of independence to be on June 26 1991.[136] Izetbegovič and the Bosnian Muslims either had to risk declaring Bosnian independence or stay within a Serb dominated Yugoslavia ruled by Milošević. They voted for independence, which came into effect March 1992.

Each declaration of independence facilitated a war that was theoretically between the JNA and each republic attempting to secede. In reality, the Slovenian War and the

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[133]James Lyon, "Serbia's Sandzak under Milosevic: Identity, nationalism and survival," *Human Rights Review*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2008): 75.
[134]Lyon, "Serbia's Sandzak under Milosevic: Identity, nationalism and survival," 75.
[135]Lyon, "Serbia's Sandzak under Milosevic: Identity, nationalism and survival," 77.
[136]Benson, *A Concise History of Yugoslavia: Revised and Updated Edition*, 159-161.

Croatian War would be between an increasingly Serb dominated JNA and Serb

paramilitary forces and the newly created defence forces of each respective state. While

Milošević did not seriously attempt to keep Slovenia in Yugoslavia, the separation of the

Croatian and Bosnian Serb minorities from Yugoslavia and the Serb homeland was not

acceptable to the Serb nationalism that emerged before the war. Serbia and Montenegro,

under Milošević, supported, aided and armed both Croatian and Bosnian Serbs in their

fight for lands they believed historically belonged to the Serbian nation. The war in

Bosnia would be a war between the army of the newly declared Bosnian Serb Republic,

called the Republika Srpska, and the Bosnian Muslim army of the state of Bosnia-

Herzegovina. Croatian paramilitary groups fought initially against both Bosnian Muslim

and Serbian forces, but would later join Bosnian Muslim forces against the Bosnian

Serbs.[137] The conflict would prove to be the bloodiest war in Europe since World War

Two, stretching over five years and resulting in the death of roughly 200, 000 people, the

majority of whom were Bosnian Muslims. Another approximately 3 million people

would become refugees.[138]

As a result of the proliferation of nationalist sentiment that was present in

Yugoslavia during the two years prior to the beginning of the wars, almost every aspect

of society was portrayed, or 'framed', along national lines, from football games to

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[137]Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the destruction of Yugoslavia*, 3rd Edition (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 186-189. Judah gives a concise overview of the separate forces that fought in the Bosnian war. In 1994 the UN identified 83 different paramilitary groups that fought with or against the governmental armies of the Republika Srpska and the Bosnian Federation. 56 of these were Serb paramilitary groups, 13 were Croat, and 14 were Bosnian Muslim.

[138]Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*, see pages 466-468 for Ramet's conclusion on the physical and psychological damage the wars had on the populations of Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia.

holidays and state symbols. Of course, the war brought the radical Croatian and Serbian

nationalism to new heights. Memoirs written after the war reflect on the rhetoric of hatred

and the antagonism between the different national groups. The prevailing discourse of

hatred espoused by Serbian and Croatian nationalists for the other destroyed whatever

chance there was for individuals to maintain cross-national relations. The prominent

identifier of any individual became their assigned national origin which, for many people,

had been outwardly undeterminable or irrelevant prior to the crisis.[139] The war concluded

with the Dayton Peace Accords, which divided Bosnia-Herzegovina into two newly

established territories, one designated to Bosnian Serbs and the other to Bosnian

Muslims. In Croatia, the majority of Croatian Serbs fled to Serbia or abroad as the war

came to a close in 1995. By 1995, the use of nationalism to mobilise people politically

and militarily resulted in the physical separation of the different national communities.[140]

The multi-ethnic nature of Yugoslavia, particularly Bosnia, was destroyed by the framing

of the crisis along national lines and because of the radical and violent nationalism that

came to dominate as Communist Yugoslavia disintegrated.

