

**The Breakdown of Elite Ideological  
Consensus: The Prelude to the  
Disintegration of Yugoslavia  
(1974-1990)**

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## **Abstract**

### **The Breakdown of Elite Ideological Consensus: The Prelude to the Disintegration of Yugoslavia (1974-1990)**

The disintegration of Yugoslavia was the result of many factors, not of a single one, but the main one was the breakdown of the ideological consensus within the Yugoslav political elite during an extended period of 15 years preceding the actual disintegration of Yugoslav institutions. The thesis examines the emergence, implementation, crisis and the breakdown of the fourth constitutive concept of Yugoslavia (1974-1990). Since the role of the political elite in this period was crucial, it is only by focussing on elite perceptions of reality that one can understand Yugoslav politics. More than any other work in the field, this thesis emphasises the link between elite and ideology (i.e., Kardelj's interpretation of Marxism). Using interviews with dozens of key political actors in this period, documents and other primary sources, the thesis reconstructs the elite's motives and reasons for first accepting then abandoning both Kardelj's interpretation and a fragile but viable compromise reached during the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate. The thesis is a historical case-study of the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, but it makes contribution to other fields, such as: theories of state disintegration; the comparative politics of communist states; elite politics; the debate on ideology; politics in multi-ethnic societies; methodology of social sciences, etc. Its main novelty is in presenting new sources and offering an original interpretation of the events which happened in the analysed period. It also corrects some misconceptions in the debate on the collapse of Yugoslavia, such as the 'ethnic hatred' argument and various mono-causal explanations focussed on economic crisis, international politics, ethnic structure, etc. Their main fallacy is in neglecting the subjective, i.e., the perceptions of political actors in politics. The thesis demonstrates that institutions that were created on ideological grounds found it ultimately impossible to survive the collapse of the ideological narrative whose products they were.

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# Introduction

## 0.1. Aims and justification

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first book-length attempt to analyse the breakdown of the ideological consensus within the Yugoslav political elite in the last period of relative stability in Yugoslavia (1974-1990) before its disintegration. There have been a few articles and chapter-length analyses on this subject (Goati, 1997; Dyker, 1996; Pavković, 1997). There are also several analyses of the structure and decision-making processes within the Yugoslav political elites in previous periods (Burg, 1983; Cohen, 1983; Cohen, 1989) and of its transformation in post-Yugoslav states (Lengyel, 1996). However, this is the first detailed account of the extremely complex and controversial relations between the various sections of the Yugoslav political elite in the last two decades of the Yugoslav federation.

As Chapter One of this thesis analyses in detail, most of the recent analyses of the disintegration of Yugoslavia are focused on either the long-term macro-structural factors that made this country unstable ever since its creation in 1918 (Lampe, 1996; Ramet, 1992; Sekelj, 1993; Vučković, 1997; Pavković, 1996; Denitch, 1994; Irvine, 1997; Dyker, 1997, etc.), or on the role of personalities (such as Tito and Milošević) in the last two decades before disintegration. Many books have focused on the actual disintegration of the Yugoslav institutions and the causes of the post-Yugoslav wars in the 1990s (Woodward, 1995; Samary, 1995; Silber and Little, 1995; Van den Heuvel, 1992; Crnobrnja, 1994; Glenny, 1992 and 1993; Cohen, 1993; Magas, 1993; Stojanović, 1997; Meier, 1999, etc.). Some of them analyse the role of international politics in the Yugoslav crisis (Gow, 1997b; Williams, 1998; Owen, 1995; Rose, 1998; Zimmermann, 1996; Bildt, 1998; Holbrooke, 1998, etc.). This thesis, however, focuses on the elite perceptions of reality which evolved in the period analysed here. I hope to explain the reasons (1) for the emergence of the last political compromise (of the 1974 Constitution), (2) for the crisis of this *constitutive concept* and – finally – (3) for the break-down of this ideological and political consensus in the late 1980s. The three parts of this thesis follow the emergence, crisis and break-down of the elite ideological consensus between 1974 and 1990.

Politics of Yugoslavia in the analysed period was the politics of its elite. Although Marxist ideology was in its letter anti-elitist, the communist regimes were in reality constructed on the Leninist notion of the Party being the vanguard of society. The Party was guaranteed a ruling (leading) role because of its vision of the future, that was built on its ability to understand the *General Laws of History*, to see further into the future and thus to construct reality according to

this vision. The Party (i.e., its leadership) was the main interpreter of the aims of social development. Its *mission* was to lead society towards a true communist (classless, stateless) form of social organisation. Thus, while in theory the socialist societies were anti-elitist, in political reality it was only the (Party) elite that mattered. The main political conflicts in socialist Yugoslavia were intra-elite conflicts.

The basic contradiction between the declared goals (in the Yugoslav case, self-management as the form of direct democracy) and political 'necessity' in the *transitional period* (displayed in the guaranteed role of the Party as vanguard) was a source of permanent contradictions in all socialist states. On the one hand, the elite occupied the main locus of power, while on the other it declared *direct democracy* to be its main aim. The contradiction was resolved by the notion of the *transitional period* between the *old regime* (of political, party democracy) and the *communist society* in which the ideals of direct self-government would be fully implemented. The socialist period was a period of permanent reform of the political system, aimed at reducing the role of the institutions of the *old regime*, in the first place of the state, which was to 'wither away' at the end of this process. In this process of the *withering away of the state*, the Party (as the elite) had the leading and irreplaceable role.

The period I analyse in this thesis was the last attempt to reform the Yugoslav political system towards these goals. The ideological and political consensus within the Yugoslav political elite was based on the Marxist notion that the state should be weakened and direct democracy strengthened in the *transitional period*. This general conclusion was formulated primarily in various books, articles and speeches by Edvard Kardelj, the main ideologue of Yugoslav self-management (Chapter Two) and was adapted to Yugoslav reality through major debates in the 1967-1974 period (Chapter Three). The members of the Yugoslav political elite, being Marxists themselves, agreed on Kardelj's interpretation of reality and social aims. The 1974 Constitution was an expression of this agreement. The 'constitutive concept' of post-1974 Yugoslavia transformed the ideology of Marxism, i.e., its Yugoslav interpretation, into legal provisions and political actions. It de-centralised the institutions of the federal state not only to *resolve* the national question (of which the Yugoslav communists were aware) but also to make a further step forward towards the *withering away of the state* and its replacement by *self-management* as an alternative to the state.

Most of the recent literature on the collapse of Yugoslavia underestimates both the ideological essence of this attempt and the extraordinary role of the political elite. On the contrary, they focus on long-term macro-structural factors, such as economic problems, the geopolitical position of Yugoslavia, changes in international politics, and - especially - the enormous cultural and ethnic diversities within the country. I do not deny the importance of all these elements, nor do I underestimate the contribution made by authors who rely on them.

However, I argue that it is with the perceptions of the political elite and primarily with their ideological beliefs that an analysis of the disintegration of the Yugoslav state should begin. Despite the ever-existent long-term problems, the Yugoslav political elite in the 1967-1974 period found a way to preserve the unity of Yugoslavia, while fifteen years later in circumstances which looked much more promising they were not able to secure its further existence. My aim is to explain why these long-term problems were in one period successfully sidelined while in another they formed an unsurmountable problem. I argue that the main difference was in the break-down of the elite ideological consensus, which was based on Kardelj's interpretation of Marxism. The ideological vision of objectives and the shared interpretation of reality that existed in 1974 were no longer there in 1989. The *constitutive concept* that linked the elite consensus on ideological issues with their legal and political actions gradually collapsed as the vision became blurred.

Although this is not a work of comparative politics, nor a theory of states, but a historical study of the collapse of one state, I hope to make a contribution to several broader debates within the fields of history and political (social) science, such as: (1) the reasons for the collapse of states; (2) the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe; (3) the debate on the role of elites; (4) the debate on ideology; (5) the complexity of politics in multi-ethnic societies; and (6) the debates on the methodology of analysing political change and political action in general. The case I analyse indicates that *ideological states* are extremely vulnerable to a collapse of ideology that forms the basis of their identity. Not only in this particular case, but also in similar cases of ideologically-based states, the institutions are not independent of the narratives whose products they are. Although, once created, institutions have their own impact on political events, in ideological societies they are functions of the ideology which created them and which gave them their aim and purpose. Unlike in societies based on the representation of existing political interests, in societies in which the elite presents a *vision* of the future, institutions are not neutral and bureaucratic (in the Weberian sense) instruments of *common interests*. The central role of ideology in communism was the main reason for the weakness of state institutions, and - ultimately - for their collapse in the late 1980s. Institutions that were created on ideological grounds (such as the Army, police, media, the whole apparatus of power, etc.) found it difficult and - ultimately - impossible to remain intact once this ideology had collapsed.

This was especially the case with the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, two communist countries with their own ideological narratives. Unlike in other East European countries which followed Soviet ideology, the Yugoslav political elite had created its own narrative, which was in its essence anti-Soviet. The entire project of Yugoslav socialism was based on criticism of Soviet *statism* and of its *hegemonic* role within the world of socialist states. In its essence, the Yugoslav project was *anti-statist*. The anti-statist character of Yugoslav ideology, however, posed a

question - how to construct a state on an anti-statist narrative? Although the Kardelj concept offered some answers to this question, it ultimately failed to resolve this basic dilemma.

Treating Soviet socialism as *revisionism*, the Yugoslav (Kardeljist) interpretation of Marxism linked elements of the national tradition with strict implementation of the Marxist notion of the *withering away of the state*. The new Yugoslav identity was, therefore, linked to a new interpretation of Marxist ideology. Subsequently, once the ideology collapsed, it carried with it the very national identity of Yugoslavia. Unlike other East European countries, whose elite followed ideological interpretations made by somebody else (the Soviet communists), the Yugoslavs had no one but themselves to blame for the failure of their own project of communism. They could not abandon communism and remain Yugoslavs at the same time. But, they could even less construct a Yugoslav (political) nation without abandoning communist doctrine.

Unlike, for example, the Polish or Hungarian anti-communist movements, which were in their essence anti-Soviet but not anti-Polish or anti-Hungarian, anti-communism in Yugoslavia was to a large extent anti-Yugoslav. But, at the same time, the Yugoslav version of communism was not Yugoslav either: it was based on denial of the existence of the Yugoslav nation, not only in an ethnic, but in a political sense too. Furthermore, as explained in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis, it regarded Yugoslavia as a state that would perhaps become a 'core of a wider integration', as Kardelj himself said in 1970. Being based on its own interpretation of Marxism, Yugoslavia was more, not less ideological than Poland and Hungary. It is for this reason primarily that Yugoslavia could be compared with the Soviet Union, not with the other East European countries. The fall of the Soviet and Yugoslav ideologies led to the collapse of the Soviet and Yugoslav states. It is also in the anti-statist ideological narrative of self-management that one may find the seeds of the later fascination with statehood by the anti-communist movements and parties in the post-Yugoslav states. As opposed to self-management as an anti-statist doctrine, the anti-communist movements were often pro-statist. As opposed to the anti-nationalism of the Yugoslav political elite in the last communist period, they were often pro-nationalist. The collapse of 'communism' and the emergence of 'nationalism' were, therefore, not two separate lines of events. It was not that 'communism' collapsed because of nationalism, or that nationalism emerged on the ruins of communism. The relationship between the two was more complex: they always existed separately, yet they constructed themselves by reacting to one another. By doing this, both doctrines (communism and nationalism) in Yugoslav circumstances contained elements of the other. Once the 'turning point' happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s, only those who had disregarded the complexity of Yugoslav politics in its last 20 years, were taken by extreme surprise. This is why I have argued that it is impossible to understand what happened after 1990 without analysing what happened before the collapse

of Yugoslavia. It is only within the existing political context that one can understand political events, which were the result of the long process that I follow in this thesis.

## 0.2. Analytical approach

In the methodological sense, this thesis aims at underlining the importance of analysing events within their context. I propose that political change be analysed by focusing on the political actors and their (subjective) perceptions of the (objective) factors which constitute the context in which they act. Here I am interested in political leaders' perceptions. In order to explain political action, I argue, we need to take the actors, their beliefs, intentions, motives and explanations, seriously. Political actors, especially in communist politics, do not simply act as representatives of various social groups (nations, classes, etc.) but also (and even primarily) as 'representatives' of their perceptions. In order to reconstruct their perceptions I have relied on Quentin Skinner's (1988) instructions on how to analyse political action as I argue in detail in Chapter One. Being interested in past political actions, I occupy the middle ground on the somewhat artificial divide between political science and history. Being sceptical about the usefulness of various political science models in explaining this particular case of state-collapse, I take a *historical approach* in analysing political events. The fact that my study is not a comparative analysis, but a single-country study also indicates my closeness to the historical approach. On the other hand, I am in full agreement with Skinner when it comes to his warning about the potential dangers in the way of historical analysis. As Skinner argues, one of the most frequent mistakes that historians are tempted to make is a result of analysing past events from a comfortable position of the *known outcome* of these events. By attempting to draw the *veil of ignorance* about the final result of events that I analyse in this thesis, I have aimed at avoiding the 'prolepsis mistake' and the 'coherence myths' that in many analyses of Yugoslav history nullify the benefits of hindsight. Although aware that one cannot fully exclude personal attitudes or simple knowledge of what happened after the period analysed in this thesis, I have tried to aim at following and analysing the events as they happened in their own context, not in the context of their 'consequences'. The main focus of my interest was the perceptions of the political actors and their reasons for action at the moment they acted, not what either I or they today think they should or should not have done in order to achieve certain goals. The purpose of political analysis is not, I believe, to condemn or justify but to explain why political actors acted as they did. Not much more and no less. Personal judgements about how *sensible* the actions taken by them were are left to every reader. Having no universal grounds for condemning or justifying political actions, political analysts and historians, I believe, have no monopoly in judging them.

### 0.3. Methodology

The main aim of this thesis dictated the methodological approach and the range of sources I relied upon. Since the archives for the period analysed in this thesis will remain inaccessible for a decade or two, I relied on semi-archival sources, such as published and unpublished Party documents, minutes from the sessions of the Party and state leadership, analyses of political events prepared for various sessions of party institutions, speeches of leading Yugoslav politicians, public statements, newspaper reports from the sessions of the Central Committee and other Party institutions, interviews with members of the political elite conducted by journalists and published in the period in which the actions had taken place, video-recorded minutes of Party meetings, etc.

A large proportion of my thesis relies on the memoirs and recollections of the leading members of the Yugoslav political elite in the 1974-1990 period. Political leaders, especially in Serbia and Slovenia, have provided the analyst with substantial help by publishing their speeches in the period analysed, and have given many interviews explaining their role.

As a journalist in the last period analysed in this thesis, I interviewed some of the key participants in Yugoslav politics for various newspapers I had been writing for since 1984. My early career in journalism enabled me to attend many Party meetings, to collect minutes and to have direct access to the main politicians. For this thesis, I used my personal archive as well as the personal archives of dozens of politicians who kindly permitted access to their personal correspondence and other documents, such as, for example, the minutes of the main debates conducted behind closed doors (some of which had – not long ago – been classified as *state secrets*). I also used notes in my diary, which I had occasionally taken to record my informal conversations with politicians, journalists and other analysts of the events as they were unfolding.

In addition, in the last four years, I have conducted dozens of interviews with leading members of the Yugoslav political elite in the 1970s and 1980s. The transcripts of these interviews are almost of equal size to this thesis itself. The interviews I conducted have enabled me to cross-reference their statements with documents and other sources from the time when the events took place. It is only with reference to archival documents and their own statements in the actual context (i.e., at the time of the action) that I use political actors' present recollections as relevant in this thesis.

In addition to political participants, I have interviewed some of the leading experts in areas related to my subject and some of the international participants in the Yugoslav drama. Several

public lectures, mostly at the London School of Economics and Political Science, have also been a useful source for reconstructing the views of experts, academics, and participants.

Being limited by the official requirements about the size and structure of the thesis, I was able to use only excerpts from various interviews and documents I have collected in the last several years of my research. Most of my sources are presented in footnotes as evidence for and illustration of my argument, which is stated in the main body of the thesis. Although somewhat longer than one would normally expect them to be, they make a substantial part of my argument. In addition, the footnotes in this thesis tend to guide the reader through the various streams of arguments that I am presenting throughout the thesis.

It is my hope that one day, when the archival sources are fully available, the actors' explanations of their own motives for certain actions will represent a valuable contribution towards an even more complete picture of Yugoslav politics in the last fifteen years preceding the disintegration of the state. Taking into account the nature of communist regimes, in which many decisions were taken informally, without any written trace to constitute evidence or a source for future historians, one can assume that the archival sources alone would not be sufficient to map out the extreme complexity of intra-elite relations. The reconstruction of the elite thinking that I aim at in this thesis would then prove to be not only an additional, but also an unavoidable source of historical research. Bearing in mind the age of the main participants (and the fact that some of those interviewed have passed away) this research hopes to represent a unique source for further studies of this period.

#### 0.4. Key concepts

Before moving to the main text of this thesis, a few words should be said about the use of some key concepts in the text. Based on the conclusion that we should always approach political actors themselves, their way of thinking and their motives, I could not and did not want to avoid using certain key words in the meaning they shared, not in the one we would share today, in a different ideological and temporal context. The mistake of misunderstanding the actions of other people has often been committed when analysts assumed there was only one *correct* meaning of key words. The misunderstanding between East and West, and especially between Yugoslavia and both East and West, was to large extent a consequence of an unwillingness to accept that terms used in two different contexts had different – sometimes even opposed – meanings. My position here is based on rejecting the *universalist* notion that there is one single *correct* meaning of terms. As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, the main political conflicts in Yugoslavia often took the form of an ideological and even linguistic struggle about the *correct* meaning of certain words. Behind these struggles was the belief that



the Party was the legitimate ruler since it knew the truth about history and the future of society. The Party was the only interpreter of the truth, which was also – by definition – the only truth. The exclusion of any other interpretation of reality, both outside the Party (in the form of political parties) or within it (in the form of *factions* or *revisionist views*) was the result of the monistic principle. But, some post-communist critics of communism repeat the same mistake when arguing that the communists were simply wrong in using terms such as *democracy*, *socialism*, etc., in the way they did. They assume that there is only one *true democracy*, and that is the one developed in the Western world. It is needless to mention, however, that this same belief – *mutatis mutandis* – was cultivated in the former communist countries. For Yugoslav communists, the only real *democracy* was one that included the full self-determination of nations and the self-management of working people, not one ‘reduced’ to mere political and voting rights.

As much as I cannot deny my preference for the Western understanding of democracy over the one developed in the former communist countries, I do not think that political analysts and historians should be arbiters between the two conflicting understandings of the same term. What we should do is explain the reasons for action as seen by those who acted in a certain way. We shall never be able to do so if we simply dismiss their own way of thinking as *irrational* and therefore not logical. On the contrary, only if we approach the actors’ way of thinking as closely as possible, will we be able to explain their reasons for their own actions.

This is why in this thesis I do not attempt to *correct* Yugoslav political leaders when they use certain concepts in a different way from how either I myself or a Western reader would normally use them. One should, however, be aware of differences when it comes to the main concepts. A detailed exposition of the key concepts used by Yugoslav communists is developed in Chapter Two, in which the Kardelj ‘constitutive concept’ is analysed. We shall therefore limit our explanation here to only a few key concepts in order to prevent initial confusion.

In the Yugoslav communist vocabulary, for example, the word *nation* ('nacija', 'narod') signified the *constitutive nations* ('konstitutivne nacije') of Yugoslavia (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Muslims, Montenegrins and Macedonians). *Nationality* ('narodnost') was term used to describe the special status of the Albanians, Hungarians and other *non-constitutive nations*, in order to distinguish them from both *nations* and *national minorities* ('nacionalne manjine'), as they used to be named in the inter-war period. The Yugoslav state is often referred to as a *federation*, since the word *federative* was in its name ever since 1943. However, one may notice that in the period we here analyse Kardelj’s conclusion that Yugoslavia was neither a classic federation nor a classic confederation was accepted by all political leaders. The word *state* ('država') and concepts of *statism* ('etatizam') were used with a negative connotation – as something opposed to *self-management* ('samoupravljanje'). A *statist* ('etatist') was an enemy of self-management.

Among other words that were used as labels of anti-socialist behaviour were: *bureaucracy* ('birokracija'), *nationalism* ('nacionalizam'), *liberalism* ('liberalizam'), *techo-managerialism* ('techo-menadžerizam') and (as perhaps the most dismissive) *counter-revolution* ('kontrarevolucija'). Since Yugoslav self-management was opposed to Soviet *state-socialism* and inter-war Yugoslav unitarism, words such as *unitarism* ('unitarizam'), *hegemonism* ('hegemonizam'), *centralism* ('centralizam'), *Great-State tendencies* ('veliko-državne tendencije'), *Greater-Serbian domination* ('veliko-srpska dominacija'), *Stalinism* ('staljinizam'), etc., were also high on the list of political disqualifications.

The Yugoslav politicians, like those of other East European countries, named their political system *socialist*, but often emphasised that their socialism was not statist, but *self-managing* ('samoupravni socijalizam'). The word *communism* ('komunizam') was used rarely, and only when related to the Party, which was in 1952 renamed the *League of Communists* ('Savez komunista', SKJ) to emphasise both its roots in Marx's ideas and a difference with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. While the state was *socialist*, the party was *communist*, because the Party was representative of the future of society (i.e., 'full' communism), not of its present. Communism remained a goal of the Party's activities. The real communism, at least at a symbolical level, existed only within the Party: its members addressed each other as equal regardless of their ranks and positions. Even to Tito, they used to use the familiar *Ti*, rather than the official *Vi*, emphasising that one day, when communism came, this perfect equality would be extended to the whole of society. The Party was a *vanguard* ('avangarda'), and its members were *morally and politically suited* ('moralno politički podobni') to educate others and guide society towards communism. Although the earlier phrase *people of a special mould* ('ljudi posebna kova') was not used in the period I analyse here, the Party members were the *politically conscious* ('politički svjestan') part of society. The Party itself (together with four other official organisations: the Socialist Alliance of Working People; the Alliance of Socialist Youth; the Veteran Association and the Alliance of Trade Unions) was the *subjective force* ('subjektivna snaga') of society. By definition, to be a member of the Party meant not only to be admitted to a privileged club of those who are 'conscious' and 'suitable' to educate others, but also to be recognised as a 'subject' (i.e., an active element), rather than an object of practical politics. Hence, on the other hand, expulsion from the Party, meant not only that one would lose such privileges, but also that one would be demoted from 'subject' to 'object'. He/she would be publicly stripped of recognition of being 'conscious' and 'suitable' and would therefore be humiliated and excluded from public life. The socialist societies (including Yugoslav) were divided between those *included* and those *excluded* from politics along the lines of Party membership.

In the vocabulary of Yugoslav socialism, the word *ideology* was used mostly with a negative connotation, as *false consciousness* ('lažna svijest'). The Party was not professing an ideology, but

a *scientific world-view* ('*naučni pogled na svet*'). Marxism was not ideology either - it was *scientific socialism* ('*znanstveni socijalizam*'). Instead of being called *ideological*, party commissions in charge of ideology were named *ideo-political commissions* ('*idejno-političke komisije*'). Terms like *commissars* were also avoided as too closely reminiscent of Soviet practice. In the Army, the *commissars* were replaced by *officers for ideo-political education*. In the state structure, neither *commissars*, nor *ministers* were used - the *federal (republican, provincial) secretaries* were members not of *government* but of the *Executive Councils*.

The construction of a new reality (as socialism defined its objective) demanded the replacement of old terms linked to the existence of the state with new ones that belonged to the *self-management* glossary. Some of these words are almost impossible to translate into any West European language since they were invented to describe institutions uniquely linked to a new form of social organisation. Terms such as the *basic organisation of associated labour* (BOAL or OOUR in Serbo-Croat) and *self-managing community of interests* (SIZ) soon became trademarks of Yugoslav anti-statist socialism. The term *nationalism* was used as a synonym for *separatism* and *chauvinism*, while *unitarism* meant Yugoslav state-nationalism - a doctrine and practice that denied the federal character of Yugoslavia and/or the existence of its constitutive nations and their republics (states). In the official vocabulary of Yugoslav communism, *nationalism* and *unitarism* were to be defeated. Although in public rhetoric all nationalisms were treated as equally dangerous, in intra-party debates Serbian nationalism was somehow *naturally* identified as the closest possible ally of *unitarism* and a potential ally of Soviet 'hegemonism' and was, therefore, considered to be the most dangerous. Unless it is obvious from the context or explicitly stated, these terms are used here in their original meaning, i.e., as they were used by the Yugoslav political elite.

In this text I introduce several new concepts which need to be explained here. By '*constitutive concept*' I mean a set of ideas and beliefs about the nature of the state on which a basic consensus is created within the (ruling) political elite, which forms a more or less internally consistent whole and which is then transformed into political and legislative action. As explained in Chapter Two, I identify four major *constitutive concepts* in the whole period of Yugoslavia (1918-1992), the last of which (here called the *fourth*, or the *Kardeljist*, or - sometimes - the *Brioni* concept) is the main object of my analysis. The *constitutive concept* is a term that links ideology (here Marxism), its dominant interpretation (in this case Kardelj's interpretation) with the main initiatives by which the political elite attempted to implement it through legislation (the 1974 Constitution) and political action. The *constitutive concept* forms, therefore, a linkage between ideology and practice - it is a means of the transformation of ideology into legal regulation and political action. The formulation of the *constitutive concept* occupies a central place in the politics of highly ideological societies. As the case of socialist Yugoslavia illustrates, major political conflicts took the form of constitutional debates. In highly ideological

societies, the wording of social aims is the main substance of politics. Yugoslav domestic politics was almost exclusively organised around constant constitutional debate which resulted in four constitutions (1946, 1953, 1963, 1974) in the four decades of its existence, while in the last two decades it was in a permanent process of reforming its last constitution. Such a situation of permanent 'reforms' and 'changes in the constitution' was only an expression of the belief that socialism is a transitional period in which institutions and political culture are in permanent 'transition' from their old, pre-socialist forms towards new - communist - ones. Although constitutional changes were not independent of the pressures placed on political leaders by internal and external political factors, they were also initiated from within the elite in an attempt to further push *reality* towards *communist* ideals. The changes of the period I analyse here were, therefore, equally a pragmatic response to the existing challenges that the elite faced from within and from outside the country and an effort to further improve the socialist character of Yugoslavia.