Conclusion:

Frictions exist in the historiography of the Yugoslav Wars of Succession over the

nature of the war, particularly over the war aims of the main actors, the role of

international forces, and the question of genocide. Ramet states that the most contentious

issue of war aims concerns the role of Milošević and Serb nationalists, arguing about

[139]Wojciech Tochman, *Like Eating a Stone: Surviving the Past in Bosnia*, trans Antonia Lloyd-Jones
(London: Portobello Books, 2008).
[140]Charles Ingrao, "Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Central Europe: An historical Approach," *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 27, no. 2 (1999): 312.

what their goals were and how much they planned for the war in Bosnia to occur.[141]

Indeed, the debate over the motives of all prominent actors during the conflict is

strong.[142] Another debate about the conflict is about whether it had a genocidal nature,

which appears, as Ramet puts it, to be a debate about the semantic definition of

"genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" in the context of the Yugoslav wars.[143] Nevertheless,

the radical nationalisms that dominated public discourse and politics prior to the conflict

had a major impact in breaking apart the Yugoslav federation, and had an influence on

the nature of the war that followed.

The historical process that had led to the construction of Yugoslavia and the

dynamic relationship between its political structure and the institutionalisation of national

groups was important for the development of the new nationalisms in the 1980's. The

constitutional framework, particularly the 1974 constitution, gave a fair amount of

political and economic autonomy to the six republics and the two autonomous provinces.

This allowed for the systematic strengthening of the republics at the cost of the federal

government, and for the republics to be institutionalised along national lines. The

establishment of the republics based on national groups and the protection of these

republics in the constitution created the political framework for the crisis that occurred in

the late 1980's. When Yugoslavia's economy proved to be structurally deficient in the

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[141]Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*, 13-14.

[142]Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," 116-118. Jovic raises an important point when discussing motives of actors during the actual conflict. He argues that historians should not stick strongly to labels attached to prominent actors, arguing that they may act differently than the prescribed category that they have been allotted to would predict. Examples of these categories include "nationalists, Communists, liberals, democrats."

[143]Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*, 15-18.

1980's, the relations between the republics became strained, particularly between Serbia and Slovenia. The leaderships of each republic felt that the constitution hindered their respective national republic. Any attempt to strengthen the federal government and reform the economy was vetoed by at least one republic, who thought that it would threaten their regional economy. Thus, the leaderships in each republic began exercising more power, and the federal government was unable to completely control them.

As political attempts to solve the economic and constitutional crisis stagnated, nationalism as a political ideology entered into public discourse. In Serbia, intellectuals from the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts formulated the official doctrine of the Serbian nationalism that would be adopted by Slobodan Milošević. With the aid of the intelligentsia and the grass roots organisation of Kosovo Polje, Milošević would be able to dominate political power in Serbia by ousting the moderate communist officials in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro and replacing them with his supporters. However, Milošević was not able to dominate the federal government, and nationalism entered into politics in Slovenia and Croatia in response to Serbian nationalism. Indeed, the backlash to the aggressive stance of Milošević's Serbia and Serb nationalist rhetoric brought on a strong shift to Croatian nationalism in 1989 among Croatian political elite and society. Serbian and Croatian nationalism were very similar in their articulation, with Serbian nationalism being expressed within a primordial or continuous perennial paradigm and Croatian nationalism being expressed within a recurrent perennial paradigm. By late 1989, national identity became the dominate identity in politics. This process continued so that by 1990 nationalist rhetoric reshaped Yugoslav society, and created an atmosphere

where most official displays and symbols in day-to-day life were portrayed along national lines.

As the traditional political forms of conflict mediation in Yugoslavia failed, many younger members of the political elite looked to nationalist ideologies to garner support for themselves and their national republic. Surprisingly, nationalism in each republic overcame the opposition against it by the traditional communist ruling elite. By late 1989 nationalism became the dominant political ideology used by the leaderships of Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia to foster support for their respective causes and to further their ambitions and goals in the Yugoslav federation. With the repeated failure of negotiated political attempts to reform the constitution and economy, competition between Milošević and the Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian leaderships dominated over any attempt to cooperate. This culminated with the failure of the Fourteenth Party Congress and the effective dismantling of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. As political solutions to the constitutional crisis were no longer valid, and there was no real support for Marković's initially successful economic reforms, Slovenia and Croatia opted to leave the Yugoslav federation. Their political leadership viewed the prosperity and territorial integrity of their republic as more important than the survival of the Yugoslav state. Bosnia-Herzegovina followed suit, and the attempts to draw the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs out of a union with Serbia proper proved unacceptable to the radical Serb nationalism established by Milošević and his nationalist government. Thus, war ensued, and individuals were defined by their national identity, whether they supported the newly empowered nationalists or not.

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