This thesis is about political elites, and thus the meaning of this term should also be explained. There have been several attempts to identify who constitutes the elite in Yugoslav and other socialist societies (Burg, 1983; Cohen, 1983 and Cohen 1989, etc.). In socialist societies it is sometimes difficult to identify the members of the elite, since politics often took place as an informal activity, while the criteria for inclusion in or exclusion from the real decision-making process were very different from those established in representative democracies. By elites I understand the not very strictly structured body of party, state and military leaders, who had real influence over the formulation and implementation of political decisions in Yugoslavia. For the entire period between 1945 and 1980, Josip Broz Tito was the key member of the Yugoslav political elite. After the dismissal of Tito's deputy Aleksandar Ranković (1966), and until his death in 1979, Edvard Kardelj was clearly the main creator of the *constitutive concept* expressed in the 1974 Constitution and the political action that followed it. In this period, the leaders of the republics and provinces increased their influence, playing a much more independent role than ever before. After 1974, the influence of the Army in Yugoslav politics also increased. On the other hand, the importance of state functionaries, such as the head of the Yugoslav government, the various state secretaries (except those directly linked with Tito), and even the members of the Yugoslav Central Committee (except its Presidency, which represented their republican/provincial organisations) decreased. In the post-Titoist period, as explained in Chapter Four, the Yugoslav government unsuccessfully tried to occupy the central locus of power, but it was the Party that remained the most important institution until its actual disintegration in January 1990. The main political conflicts in Yugoslavia were intra-party conflicts. Finally, the disintegration of the Party led directly to the disintegration of the state. By the political elite here, therefore, I understand the inner circle of the Yugoslav leadership, whose core was the Party leadership at the federal level and in the republics/provinces.

## 0.5. Structure

Finally, the structure of the thesis follows its main objective. In Chapter One I analyse the current attempts to explain the disintegration of Yugoslavia, relating my analysis to their main conclusions. I identify seven different sets of explanations, six of which (with exception of the 'ethnic hatred' argument) contain elements of truth and are helpful to our understanding of the problem. Yet, they all somehow underestimate the element that I am focussing on here – the link between ideology and elite, which I consider to be the key to understanding the reasons why Yugoslavia collapsed in the 1990s.

The core of this thesis is structured in three parts, each containing two chapters. The first part (Chapters Two and Three) analyse the rise, the second part (Chapters Four and Five) - crisis, while the third part (Chapters Six and Seven) focuses on the decay and fall of the Fourth Yugoslavia.

Chapter Two identifies four different constitutive concepts in the whole history of Yugoslavia: (1) the *national unity* concept; (2) the *agreement* ('Sporazum') concept; (3) the *socialist Yugoslavism* concept and (4) *Kardelj's concept*. These four constitutive concepts were based on different interpretations of the Yugoslav idea and/or of other basic ideologies (such as liberalism and Marxism). A brief overview of the first three concepts is given at the beginning of Chapter Two.

The main focus of this thesis is on the fourth constitutive concept, here called *Kardelj's concept* or the concept of *Brioni Yugoslavia*. This concept was in constitutional terms formulated during the Constitutional debate of 1967-1974, which was – to a large extent – a genuine attempt to accommodate the differences between the various segments of the elite within a system that would still remain socialist in its character. Chapter Two analyses the main aspects of Kardelj's concept in detail, while Chapter Three examines the reasons why Kardelj's concept was accepted by the various groups in Yugoslavia, and especially by the Serbian leadership. The *Fourth Yugoslavia*, just like the three previous constitutive concepts, was a complex compromise between the various segments of its political elite. I argue that the *constitutive concept* was not forced on the elite or on society by a dictatorship but was the result of complex negotiations amongst those *included* in real politics, i. e., the members of the political elite.

Chapters Four (on economic crisis) and Five (on political crisis) examine the political actions taken in order to implement the constitutive concept agreed upon in the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate. It is in these two chapters that politics as the struggle for the *real meaning* of Kardelj's concept is analysed in detail. During the period 1974-1986 Yugoslav politicians interpreted the text of the Constitution and the intentions of its authors in such different ways

that the fragile compromise reached in 1974 became seriously endangered. It was also in this period that the *supreme arbiters* (Tito and Kardelj) died, leaving Yugoslavia to its divided regional elites. The context in which the Constitution was to be implemented was gradually becoming very different from the one in which it was agreed upon. The *objective factors* had changed as a result of economic crisis, foreign involvement and the first signs of organised opposition to the regime.

Chapters Six and Seven analyse the emergence of alternative constitutive concepts in Serbia and Slovenia in the last four years of Yugoslavia (1986-1990), and the reaction of the political elite to this. The division of the elite into 'defenders' and 'reformers' of the Constitution polarised the Yugoslav political elite, whose Slovenian and Serbian parts moved closer to their electoral constituencies. At the end of this process, Kardelj's concept of Yugoslavia, terminally wounded by the disintegration of the LCY in January 1990, ceased to exist. Many participants in Yugoslav politics, ousted in the mid-1960s for their opposition to Kardelj's concept, now came back, playing a significant role in its overthrow. Detailed analyses of Slovenian and Serbian nationalism and of other alternative concepts (such as *civil society* in Slovenia, *anti-bureaucratic revolution* in Serbia, etc.) may be found in these two last chapters of the thesis.

The structure of the thesis in its main lines follows the central message: that the disintegration of Yugoslavia ought to be analysed through the interaction between the constitutive concept and the context in which it was implemented.

## Chapter One:

# Analytical Approaches to Studying the Disintegration of Yugoslavia

### 1.1. A Critical Assessment of Existing Approaches in Analysing the Disintegration of Yugoslavia

Why did Yugoslavia collapse? Was its disintegration unavoidable? Was it the result of impersonal (objective) factors such as economic crisis, social cleavages, complex ethnic structure, changes in the international environment, processes of modernisation and globalisation, etc.? Or was the collapse of Yugoslavia in the first place the outcome of actions taken by political elites in Yugoslavia itself, thus, of personal (subjective) decisions, beliefs and intentions? And if the latter, what were these beliefs and intentions? How did they emerge and why did they prevail over the forces of integration?

Broadly, recent literature on this subject identifies seven major types of arguments on the reasons for the collapse of Yugoslavia: 1) the economic argument; 2) the 'ancient ethnic hatred' argument; (3) the 'nationalism' argument; 4) the cultural argument; 5) the 'international politics' argument; 6) the 'role of personality' argument and (7) the 'fall of the Empires' argument. With the exception of the *ethnic hatred* argument, which I reject in its entirety, all other approaches offer useful elements for explaining the reasons for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. However, they sometimes tend to reduce its complexity to a single cause. They also neglect the subjective, i.e., the perceptions of the relevant political actors, as expressed through ideology. I argue that the disintegration of Yugoslavia had many causes, not a single one and that only by analysing the perceptions of all these elements by the relevant political actors, can one understand the events that followed. Before I explain my own approach, I will analyse these groups of arguments, relating them to the main argument of this thesis.

#### 1.1.1. The Economic Argument

The economic argument is based on the assumption that the economic crisis that occurred in the late 1970s and the widening gap between the developed and under-developed regions (republics, provinces) made the further existence of Yugoslavia impossible. The most developed

republics, such as Slovenia and Croatia, demanded independence for reasons of their further development. They also opposed attempts to limit the achieved level of economic autonomy, as provided by the 1974 Constitutional compromise. The economic theory is based on the assumption that political decisions are influenced by the interests of political participants, which are primarily economic. Kosovo and Slovenia, although being at the two opposite poles on the scale of economic development, both came to the point of seeing no incentive for remaining further in Yugoslavia. In 1987, for the first time, Slovenian public opinion indicated that Slovenia would have better economic chances outside than within Yugoslavia (Toš, 1987). Kosovo, on the other hand, saw no economic benefits for its further remaining in Yugoslavia when its GDP, although permanently increasing in absolute terms, when measured per capita had fallen from 47% to 26% of the Yugoslav average in the post-war period.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis accepts that economic factors played a significant role in creating the context to which the narratives of political leaders were forced to respond. As Woodward (1996) argues, the economic crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s triggered constitutional conflict, which resulted in the crisis of the state itself. We follow this chain of events by analysing the response of the political elite to economic crisis (Chapter Four) and constitutional issues (Chapter Five) to arrive at an analysis of the emergence of alternative political concepts in Serbia and Slovenia (Chapters Six and Seven). Yet, it is here argued that economic crisis in itself would not necessarily have resulted in state disintegration, had it not been used to destroy the old Kardeljist constitutive concept and to replace it with several others. As Bojičić argues, 'the intensity of collapse in the Yugoslav region does not follow from the scale of the economic and political troubles in which they found themselves at the end of the 1980s' (1996:77). Contrary to the arguments of the economic-based explanations of the collapse, Yugoslavia in fact disintegrated at the moment when the economic reforms of Ante Marković's government were showing their first positive results, accompanied by the elimination of inflation and a sharp increase in the personal income of Yugoslav citizens.<sup>2</sup> As Pleština points out, the resignation of an ineffective government in December 1988, and the selection of a new market-oriented Prime Minister Marković in January 1989 were signs of hope for the future of Yugoslavia.

'The inflation rate, which for the month of December [1989] had climbed to 56%, had by the end of January [1990] fallen to 17.3%; by February it was down to 8.4%, by March to 2.4% and for April it registered only 0.2%. Foreign-currency reserves which at US\$ 5.4 billion in December [1989] were strong enough to permit the convertibility of the dinar, had

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<sup>1</sup> For the economic argument see Žižmond (1992), Zdunić (1994), Vojnić (1994), Ferfila (1991), Uvalić (1992), Gapinski (1993), Horvat (1992) and Horvat (1993).

<sup>2</sup> As Denitch (1990:XIV) says, Yugoslavia's international debts were reduced from 24 to 16 billion dollars under the government of Ante Marković (1989-1991). The last US Ambassador to socialist Yugoslavia Warren Zimmermann says that in less than a year in office the Prime Minister quadrupled Yugoslavia's foreign exchange reserves, bringing down inflation from 25,000% p.a. to zero (1996/1999: 49). However, as Djilas points out (1993:139), Marković overestimated the importance of economic factors in 'saving' Yugoslavia. He did not have a clear political vision (a 'constitutive concept') and believed that everyone would realise that it was 'irrational' to separate from Yugoslavia. Political decisions, however, did not follow the logic of economic 'rationality'.



increased by January [1990] to US\$ 6.5 billion and by May [1990] to US\$ 8.5 billion. Industrial productivity has also increased and foreign loans have been secured to aid the restructuring of the economy... Marković has managed to galvanize a degree of support and energy after a decade characterized by cynicism and apathy' (Pleština, 1992:166).

At the same time, political reforms were also gaining their momentum. Yet, what seemed to be 'hopeful like a new beginning was but a very brief lull before the proverbial storm' (Pleština, 1992:155). It was at this moment, when the first hopes for a democratic and economically stable society emerged, that the state collapsed. The economic argument has failed to explain this paradox.

As will be argued in Chapter Three, the political reforms of the federation in the 1967 - 1974 period were even less motivated by economic failure. On the contrary, to a large extent they were boosted by economic success which promoted Yugoslav self-management as a possible alternative to both 'state socialism' of the Soviet type and 'capitalist societies', which both faced deep crises in 1968. In the same way, the economic factor did not play the main role in the last phase of negotiations about the future of the country, when the three main leaders of the Yugoslav republics (Milan Kučan, Slovenia; Franjo Tuđman, Croatia and Slobodan Milošević, Serbia) declined an offer by the European Community to find a political compromise in return for substantial economic support by the European Community.<sup>3</sup> Instead, they decided to continue their uncompromising policies, which resulted in the economic failure of all the post-Yugoslav states, with the partial exception of Slovenia. Although this dissertation does not focus on the post-Yugoslav situation in the region, it is fair to say that in an economic sense as well as in the sense of modernisation processes, the disintegration of Yugoslavia was, as Hobsbawm says, a 'purely negative event'.<sup>4</sup> In terms of modernisation, despite the significant setback of economic and political crisis, socialist Yugoslavia was neither a disastrous failure nor did it have to collapse. Economically, and also politically, it was the most advanced case of all East-European societies. The importance of economic factors for the disintegration of Yugoslavia is not per se, but in the context they provided for political leaders, who used them to argue that their ethnic or/and political group was disadvantaged in Yugoslavia. The economic element, true, played an important role in causing differentiation between different parts of Yugoslavia which, ultimately, resulted in growing demands for changes both from within the political elite and from the population. However, economic reductionism can never

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<sup>3</sup> In an interview with me in June 1996 Macedonian President Gligorov confirmed that Jacques Delors, then the President of the European Commission, offered 5,5 billion US dollars in order to support the transformation of Yugoslavia towards a looser Union of Yugoslav States, which would be admitted to the European Union. 'Milošević and Tuđman were angry and mad. You cannot buy us with promises. We don't need your money'. Milošević was even more angry: 'You, Europeans want to cheat history. There are big and small nations,' he said. 'You better keep your money. We are capable of deciding about our future.' Gligorov repeated this conversation in his interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, see *Vjesnik*, 20 January 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with author, 1996.

explain political phenomena completely, because it leaves out human agency, i.e., the perceptions and actions of political actors.

### 1.1.2. The 'Ancient Ethnic Hatred' Argument

The 'ancient ethnic hatred' argument is very popular in not-strictly-academic debates, such as in the media,<sup>5</sup> with politicians, soldiers,<sup>6</sup> writers,<sup>7</sup> et al. It is perhaps best summarised by US President Clinton, who justified the military intervention against the FR Yugoslavia (March – June 1999) by saying:

'Under communist rule, such nations projected a picture of stability, but it was a false stability imposed by rulers whose answer to ethnic tensions was to suppress and deny them. When communist repression lifted, the tensions rose to the surface, to be resolved by co-operation or exploited by demagoguery.'<sup>8</sup>

This thesis strongly rejects the 'ethnic hatred' argument in any form. The Yugoslav conflict, I argue, did not begin as an ethnic conflict. Ethnic hatred was not 'ancient' and ever-existent, but had to be created before what started 'very far from the level occupied by the average citizen of any of the nationalities' was transformed into an ethnic war'.<sup>9</sup> Although the lack of openly expressed nationalist views in the first part of the period I analyse here was certainly the result of tight control of the media by the elite, it is still not accurate to say that Yugoslavia was held together by a brutal political dictatorship or pure suppression of national sentiments.<sup>10</sup> But, once the constitutive concept of the Fourth Yugoslavia started to disintegrate, there was a tendency (initiated primarily by nationalist groups within both the intellectual elite and the population) to revert to stereotypes and behaviour characteristic of an earlier period, i.e., WWII

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Patrick Bishop in the *Daily Telegraph*, 20 January 1999 says: 'Folk memories are long, and an inability to forget the hatreds of the past has condemned successive generations to perpetuate them... The countries which make up the former Yugoslav federation are split by deep political, religious and ethnic fault lines, left over from the days when the region was divided between the rival empires of Turkey and Austria-Hungary' (Bishop, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Rose (1998).

<sup>7</sup> Kaplan (1994).

<sup>8</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 18 April 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Oklobdžija (1993:92); cf. also Pavković (1997) and Woodward (1995).

<sup>10</sup> For example, a research on social distance between members of Yugoslav ethnic groups (Pantić, 1987) indicates that Albanians were the only group which preferred not to enter marriages with members of other groups, and vice versa, that members of other groups had a problem in marrying an Albanian. In relationships between members of Yugoslav constitutive nations, the largest social distance was of Slovenes towards Muslims (not vice versa). In all other cases, more than 50% of respondents expressed the view they would not have a problem in marrying a member of other ethnic groups, though in all cases respondents preferred a member of his/her own group. Most importantly, 74% of Serbs said they would not mind marrying a Croat person, while 72% of Croats said the same for a Serb. Significantly, neither Serbs nor Croats expressed much problems about marrying a Slovene (76% and 72% respectively), while Slovenes hesitated more towards these two groups (59% and 60% respectively). The research certainly does not confirm any conclusion about high levels of social distance between members of Yugoslav nations, with the noticeable exception of Albanians.

and before. Once the previous 'others' to which the elite referred (such as 'class enemies' within the country, and both East and West outside the country) disappeared as a realistic danger, other 'others' had to be invented.

As numerous public opinion surveys conducted in the last years of the 1980s demonstrate (analysed in the last two chapters of this thesis), political protests in Serbia and Slovenia were in their first phase primarily concerned with 'injustice' and the 'bureaucratisation' of the political elite. But the elite successfully redirected them against the new 'others'. The Serb demonstrators were worried about the 'disintegration of the country', for which the others (Slovenes, Croats, various international institutions, etc.) were made responsible. The Slovenian intellectual elite and media also argued that 'the others' were responsible for 'Greater-Serbian' expansionist demands, for the economic exploitation of Slovenia and for 'unitarist' suppression of the national identity of the Slovenes.<sup>11</sup> By re-directing popular protests towards the others, the political elites in Serbia and Slovenia survived at the cost of undermining Yugoslavia.

The 'ethnic hatred' argument, therefore, perhaps can explain some of what happened in the post-Yugoslav wars, when the nationalist political elites succeeded in promoting hatred among the population. However, as an explanation of the actual disintegration of Yugoslavia it is as irrelevant as it is inaccurate.

### 1.1.3. The Nationalism Argument

While the 'ancient ethnic hatred' - although popular in current debates - can be easily dismissed as inadequate, it is certainly more difficult to object to the 'nationalism' argument, widely present in academic debates on the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Nationalism, here defined as the primacy of the national over any other interest in political activities and as a doctrine which at its core has the creation of a nation-state, as homogeneous as possible, does not always develop into ethnic hatred towards the other. While 'ethnic hatred' between Yugoslav nations did not exist to any extent greater than within other multi-ethnic states, nationalism was always present as a political doctrine in its many forms. As Djilas (1995) argues, nationalism in Yugoslavia was stronger than liberalism, and hence the main alternative after the fall of communism. Occasionally, such as in the 1967-1972 period with the 'Croatian', or - as Burg names it - the 'Yugoslav' crisis; or with the 1968 and 1981 protests in Kosovo, nationalist doctrines and actions caused ethnic tensions and the instability of the country. However, it is difficult to accept the somewhat *fatalistic* conclusion that nationalism and hatred had to prevail over other doctrines, once communism was defeated. Along the lines of many

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<sup>11</sup> Relations between Slovenian and Serbian intellectuals and the political elites in these two republics are analysed in Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis, and in Dragović Soso (1999).

other authors, I argue that in its most dangerous form in which it emerged in the late 1980s, nationalism was created by the intellectual elites and then accepted by certain elements within the political elite, primarily in Serbia and Slovenia.

The causes of nationalism in Yugoslavia were indeed many: historical, economic and cultural differences being among the most important. Yet, in the analysed period, it was the ideological narrative that made the nationalism of Yugoslav nations (including of the Kosovo Albanians) both weak and strong at the same time. The weakness of (Yugoslav) nationalism in the period we analyse in this thesis (the Kardelj period) was the result of the anti-statist ideology on which Yugoslavia was re-structured following its 1974 Constitution.<sup>12</sup>

Kardelj's concept (explained in Chapter Two) projected self-management as an alternative to the state. More than other socialist states, the Yugoslav state was – at least at the ideological level – in the process of 'withering away'. The anti-statist rhetoric had enormous consequences for the (de)construction of Yugoslav institutions and of Yugoslav 'high culture' (to use Gellner's term). As shown in Chapters Four and Five, the complex system based on the anti-statist ideology of Kardelj made Yugoslavia economically and politically atomised. It prevented a fast and decisive response to economic and political crises when they appeared in the early 1980s.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In this thesis, I present data on very low cross-Yugoslav mobility, especially among students and workers, who almost exclusively remained in their own republics, unless they were members of minority ethnic groups in this republic. Institutions were created in such a way that no all-Yugoslav political force could emerge: there were no Yugoslav-wide elections, no Yugoslav media, etc. Officially, Yugoslavia did not have even a national anthem, since the republic and provinces could not agree on its words. An interesting debate on this issue was conducted in Yugoslavia in the 1980s. The Albanian representatives opposed using the word 'Slav' in the first verse of the text, while Slovenia and Croatia did not agree to change it to 'Yugoslavs'. Economic systems were clearly built to suit the self-sufficiency of the republics and provinces. Terms such as national working class were coined to describe the national (not Yugoslav) character of the main political substance of Yugoslav society. In general, the failure to construct a Yugoslav political community indeed could be explained by the lack of a 'centralised educational system supervised by and often actually run by the state in question, which monopolises legitimate culture almost as much as it does legitimate violence, or perhaps more so' (Gellner, 1983:141). The Fourth Yugoslavia was an example of having neither a 'central culture' nor a 'central state', two conditions Gellner pointed out as crucial. As Lendvai (1991) argues - in political sense, Yugoslavia was left without Yugoslavs.

<sup>13</sup> All three multi-ethnic communist federations proved incredibly weak and incapable of protecting themselves once their constitutive stories collapsed in 1989. But it was precisely Yugoslavia that went the furthest of the three in its attempt to implement an anti-statist ideology, inventing 'self-management' and de-centralising the whole system. By doing this, Yugoslavia's communists aimed at denouncing the Soviet version of socialism as 'dogmatic', 'statist' and practically 'revisionist'. They claimed a monopoly over the right interpretation of Marxism, denouncing the others as 'revisionists'. Ideological commitment to Marx led them to eliminate the state to a larger extent than was the case in both Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union – in fact, perhaps more than in the Western world of liberal democracies as well. Apart from ethnic structure, historical and geographical circumstances, it was also for this reason that Yugoslavia collapsed in a more dramatic way than the two other former socialist federations, especially Czechoslovakia. Unlike Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia linked its identity more closely to its own, and original constitutive concept. Consequently, the collapse of this concept made the existence of Yugoslavia much more difficult. Finally, in Yugoslavia there was no one else to blame for the failure of a concept which was created by the Yugoslavs themselves. Other East European countries had a perfect scapegoat in the existence of the Soviet Union, which was perceived as the oppressive other. But in all cases the collapse of the constitutive concept was the main reason for the disintegration of even the strongest institutions (such as the Army, or secret services) of what seemed to be among the most powerful states in the world. The institutions collapsed once they were left without the constitutive concept that kept the system together. For the differences between the Yugoslav and Soviet understanding of the state see Lapenna (1964) and Ferdinand (1991).

At the same time, however, in real terms, Yugoslavia was still united by its ideological narrative, formulated by Kardelj and accepted by other members of the political elite. It was Kardelj's narrative, not the ethnic similarities among the Yugoslavs (South Slavs) or the political equality of its citizens which the elite saw as the glue which bound Yugoslav differences into one whole. Paradoxically, therefore, the Yugoslav state itself was based on an anti-state ideological conception. This paradox lies at the heart of the crisis of the Yugoslav state in the post-1974 Yugoslavia.

By treating Yugoslav constitutive nations as 'completed' (as Kardelj formulated it in 1970), and their republics as 'sovereign states' (as formulated in the 1974 Constitution, the ideological narrative of Yugoslav communism in practice shielded and promoted nationalism in its constitutive nations. At the same time as Yugoslav nationalism and the Yugoslav state were being weakened, the nationalism of the constitutive nations was getting stronger. The same concept that kept Yugoslavia together by consensus between its leaders, held in itself also a destructive and disintegrative potential. This trend was in fact also the result of the Kardelj concept, which was constructed as a radical alternative to both inter-war Yugoslav *unitarism* and Soviet *statist centralism*. Being based on a fragile political compromise between segments of the elite, Yugoslav unity after 1974 depended more on the interpretation of the real meaning of this concept rather than on formal procedural rules and effective representative institutions. It is within the Yugoslav political elite, therefore, that one needs to look for the seeds of the collapse of Yugoslavia.

In addition to this, by promoting a non-ethnic base for Yugoslav unity, the elite made nationalism the main rhetorical antipode to the dominant ideology of the regime. At the same time, by declaring everyone who opposed the regime a nationalist, the regime in fact promoted such nationalism as the main alternative to itself. By excluding it from the public sphere Kardeljists both weakened it in public and made it stronger 'underground'. The weakening of the state made nationalist demands for a strong state (whether Yugoslavia, or separate nation-states of constitutive nations) plausible. This is how one can explain why nationalism (and not, for example, the liberalism of the minimal state) grew as the main alternative to the 'self-managing' system. Contrary to popular interpretations which link the existence of 'strong states' run by Communists with people's demands for strong (nationalist) states after Communism, this dissertation argues that it was the weakness of the state that provoked an alternative. Post-Communism (as anti-Communism) was about establishing the state that was missing, not about preserving one that already existed. In the case of ethnically homogenised states (such as, for example, Hungary, Poland etc.) the 1989 'revolution' meant establishing themselves as states by liberation from the Soviet patronage. While the Hungarians and Poles perceived the Soviet Union as the main obstacle to creating a proper state, the Croats, Slovenes and Albanians in Kosovo perceived Belgrade as this obstacle. Yugoslav independence from

Moscow thus proved to be a disadvantage for preserving the country's unity, since there was no possibility of blaming an external power for the crisis.

The demand to establish a 'proper state' that did not exist (due to the 'anarchic'<sup>14</sup> self-managing society) was what the Serbs, Slovenes, Croats (and others) in Yugoslavia shared. But they disagreed on the definition of the constitutive nation that should create this state. Since its creation in 1918 the same question had appeared in Yugoslavia again and again: Were the Yugoslavs one (political) nation or not? Were the (ethnic) Serbs one (political) nation or not? Were the Croats a nation or not? And the Albanians? The lack of a single Yugoslav cultural space and of Yugoslav political institutions that would represent the citizens of Yugoslavia (especially in the post-1974 period) was the main obstacle to creating a Yugoslav nation. The separate cultural systems recognised and further developed after 1967 in the six Yugoslav constitutive nations naturally resulted in creating six political nations and - ultimately - their independent states.

In its new form, as public protest, open nationalism at the end of the 1980s was a result of the country's democratisation. The minority rights of the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins united the democratic and nationalist segments of the Belgrade opposition, the strongest in the country. The elite was facing massive protests from the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins, as well as public demands for political reforms from the Slovenian and Serbian 'critical intelligentsia'. At the same time, fear of becoming a minority in Yugoslavia, in which they had been treated as a 'constitutive nation', united Slovenian public opinion. These fears were the result of the country's democratisation, which demanded a new set of rules and a new 'constitutive concept' for Yugoslavia. The leaders in Slovenia and Serbia decided not to use force against the demonstrators and intellectuals, but to accommodate their demands. This is how they - despite their originally anti-nationalist intentions - became tolerant of nationalism, causing a split in the LCY and the Yugoslav state. Although neither Milan Kučan nor Slobodan Milošević were originally ethnic nationalists, their political pragmatism and the context in which they acted led them to act like 'someone who has jumped on to the tiger of nationalism and is finding it difficult to get off again without the tiger eating him' (Owen, 1995:129).

Of course, it did not have to happen this way. For as long as they remained committed to the Kardeljist concept, political leaders in Yugoslavia rejected coalition with ethnic nationalists and sought an intra-party compromise. They even hesitated to criticise the members of the elite in other ethnic groups and republics. Once this rule was abandoned, another set of rules had to be invented to keep Yugoslavia united. But it was difficult, if not impossible in circumstances in

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<sup>14</sup> In his speeches during the 1984-1989 period, Slobodan Milošević insisted that Yugoslav society was facing anarchy. More on this in Chapter Six.

which the political elite developed entirely different notions of democracy and of the political unit to which it should be applied. While the Slovene option in the late 1980s argued in favour of democratisation within republics, but not at the federal level, the Serbian option argued for democratisation at the federal level too. Consequently, if successful, the Serbian demands for democratisation of Yugoslavia would have led to the emergence of a Yugoslav (political) nation. Additionally, the two options also differed on how they understood 'democratisation', and on how to secure a link between 'socialism' and 'democracy' in the new circumstances. These insurmountable differences divided the Yugoslav political elite and the country in general.

Finally, what the 'nationalism' argument fails to explain is the growing sense of 'Yugoslavism' among the population at the same time as ethnic nationalism was increasing. The two parallel processes which characterised the period are analysed here: (1) the (re)-emergence of a Yugoslav culture<sup>15</sup> and the first demands to establish institutions of representative democracy, which would result in the creation of a Yugoslav political nation; (2) the reaction of ethnic nationalists to this. The struggle between the forces of integration and those of polarisation was what the Yugoslavs witnessed in the period I analyse here. This new Yugoslavism was in the first place a reaction against the general trend of fragmentation in the last 20-30 years of Yugoslavia. A Yugoslav culture was emerging in the young, and more educated generation.<sup>16</sup> A direct result of this was a significant growth of declared ethnic Yugoslavs in the decade between 1971 and 1981: from, 273,000 to 1,219,000. The share of 'Yugoslavs' in the total population increased from 1.3 to 5.4 percent in this decade, while the share of all 'constitutive nations' (except Bosnian Muslims) decreased: Serbs from 39.7% to 36.3 %; Croats from 22.1% to 19.8%, Slovenes from 8.2% to 7.8%, etc. The Croatian historian and politician Dušan Bilandžić estimated that the share of the 'Yugoslavs' would further increase in the decade between 1981 and 1991 to approximately one fifth of the total population – a trend that displeased and worried ethnic nationalists in all the Yugoslav nations.<sup>17</sup> The (realistic) chance of Yugoslavia becoming a member of the EEC in the foreseeable future, in which case national identities

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<sup>15</sup> The real bearers of the Yugoslav culture of the 1980s were people such as film director Emir Kusturica, rock-musicians Goran Bregović, Johnny Štulić, Vlatko Stefanovski, Bora Djordjević, etc., who in fact opposed the official doctrine of semi-confederalism, often clashing with politicians and ideologues. Ramet (1992/1996) offers a good analysis of the Yugoslav rock-scene. Both Bregović and Štulić left the country after its disintegration in 1991. So did Kusturica and some of the most popular Yugoslav film actors and actresses, such as Rade Šerbedžija and Mira Furlan (all from Zagreb and Sarajevo). Bregović and Kusturica supported Ante Marković's party at the 1990 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Šerbedžija took part in anti-war protests a few days before the war in this republic in 1992. Many Yugoslav writers (such as Dubravka Ugrešić, Slavenka Drakulić, Filip David, Bora Ćosić, David Albahari, etc.) found themselves in exile.

<sup>16</sup> As Cohen (1993/1995:49) points out, the five-fold increase in the number of declared Yugoslavs, especially in ethnically mixed areas (Vojvodina, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina) and among the younger, urban and more educated generation, was in sharp contrast to an increasing aversion to the LCY in the same segments of the population. Surveys conducted by Flere (1988) and Katunarić (1988) showed that by 1985 the level of Yugoslav identification had further increased, as a form of protest against the political fragmentation of the country.

<sup>17</sup> An interesting debate on the real meaning, causes and significance of Yugoslavism occurred in Yugoslavia following the 1981 census (see Matvejević et al.).

would have found themselves under two supra-national lids (Yugoslav and European) additionally mobilised the sense of being endangered among the ethnic nationalists.<sup>18</sup> In its essence, the nationalism that emerged in various Yugoslav countries was largely anti-urban,<sup>19</sup> anti-European and to a certain extent motivated by romantic and anti-rationalistic ideas. It was based on fears (primarily among the intellectual and political elites) that the status of their ethnic groups would be decreased from one of 'completed constitutive nations' (as recognised by the 1974 Constitution) to one of a minority in the new democratic structure of the country.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the nation-states were seen as not only desirable, but necessary protector against this trend.

Although it correctly points out the importance of nationalism for the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the *nationalism* argument often overlooks the ambivalent relations between communism and nationalism. It also tends to underestimate the complexity of the situation in which the members of the political elite found themselves in the late 1980s. Finally, it neglects the importance of personal beliefs and perceptions by the elite and the population. Arguing that it has always been present, only somewhat 'frozen' during the times of socialism, the *nationalism* argument denies the importance of the subjective. This is what this dissertation aims to correct.

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<sup>18</sup> Globalisation theory, as expressed by Giddens, argues that ethnic separatism is a reaction to the processes of globalisation. Applied to the Yugoslav case, separatism was a reaction to the growing sense of Yugoslavism and the emergence of a Yugoslav culture, as explained above. However accurate globalisation theory is in pointing out the link between the two trends, it fails to explain the existence of nationalism in earlier phases (before the end of the Cold War). In addition, the collapse of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia does not support the optimistic vision of future, promoted by Giddens. Globalisation theory is a typical social-scientific attempt to explain the *General Laws of History*, which are based on objective factors. Being universalist and revolutionary, the globalisation theory tends to underestimate the importance of cultural and contextual elements and to subsume all nationalisms under one type of anti-globalisation: 'fundamentalist traditionalism'.

<sup>19</sup> For the anti-urban character of nationalism (especially of the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina) see Vujović (1996). The destruction of Dubrovnik and Sarajevo from the hills above them, Vujović argues, was a symbol of the hatred developed by Karadžić's Serbian nationalists against the cities. One of the reasons was the large number of ethnically mixed marriages in the urban centres, as compared with rural environments. In Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1981, 15 percent of all children were from mixed marriages, while in Sarajevo 40 percent. Karadžić himself wrote a poem about the burning of a city (presumably Sarajevo) and obsessively advocated the division of the Bosnian capital. 'Our vision of Sarajevo is like Berlin when the wall was still standing,' he told the American ambassador Zimmermann (1995:20). The anti-urban character of Croatian nationalism is best represented in the literary works of Ante Pavelić, the head of the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia and his education minister Mile Budak. In more detail, these discourses are analysed in Čolović (1997) and Žanić (1998).

<sup>20</sup> For ethnic status see Horowitz (1985). The sense of losing an already existing *ethnic status* was permanently present in the discussions of Slovenian intellectuals in the late 1980s, but also among the Albanians in Kosovo, following the 1989 change in the Serbian constitution. It also emerged among the Serbs and Croats outside Serbia and Croatia respectively (with almost equal strength), who feared they would become a *minority*, not a *constitutive nation*, especially in Bosnia after the declaration of the independence of this state, and also due to demographic trends. This is also why the ethnic nationalists blocked Marković's initiatives to organise federal elections and re-construct federal institutions in order to represent the citizens of Yugoslavia. The making of (political) Yugoslavs would be the decisive step towards making Yugoslavia instead of separate nations and states. As will be clearly demonstrated on several occasions in this thesis, ethnic nationalists of the Yugoslav nations rated democracy second to issues of national identity. On these grounds, one can also explain why the critical intelligentsia emerged more strongly in the late 1970s in Serbia than in Croatia or Slovenia whose nationalist intelligentsia were less critical both of the lack of a Yugoslav-wide democracy and the ideology of decentralisation via self-management than was the case with Serbian dissidents.



#### 1.1.4. The Cultural Argument

The cultural argument on the disintegration of Yugoslavia is an applied and broader version of the ethnic argument. In various attempts to explain the collapse of Yugoslavia, it has been argued that the diversities of the traditions and cultures of the Yugoslav nations (based on the ancient divisions between Eastern and Western Christianity, as well as between Christianity and Islam) played the major role in the failure to constitute a Yugoslav culture, nation and state. The argument relies on John Stuart Mill's discussion of nationality in his *Considerations on Representative Government* (1865). Representative government, Mill argues, is best established on 'the sentiment of nationality', whose existence is 'a prima facie case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart'. Thus cultural diversities (primarily religious and linguistic differences) made nations and promoted their desire to live separately from others in their own states. Cultural, religious, economic, linguistic and historical differences between the Yugoslav nations were simply too large to allow the creation of a Yugoslav nation, which permanently destabilised the Yugoslav state. Fragmentation of the country was hence inevitable and somehow natural.<sup>21</sup>

In its recently most famous version, the cultural argument has re-appeared in Huntington's the *clashes of civilisations* thesis. Although his book focuses on international politics after the end of the Cold War, it was much used by nationalist politicians in the post-Yugoslav states (especially by Croatian President Tudjman)<sup>22</sup> to legitimise and justify not only the break-up of Yugoslavia but the more recent conflicts between Croats (Catholics) and Bosniaks (Muslims) in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>23</sup>

Even if one were to accept this argument, one would not have immediately explained why the Yugoslav mosaic of diversities survived for at least 45 years after WWII, only to collapse so suddenly after the end of the Cold War, when cultural diversities in the world, including in Yugoslavia, were decreasing, rather than increasing. Yet, the cultural argument proves to be closer to the main thesis of this dissertation than many other approaches. This thesis examines the breakdown of the ideological consensus within the Yugoslav political elites. Ideologies are part of what can be broadly called culture. In the current literature on the subject, the

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<sup>21</sup> A good overview of cultural theories of nationalism (Herder, Schleiermacher, etc.) is given by Kedourie (1993:48-52).

<sup>22</sup> See Tudjman's interview with *Vjesnik*, 13 September 1997.

<sup>23</sup> On several occasions during 1996 and 1997 Tudjman quoted Huntington in connection with the Croat-Bosniak conflict. In his interview with *Feral Tribune* on 10 November 1997, the former Bosnian Ambassador to the UK Filipović said it was 'by no means accidental that Tudjman should appeal precisely to Huntington... The theory about a clash of civilizations suits Tudjman, because it justifies his actions... He cannot find (justification for the war) in either the realm of politics or that of international law, but only in the sphere of ideology - which is why Huntington's thesis about the clash of civilizations serves his purpose'.

importance of people's beliefs, which were largely created by opinion-makers and ideologues, is largely under-estimated.

A different type of example of relying on cultural factors in explaining the collapse of Yugoslavia is Wachtel's study of the relationship between the Yugoslav idea and the creation and disintegration of the Yugoslav state (1998). Wachtel's analysis is based on the same assumption as this thesis: that the collapse of Yugoslavia (like the collapse of states in general) must be analysed primarily through the collapse of the 'constitutive concept' (as I call it here) or 'the concept of a Yugoslav nation' (as he says in his book). I share Wachtel's view that:

'the collapse of multinational Yugoslavia and the establishment of separate unination states... were not the result of the breakdown of the political or economic fabric of the Yugoslav state; rather, these breakdowns, which manifestly occurred and have been copiously documented, themselves sprang from the gradual destruction of the concept of a Yugoslav nation' (1998:4).

To a certain extent, one can accept his conclusion that the 'various causes that have been cited for the collapse of Yugoslavia were secondary to the disintegration of the very concept of the Yugoslav nation, and it is to that cultural process we must turn if we wish to see how existing deep-seated rivalries and hatreds were at various times overcome and encouraged and how they re-emerged triumphant' (1998:17).

Yet, Wachtel's exclusive reliance on cultural factors resulted in underestimating the contextual framework in which the concepts (including the concept of Yugoslavism) emerged defeated or triumphant. While he, correctly, points to the importance of the 'text' of his narratives, at the same time he neglects the fact that many factors in real life strongly influenced the narrative. Constitutive concepts (or, as Wachtel would prefer, narratives) are not once-and-for-all fixed sets of beliefs and ideals, but flexible compositions of elements. It is for this reason that one cannot take the concept alone in attempting to explain action. One always needs to see what (other) 'objective' factors influenced it. In Skinner's words, one needs to 'exhibit the dynamic nature of the relationship which exists between the professed principles and the actual practices of political life' (1988:108) by asking what the actors were doing while they were saying something. One always needs to situate ideas in their practical context. My argument here is that it was precisely because the existing constitutive concept (as interpreted by its main representatives) was incapable of providing an adequate response to the challenges of the 'objective factors' that Yugoslavia ultimately collapsed. Consequently, new 'constitutive concepts' were created in reaction to both economic and political crises in the 1980s.

It is, therefore, inadequate to analyse these two (the concept and its context) separately. True, the economic and political crises were to a large extent the results of attempts by the political

elites to see their constitutive concepts implemented at any costs. But they were also catalysts for the further revision and, indeed, abandonment of certain elements of the ideology. It is the dynamics between the two that we examine in this thesis. It is because of these dynamics between ideas and practice that it is somewhat difficult to accept Wachtel's idealist conclusion that a nation is 'not a political entity but a state of mind'. This thesis accepts that the narrative indeed ultimately defines a nation at any given moment, but this still does not imply that 'no matter how heterogeneous a group of people might appear to an observer, there is a level at which its members could choose to see each other as belonging to one nation' (1998:2). Nations are neither fixed communities defined once and for all by linguistic, anthropological, political, economic, etc., factors, nor are they simply 'imagined' from nowhere by intellectual and political elites. If anywhere, then this is obvious in the Yugoslav case. The attempts in Yugoslavia to 'create' or 'imagine' a nation despite the reality, by neglecting or underestimating the importance of already existing differences, generated political tensions, and – within a certain context – set up a framework in which the break-up of the state was possible.<sup>24</sup>

The cultural analysis is a good basis for the analysis of the Yugoslav collapse but only when certain elements of other explanations are also applied in order to explain the context in which culture operates.

### 1.1.5. The International Politics Argument

The international politics explanation of the collapse of Yugoslavia insists on the importance of one or several factors on the international arena in the rise and fall of Yugoslavia. It is argued that Yugoslavia was created (both in 1918 and in 1945) with significant help or even as the creation of the great powers, whose balance of power substantially helped Yugoslavia to preserve its existence and independence.<sup>25</sup> Yugoslavia's strategic position between the two military-political blocs in post-war Europe, and its politics of equidistance in both ideological and political terms could not survive the collapse of bipolar structures at the end of the Cold War. Yugoslavia was the victim of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In a strategic sense, it lost its importance when compared with other areas of the world, and – consequently – was no longer

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<sup>24</sup> In saying all this, one can entirely agree with Wachtel on several other points that he made in such a convincing way. For example, with his opposition to the 'inevitability' conclusions, which – as Wachtel says – 'assume that the outlooks of individuals and groups are immutable' (1998:17). Wachtel's historical classification of the attempts at nation building in Yugoslavia as: (1) Serbian, (2) multicultural and (3) supranational models is among the best short accounts of different approaches to the Yugoslav national question. However, Wachtel – typically for a representative of a cultural approach that neglects the context – does not explain why Yugoslavia collapsed precisely in the 1980s, when Yugoslav identity was getting stronger in the cultural, but weaker in the political sphere.

<sup>25</sup> In the communist interpretation of history (see chapter Two), the first Yugoslavia was 'the creation of Versailles'. Croatian historians of the communist past (like Tudjman and Bilandžić) are still committed to this interpretation. Tudjman argues that international factors played an absolutely crucial role in the creation of Yugoslavia and its development. For a debate on the Yugoslav question within the CPY in the inter-war period, see Vlačjić (1978, 1984, 1989) and Djilas (1991).

able to attract economic and political support from the West. The insensitivity of the Western world to the new position of Yugoslavia was evident, as Woodward (1995) and Zimmermann (1996/1999) argue, in its failure to support the economic reforms of the Marković government (in 1988-1991). Even worse, the pressure on Yugoslavia from the IMF, already in the early 1980s, made the Yugoslav reformist elite incapable of performing its functions and opposing growing social disorder. The economic hardship produced constitutional crisis, which in turn helped ethnic nationalists to undermine what was – even by Western standards – a rather stable and plausible project. As Woodward argues, Yugoslavia collapsed neither because of ‘ethnic hatred’, nor because of the break-up of some ‘political dictatorship’, but because of the disintegration of the international order by which Yugoslavia was ‘strongly influenced’.

‘Critical to its breakdown was change from the outside, in the foreign economic and strategic environment on which the country’s stability had come to depend. Contrary to the myth that has formed since Yugoslavia’s demise, the cracks in the system were not the fault lines between civilizations that came together in the Balkans, but those that defined the country’s domestic order and internal position during the socialist period’ (1995:22).

Woodward’s argument is echoed in Yugoslav domestic debates on the causes of the disintegration. The former Yugoslav Defence Secretary General Kadijević (1993) argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union left Yugoslavia vulnerable to pressure from the West, which encouraged anti-communist and nationalist forces in traditionally Western-oriented areas (Slovenia, Croatia) to increase their demands. The failure of communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe undermined the country’s (and especially the Army’s) ideological basis. Kadijević saw the ‘new world order’ as the ultimate danger for Yugoslavia’s independence and survival.<sup>26</sup>

Although international factors always played a significant part in Yugoslav politics, one should not exaggerate their importance in the last phase of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was not a member of either of the two military-political structures. Promoting ‘self-managing’ rather than ‘statist’ (Soviet) socialism, its leaders saw *perestroika* and *glasnost* as a victory, rather than a defeat for their own model of socialism.<sup>27</sup> With very few exceptions, the Yugoslav communists welcomed the policy of detente between East and West, seeing it even as yet another recognition of the success of the Yugoslav road to socialism. The reforms in Eastern Europe were not seen as a threat, and by no means did the Yugoslav leaders feel endangered by these changes. Neither

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<sup>26</sup> On these grounds the Yugoslav Army led by Kadijević supported the failed August 1991 military *coup d’etat* by the Soviet generals. They hoped that the overthrow of Gorbachev would help re-establish a bipolar structure which would – consequently – make the fragmentation of Yugoslavia impossible. There were also ideological reasons for this support.

<sup>27</sup> See Milošević’s toast to Gorbachev in March 1988 (Milošević, 1989:198-200), the opening speech at 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CC LC Serbia (12 January 1990) by Tomica Raičević (IB CKSKS, 1/1990) and Štambuk’s article in *Nin*, 29 January 1989. A more cautious approach to the consequences of *perestroika* for Yugoslavia is expressed by Bebler (1989).

did the Yugoslav political elite exactly follow the IMF instructions. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the Party leadership was successful in blocking the attempts of four successive federal Prime Ministers (Djuranović, Planinc, Mikulić and Marković) to implement a programme of serious economic reforms, as demanded by the IMF and other foreign creditors. The Prime Ministers, not the Party leaders, regularly lost these intra-elite battles, being either marginalised (Djuranović and Planinc) or forced to resign (Mikulić).<sup>28</sup> Being a leader of the non-aligned group of countries, Yugoslavia had a fairly independent foreign policy. While this proved to be the main reason for the country's favourable position during the Cold War, in the late 1980s it somewhat blinded the political elites, making them unaware of the immediate and long-term consequences of political changes in Eastern Europe.

Instead of seeing the collapse of East European socialism as a danger for its own international position and internal cohesion, the Yugoslav leaders and citizens concluded that with the collapse of the Brezhnev doctrine the most serious threat to Yugoslavia's security was eliminated. The Western states certainly did not want Yugoslavia to disintegrate, and even less did they wish to see instability in the turbulent region. Yugoslavia was considered to be the first East European country which would join the European Community and already in the late 1970s it had signed the first documents on co-operation with the EU. At the moment of its disintegration Yugoslavia had very few, if any enemies in the international community. It is, therefore, inadequate to argue that the intervention by the Western states and organisations was the main reason for the collapse of the country. True, when it reacted, the international community demonstrated its incompetence on a large scale, contributing to further disastrous developments in the Balkans. But, Yugoslavia was already at a very advanced stage of its disintegration when (in July 1991) foreign involvement took place for the first time. Even then it was hesitant and, as Gow (1997) has noticed, showed a lack of will. Yugoslavia was, as Perović (1993), Lukić and Lynch (1996:113) and Djilas (1993:109) argue, 'defeated' from within, not from the outside.

#### 1.1.6. The Role of Personality argument

Many authors emphasise the role of personalities in the collapse of Yugoslavia. Two personalities are often mentioned in this context – the former Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito<sup>29</sup> and the current president of the FR Yugoslavia Slobodan Milošević, since 1986 the leading Serbian politician.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This is the main reason for Marković's legendary comment on the break-up of the LCY: 'This country will survive the break-up of the Party. It does not depend on it.' In fact, he saw the break-up as the best opportunity to implement economic reforms.

<sup>29</sup> Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) was the undisputed leader of Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1980. From 1937 he was the head of the CPY (after 1952 LCY), in 1945-1953 the Yugoslav Prime Minister, and 1953-1980 the President of the SFR

In short, the attempts to explain the collapse of Yugoslavia focusing on Tito's personality emphasise that Tito was the only real decision-maker, the real sovereign in Yugoslavia. He identified the state with himself, and concentrated all real power in his own hands. During his life, Tito was the key arbiter in political disputes. It has often been argued that, despite the formal de-centralisation of the country following the 1974 Constitution, Yugoslavia remained united and centralised due to Tito's personal role. He was above the law and outside the law. This was especially the case after 1974, when the Constitution declared Tito 'President of the Republic without limitation of office',<sup>31</sup> therefore outlawing any attempt to replace him for as long as he was alive. He was no longer just the supreme politician, but the state itself (Tepavac, 1997). The main areas of state politics (such as defence, foreign affairs and state security) were considered to be his personal domains. His cult of personality was never so omni-present as in the last couple of years of his life. Furthermore, the Constitution prevented anyone from replacing Tito after his death. When he died in May 1980, there was no one to re-connect the broken bonds, and to take decisions in the conflicts of interests within the country. Yugoslavia, weakened to one person – Tito himself – died together with its ruler.<sup>32</sup>

The other person who decisively influenced Yugoslav disintegration was Slobodan Milošević. Many authors see the Serbian leader as a person who wanted to replace Tito by occupying the empty space of power vacated after his death (Vejvoda, 1993). By doing so, Milošević distinguished himself from the other post-Titoist leaders, who continued marching along 'Tito's path', favouring collective leadership, as constructed by Tito himself. It was Milošević, they argue, who disturbed the newly achieved balance between republics and provinces, and who destroyed the tranquillity of Tito's moribund successors. At the same time, Milošević introduced the masses into politics, using them as a source of pressure in the intra-elite conflicts. Although many authors share this conclusion, perhaps none have explained it better than Lukić and Lynch (1996:114):

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Yugoslavia. The most useful biography of Tito in Serbo-Croat is Dedijer (1953 and 1981), and in English those of Pavlowitch (1992) and Djilas (1981). West (1994) and Ridley (1995), Gow (1997) and Tepavac (1997) are useful too. Good guidance to literature on Tito is offered by Pavlowitch (1992).

<sup>30</sup> The full titles of Milošević's posts since 1986 are: President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia (1986-1989); President of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (1989 – 1990); President of the Republic of Serbia (1990 - 1997), and President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1997-). In the thesis shorter versions of these titles will be used. For Milošević, useful sources are: Cohen (1997), Djilas (1993), Djukić (1994), Ramet (1991), Vujačić (1995) and Thomas (1999).

<sup>31</sup> An exceptional treatment for Tito was introduced already in the 1963 Constitution. Article 220 of this Constitution limits the time in office for a President of the Republic to two consecutive terms, but it adds: 'There is no limitation in the case of Josip Broz Tito' (Petranović and Štrbac, 1977:III:73).

<sup>32</sup> Immediately after Tito's death a slogan was invented by the political elite: 'After Tito – Tito'. In a joke it read - 'After Tito, Titanic'.

'Had Slobodan Milošević not emerged as *Duce* in Serbia, Yugoslavia might have evolved gradually after the end of the East-West geopolitical division of Europe into an asymmetric federation or confederation.'<sup>33</sup>

The *role of personalities* approach is part of a wider argument by intentionalists among historians. The two schools developed their arguments during the 1980s when analysing Hitler's role in the rise and fall of the Third Reich: while the intentionalists focus their research on the mind and intentions of political actors, the functionalists argued that structures and institutions, or the system's automatic mechanisms for 'cumulative radicalisation' could explain the politics of the Third Reich better than Hitler's personal beliefs and intentions.<sup>34</sup> Several moderate versions of these two polarised schools emerged in the debate, such as Browning's 'moderate functionalism', Burrin's 'conditional intentionalism', etc.

In this thesis an attempt to articulate a moderate intentionalist position is made. I share Browning's conclusion that the two contrasting positions are unduly polarised. But, unlike Browning, who emphasised institutional factors in his 'moderate functionalism', I stress the role of personalities over institutions. I conclude that the subjective (personal) factors are enormously important in politics and yet are often neglected. This neglect is the result of relying on 'objective factors' and of the 'inevitability' hypothesis, both of which are developed within mainstream social science approaches and both of which are rejected here.

Josip Broz was certainly the central figure of Yugoslav post-war history, in the same way that Slobodan Milošević is certainly the most important character in the post-Yugoslav drama and the one whom any scholar of this discipline must study. Large sections of this thesis are an attempt to do so. One needs, however, to be wary of being trapped by the other extreme. Yugoslavia did not exist or collapse because of one person only, even if its politics has often in the past been largely determined by the will of a single strong man. Both Tito and Milošević (and any other political leader) can be understood only within the context of the political processes that brought them to power and enabled them to influence politics in such a powerful way. They were just as much 'products' as they were initiators of political trends. They had to take into consideration the interests of other participants in politics and to find a compromise between their own views and interests and those of others. As this thesis illustrates, it is the complexity of intra-elite politics that one must not neglect when analysing Yugoslav politics. The *role of personality* argument often does exactly this.

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<sup>33</sup> This thesis is also popular in all parts of the former Yugoslavia which seceded, or would like to secede: it was Milošević who made the whole difference. A similar conclusion is now widely accepted by those who argue that the removal of Milošević is a *conditio sine qua non* of the effective re-integration of the FRY into the world community of states. This demand insists that the role of Milošević in Serbian politics is absolutely crucial. The conclusion is in its most direct form expressed by Wheeler (May 1999).

<sup>34</sup> The terms were coined by Mason (1981). More about this debate in Browning (1992) and Breitman (1991).

Milošević came to power as a representative of the main trends in Serbian politics before him, and followed in many respects a policy of continuity with his predecessors. The historical context in which Milošević emerged as the undisputed leader of Serbia is often underestimated. This neglect has resulted in the failure to properly understand his intentions, (as demonstrated, for example, during the 1999 war in Serbia). In this thesis some suggestions are offered on how to read and understand Milošević and his actions. They are based on reading Milošević's texts within their context. Failure to do so, I argue, is due to several methodological mistakes, such as – for example – the *ideal type* mistake, the *prolepsis* hypothesis, the *coherence* hypothesis, etc., as explained by Skinner (1988).

While focusing on Milošević, one should also not lose sight of other actors in Yugoslav politics, who influenced Milošević's own actions. Post-Titoist politics was to a large extent conducted on an anti-personality-cult rule. It was an attempt to prevent the emergence of strong leaders. As explained in Chapters Four and Five, many politicians attempted to resolve the growing economic and political problems before Milošević. Unlike many other similar attempts to explain disintegration of Yugoslavia, this thesis devotes some attention to them too.

### 1.1.7. The *Fall of Empires* Argument

The *fall of empires* argument formulated by Erik Hobsbawm,<sup>35</sup> argues that instead of becoming a nation state constructed by liberals (as was originally planned, following the idea of the self-determination of nations), Yugoslavia developed as a multi-ethnic 'empire', much on the model of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires that had prior to her creation included its main regions.<sup>36</sup> The concept of an empire was much more successful in the post-war period under Tito, 'the last Habsburg' (as A J P Taylor called him) who was much less identified with any ethnic group than King Alexander, due to the internationalist ideology he professed. As a communist, to whom national allegiance was secondary to ideological affiliation, Tito became a supra-national arbiter in inter-ethnic conflicts. Legitimised by the internationalist ideology and not in parliamentary elections, Tito was not a representative of any existing group, but of a

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<sup>35</sup> In an interview with the author, in June 1996. Along these lines, in an interview I conducted in May 1996 (published in *Arkzin* in June 1996), Tolis Malakos argues that the idea of the nation state, imported from the West to the Balkans, produced conflicts both in the inter-war period (with the attempt to create a Yugoslav nation-state) and in the aftermath of the 1991 disintegration of Yugoslavia. He argues that Yugoslavia had a chance only as a new 'Ottoman Empire', a multi-ethnic entity, not as a nation state. Malakos, being a Marxist himself, comes close to Kardelj's understanding of the national question in Yugoslavia.

<sup>36</sup> Kedourie (1991) points out similarities in the new world (dis)order following the fall of the Austrian-Hungarian and 'Soviet' Empires. In both cases, Kedourie says, small states emerged as a result of self-determination, but it soon proved that not many among them were democratic.



specific vision of the future.<sup>37</sup> The gradual replacement of the ideological leadership with more representative leaders of republics and provinces meant the abandonment of this supra-national position at the top of 'the empire'. Unlike Tito and Kardelj (in the ideological sphere), the rulers of post-Titoist Yugoslavia could not be seen as impartial arbiters but more as representatives of their segments of society. Without an impartial arbiter in both ideological and political conflicts, the stability of Yugoslavia was undermined. The transition from an empire-like ideological structure to a fragmented semi-confederalist system was institutionalised by the 1974 Constitution, which treated Tito as a constitutional exception. The 1974 Constitution was to large extent the beginning of the de-Titoisation of Yugoslavia, which in real terms started only after his death six years later. The system was projected to prevent anyone else becoming a new arbiter in the post-Titoist period. Tito was in this respect, indeed, not only 'the last Habsburg' but 'the only true Yugoslav'.<sup>38</sup> Milošević's ambition to replace Tito in the late 1980s was indeed impossible, since the space of power occupied by Tito was now not only empty (Vejvoda, 1994) but non-existent in constitutional terms too. In order to become the new Tito (which is how his supporters initially saw him), Milošević had to change the Constitution and destroy the existing political system of semi-confederalism. But unlike Tito, Milošević could not have been seen as impartial. He did not profess an ideology that would make him supra-national. On the contrary: identifying himself too closely with only one ethnic group (the Serbs), he antagonised the others. Just like King Alexander (but unlike Tito) Milošević was a representative of the Serbian political elite and not a person without links with any separate ethnic group prior to his (potential) accession to the Yugoslav throne. Milošević was hence a Tito in reverse. In order to become a real Tito, he needed to turn the whole system upside-down. When he attempted to do this, the others decided to leave.

Although the 'fall of the Empire arguments' links various elements of other approaches (such as the weakness of nationalism; the role of personality; modernization and democratisation; the role of ideology, etc.), it is difficult to see how Yugoslavia can be compared to real Empires, in which there generally was a dominant nation and which used colonial expansion in order to lower tensions inside the metropole. Yugoslavia was perhaps an ideological Empire, but in this approach similarities with real empires of the past are certainly exaggerated.

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<sup>37</sup> Religious differences were also abandoned among the Communists. Furthermore, unlike King Alexander, Tito was not a member of the ruling elite before he became the Yugoslav leader.

<sup>38</sup> Reportedly, Tito realised this too late; in 1978 when his wartime general Vukmanović Tempo told him that there was no Yugoslavia any longer, and no Party. The Yugoslav former Foreign Secretary Mirko Tepavac (ousted as a 'liberal' in 1972) recalls a conversation with Tito in Autumn 1971, when Tito said: 'If you saw what I see for the future in Yugoslavia, it would scare you' (1987:73). In 1973 Tito told Dara Janeković that if all that she had reported to him about the situation in the country was rue, then he had 'spent [his] life in vain' (interview with Janeković, April 1998). Publicly, however, Tito never expressed any doubt about the future of Yugoslavia.

In this thesis, the historical approach to analysing politics, based on analysing the subjective within its context is offered as an alternative to various social science approaches, based primarily on objective factors (economic, international politics, ethnic divisions, etc.). This chapter proceeds to examine the reasons for selecting the historical approach and my own position on how to analyse political events in general. This position will then be followed as the main analytical framework of this thesis.

## 1.2. The Analytical Approach of this Thesis

Although all the approaches analysed above (with exception of the *ethnic hatred* argument) have added some valuable contributions to our understanding of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, they have sometimes neglected the missing link between the 'objective' factors (such as economic crisis, ethnic structure of population, international politics, etc.) and the perceptions of these elements by political actors themselves and their resultant actions. It is this missing link that I attempt to establish here. I argue that much of the misunderstanding of the actual events I am concerned with is the result of the underestimation of the importance of the subjective in politics. Politics is, I argue, a field of human interaction and not just the reflection of some external, 'objective' elements, such as economic, demographic, geopolitical etc., trends. Although political actors normally do not act entirely independently from these objective factors, the way they perceive them and how they react to them depends on their beliefs, perceptions of interests, values, personal characteristics, etc. These subjective factors are exposed to permanent change and are thus unstable.<sup>39</sup>

Although political change often comes as a surprisingly fast set of events, it is normally the result of the accumulation of discontent over the years that preceded it. The Yugoslav example illustrates the importance of the interaction between the long-term crisis of the system and quick and sudden change ('anti-bureaucratic revolution', actions in declaring independence in Slovenia and Croatia, etc.) in the final phase of the crisis. It is for this reason that one needs to focus not only on the 'revolutionary' phase, but on its prelude as well.

This dissertation is, in fact, an analysis of past political events but also of political concepts and ideas. In Kedourie's terms (1996), it is a political history and intellectual history at the same

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<sup>39</sup> Pizzorno (1984) points out how common it is that over time one loses interest in something for which one was once ready even to die. The Yugoslav example also demonstrates how much people can change their political beliefs: not only 'ordinary people' but also (perhaps even more) members of the political, economic, military and intellectual elites. The political elites in Eastern Europe were taken by surprise when various 'revolutions' happened in their countries, no less than Western observers. Perhaps the best example is Romania's Ceausescu, who convened a public rally to support his position, only to find that he had lost all support 'practically overnight'. In fact, revolutions – *per definitionem* – always take rulers by surprise. But, in fact, none of these changes came 'overnight', as the participants and some analysts sometimes argue. As this thesis demonstrates, the disintegration of Yugoslavia was only the end result of a long prelude in which most of its elements had been 'tested' and fully developed.

time. Analysis of a communist system is incomplete if it does not include both dimensions. In communist systems political actions were attempts to implement a set of ideas in political reality. Politics in Communist-led societies was - to use Voegelin's expression (1952:70) - a 'representation of truth', defined by certain texts and interpreted by the Party (the 'subjective force' of socialism) just as much as it was the representation of certain interests or preferences of its main participants - the political elites. Communist politics is about the realisation of the truth, in which the Party - as Kardelj explained - has the role almost of a scientific institute.<sup>40</sup> It is a collective intellectual.<sup>41</sup>

The intellectual debates within the political elite were in fact, if not the main acts of politics, then certainly the most suitable medium of real political struggle. As Irvine argues, 'control over the actual meaning of language became essential to those regimes' ideological and symbolic sources of legitimation' (1997:6). Political conflicts in the socialist societies of Eastern Europe had often been expressed as a linguistic debate over the 'correct' interpretation of Marxism.<sup>42</sup> The main idea behind these conflicts was that there is only one correct way of understanding Marx's message and that the Party was entitled to act as an arbiter between conflicting interpretations, when they occurred. In reality, however, many interpretations emerged, struggling for the status of the official one. The level of liberalisation of a communist system was indicated by the presence (or absence) of alternative (non-official) interpretations of Marxist ideology. Since no other (non-Marxist) ideology was allowed to compete with Marxism, the intra-party debate on the real meaning of Marxism covered a much larger spectrum of issues than an observer in a democratic (ideologically pluralised) society would expect. In more strict times when liberalisation was in retreat, defeat in the struggle for the 'correct' interpretation resulted in expulsion from public life, or even persecution, under the label of 'revisionism'.

The main question I am addressing in this thesis is - why did political actors act as they did? Why did their actions make sense to them? What were their *rationale*, their motives for action

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<sup>40</sup> More on this will be said in Chapter Two.

<sup>41</sup> As Stipe Šuvar pointed out in an interview for this thesis, the leading Yugoslav party ideologues (Kardelj and Bakarić) were influenced by Gramsci's ideas and wanted to introduce some institutions derived from the Italian Communist Party. It is for this reason that the main conflicts between the elites and *dissidents* in communist societies took the form of a conflict between the politicians and the intelligentsia. This was equally the case in Central and South-Eastern Europe, where intellectuals traditionally played a 'messianic' role in nationalist movements. In the Yugoslav case, as illustrated in the last two chapters, the new (nationalist) *visionaries* saw their chance after the death of the previous generation of (communist) *visionaries*. Among them was Dobrica Ćosić, who said that the writers and intellectuals in non-democratic states had 'assumed the role of the conscience of the nation and society, the role of prophet and spiritual saviour as they did in the age of national romanticism' (1992:18). In Serbia, in which Ćosić himself was firstly the most prominent member of the 'Critical Intelligentsia' and then the first President of the FR Yugoslavia (1992-93), they 'have been bringing about the spiritual rebirth of Serbian society' (1992:20). Similar examples could be found elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

<sup>42</sup> The Eighth Session of the CC LC Serbia (analysed in Chapter Six of this thesis) is an example of this. Excellent sources on the importance of language in communist politics are Waller (1972) and Bogdanović (1988).

and their intentions? If one really wants to understand the rationale behind the actions of the Yugoslav communists, he/she needs to take their own beliefs seriously. What is relevant here is not whether these actions make sense to us but whether they made sense to them, to those whose actions we analyse and to the relevant segment of the political body upon whose approval the stability of the regime depended. It is not the aim of this thesis to judge the actions taken by the Yugoslav elite in either favourable or unfavourable terms, but to explain them by understanding the reasons the actors had for them. I am attempting to reconstruct and present these reasons.

In doing so, I rely on Quentin Skinner's theory of analysing the meaning and understanding of words and actions in their mutual interaction.<sup>43</sup> It is also in Skinner's warnings about possible problems of historical analysis that I find useful guidance for my own research.

Skinner warns about two extremes in analysing intellectual history - one linked to overestimating the context in which a text occurs; the other doing the opposite - neglecting the context by arguing that the text itself can be understood without much reference to the context. When it comes to the context, this dissertation aims at correcting inaccurate interpretations of the intentions and actions of the main Yugoslav politicians based on the *myth of coherence* and the *myth of the ideal type*.

The myth of coherence is an attempt to find a coherence in one's ideas and actions at all costs. Coherence may be found 'horizontally' or 'vertically' in time. When 'horizontal', the coherence is sought in actions by members of some group, even if they differ in most relevant matters. When 'vertical', the coherence is sought in actions of the same actor over time. The myth of coherence, therefore, neglects or underestimates changes that occur over time and denies plurality within social groups.

The myth of the ideal type is an attempt to reconstruct the meaning of intentions and actions in accordance with previously constructed ideal types, categories such as 'nationalists', 'communists', 'liberals', 'democrats', etc., that have been defined in certain ways by social scientists. The ideal types are constructed on more or less exact observations, but can also be influenced by stereotypes and prejudice about certain groups and actors.

Both types of myths linked to context in reality use the methodological apparatus of mainstream social science (especially of 'scientific naturalists', as Ricci names them, 1984:92) in order to construct generally applicable models of analysis. In doing so, they more often than not

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<sup>43</sup> The interpretation of Skinner's position in this section is based on his essays edited by James Tully and published in Skinner (1988).

blur our understanding of a particular event. For example, once we label a person X as a 'nationalist', there is a danger of attempting to 'retrieve' the meaning of what he said, or did not say, from what one expects a 'nationalist' to say or not say. These two mistakes (the *coherence* and *ideal type*) are the basis on which controversies or changes of mind are often dismissed as yet another 'proof of caution', or as 'just a tactic', while there is a 'real' (and often hidden) agenda that in fact determines people's actions. Therefore, for example, when a person X attacks nationalism - regardless of how strong this attack might be - many are still inclined to believe that this is only because she had to hide her true beliefs, not because she really meant what she said. Even if one does something contrary to what is expected from a certain ideal type this would be taken just as a 'tactical move', not a real indication of change. Although these analysts focus their research on the subjective, they still make the mistake of not looking at changes over time and of trying to situate actors within certain ideal type categories.

In this thesis I try to avoid the myths of coherence and of ideal types, arguing that we need to take political actors seriously if we want to understand them. To take them seriously, however, does not imply we should believe their words only: on the contrary, we should never neglect the context in which these words were expressed and actions that preceded and followed them. This is why this dissertation is not a pure discourse analysis, but goes further by situating discourses in the context of practical politics.

Another methodological mistake that this dissertation warns about is identified by Skinner as the *myth of prolepsis*. This mistake is committed when one relies for one's interpretation on events that happened after the political decision was taken, assuming that there was a causal link between the action and its result. The assumption here is that the result of somebody's action was always intentional, and that once we know the results (or even, more precisely, only then) we can fully understand the real intentions, the real meaning of the words and actions that 'caused' such results. If the break-up of Yugoslavia was a consequence, then it had to be the result of the intentions of the main political actors. Or, to take Skinner's example - if totalitarian ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century claimed they were based on Rousseau's writings, then Rousseau's writing was somehow responsible for totalitarianism. Intentionalists would claim that very few, if any, event in history happened unless it was part of someone's intentions.

The analysis here, however, suggests a different conclusion. An in-depth analysis of the speeches and actions of the main Yugoslav politicians in the fifteen years before the actual disintegration of Yugoslavia shows that not many political actors (and especially not many of those within the political elite) really wanted Yugoslavia to collapse. On the contrary, most of them intended to 'save' it by either reforming or preserving various elements of its constitution and political practice. To most of the political actors, as to many analysts, the disintegration of Yugoslavia came as a surprise, not as an 'inevitable' result of their pre-meditated actions. Yet,

once it happened, many claimed they 'knew' it would happen, or even that they had wanted it to happen. Sometimes, when reminded of historical sources (such as speeches or actions by politicians), the radical intentionalists would claim this was only a public statement, while 'real' intentions were something else.

Finally, yet another set of methodological mistakes Skinner calls the *mythology of parochialism*: attempts to apply our own criteria to another culture, without sufficient effort to approach the meaning of actions from within the context in which they happened. This was perhaps the most frequent mistake by Western policy-makers in the Yugoslav crisis. An assumption that Yugoslavia would not disintegrate, because its disintegration would be 'irrational' for the interests of the main participants, was based on the pure extension of our understanding of rationality to an area in which different criteria of rationality were valid. It is always a mistake to neglect the actual context in which an action takes place. And it would be an even greater mistake to understand this context incorrectly.

Without entering into a debate on meaning and understanding in any more detail than necessary to explain the methodology and main thesis of this dissertation, I shall now conclude this overview of Skinner's methodology by saying that if we wish to understand action, we cannot simply concentrate on the words alone. The analysis of the rhetoric of the main political actors is always only a first step – necessary but not sufficient. One needs to study the situations in which the words are used, and what the author was doing in saying and/or not saying something. Ignoring the practical context of political actions will not help us understand them, and this is precisely what this dissertation demonstrates.

This dissertation aims at following the interaction between Kardelj's interpretation of Marxist ideology and the political context in which this concept was implemented. As Tully (1998) argues, to place the text in its political context means to treat it in interaction with 'the collection of texts written or used in the same period, addressed to the same or similar issues and sharing a number of conventions'. Such interaction will help us to reveal the intentions of the political participants when they spoke or acted in a certain way. It is for this reason that in many places of this thesis, the main discourses by participants are presented and analysed. It is only within their context that one may understand the actions that followed.

In saying this, one must be aware that no explanation of people's 'real intentions' can be perfect if by 'intentions' one understands the thoughts of the political actors. Political analysts, surely, do not hold the key to an actor's mind. But, as Skinner concluded, 'when we claim to have recovered the intentions embodied in texts, we are engaged in nothing more mysterious than this process of placing them within whatever contexts make sense of them.' It is not that we try to reach peculiarly inaccessible mental causes operating in the privacy of the mind, but only to

explain the reasons behind behaving in certain ways, 'to exhibit certain skills and capacities in conventional ways'. Unlike Derrida, Skinner points out that 'the intentions with which anyone performs any successful act of communication must, *ex hypothesi*, be publicly legible' (1988:279).

'Suppose I come to understand that the man waving his arms in the next field is not trying to chase away a fly, but is warning me that the bull is about to charge. To recognize that he is warning me is to understand the intentions with which he is acting. But to recover these intentions is not a matter of identifying the ideas inside his head at the moment when he first begins to wave his arms. It is merely a matter of grasping the fact that arm-waving can count as warning, and that this is the convention that he is exploiting in this particular case. Nothing in the way of 'empathy' is required, since the meaning of the episode is entirely public and intersubjective. As a result, the intentions with which the man is acting can be inferred from an understanding of the significance of the act itself' (1988:279).

It is in this way that I understand the meaning of intentions in this thesis. For Skinner, some intentions really may be irrecoverable, but this is simply on account of there being insufficient information about their context to permit an ascription of intention in a particular case: 'some utterances are completely lacking in the sorts of context from which alone one can hope to infer the intentions with which they were uttered' (1988:280). In this thesis we believe that most intentions are normally identifiable, but only if we make an effort to understand the context in which they occur.<sup>44</sup>

The fact that sometimes we have to admit that there is something we cannot explain since the actors themselves often cannot explain their own actions, however, should not prevent us from approaching this aim as closely as possible. Not even the most radical positivist approaches to the study of politics would claim we can explain everything. The point made in this dissertation is that we are more successful when avoiding these methodological mistakes. This is what this dissertation is aiming at.

In the next chapter we will focus on the historical and ideological context which influenced the development of the Kardelj concept, the original Yugoslav interpretation of Marxism upon which the Yugoslav political system was structured in the period we analyse in this thesis. Without an understanding of this concept, I argue, one would fail to understand the actions that followed. In Chapter Three we analyse these actions in relation to the concept itself. Then we move on to explaining the failure of Kardelj's concept (in Chapters Four and Five) and the emergence of alternative concepts, most explicitly in Serbia and Slovenia (Chapters Six and Seven). I argue that the break-down of the ideological consensus within the Yugoslav political elite during an extended period of almost two decades was the main reason for the actual disintegration of Yugoslav institutions.

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<sup>44</sup> For a debate on Skinner's position see Skinner, 1988 and McBride, 1996.

## Chapter Two:

# The *Kardelj* concept: Constructing the *Fourth Yugoslavia* (1974-1990)

The unity of the nation is not possible unless based on a clear platform, on a clear outlook for the future development of society.

Edvard Kardelj (1977:263)

### 2.0. Introduction

From the very beginning of the *Yugoslav idea*, and in all attempts to create a Yugoslav state, the main question was to be asked again and again: *What is Yugoslavia?* To what extent was it *an association of communities* and how far a *community in itself*?

The entire Yugoslav inter-war multipartism, as well as the main conflicts within the ruling Communist elite in post-war Yugoslavia were basically structured along the long-lasting division produced on this fundamental issue. The main constitutional question had been answered several times, and challenged soon after fragile agreements had been made. Even the minor conflicts between political groupings in Yugoslavia had by and large been expressions of differences on this cleavage.

There were four different constitutive concepts regarding the main question of (co)existence of (between) Yugoslav nation(s) between 1918 and 1992: 1) the model of 'national unity'; 2) the model of '*Agreement Yugoslavism*'; 3) the model of 'brotherhood and unity' federalist Yugoslavism; and 4) the *Kardelj* model, which could be best described as model of 'associated labour inter-national Yugoslavism'. In this chapter we first briefly analyse the three earlier models, only to focus on the last – fourth constitutive concept of Yugoslavia, formulated during the constitutional debate of the 1967-1974 period. The three previous constitutive concepts provided the historical context for the fourth one. Kardelj's concept of the Brioni Yugoslavia was an attempt to construct reality in a different – and for most of its content – opposite way from



what had been in either of the three previous phases. In Skinner's terms – one cannot understand Kardelj (and Yugoslav communists in general) without knowing the contexts available to him. The first step one needs to take in analysing political actions based on ideological concepts is, therefore, 'to situate the text in its linguistic or ideological context: the collection of texts written or used in the same period, addressed to the same or similar issues and sharing a number of conventions' (Skinner, 1988:9). The ideological context for understanding Kardelj is Marxism. The concepts against which he constructed his own alternative were: (1) inter-war Yugoslavism ('national unity') and (2) the Soviet interpretation of Marxism. This chapter addresses the question of 'what was the author doing in writing a text in relation to other available texts which made up [these two] ideological context[s]'. To a lesser extent we shall also address other questions proposed by Skinner, such as 'what was the author doing in writing a text in relation to viable and problematic political action which made up the political context'. This question will be discussed in the following chapters in which we further examine the relationship between the Kardelj concept and political action that aimed at implementing it in reality.

## 2.1. Four Constitutive Concepts

### 2.1.1. King Alexander's '*National Unity*' Yugoslavism (1918-1939)

According to the doctrine of *national unity*, the Serbs, Croats and the Slovenes were on their way to forming a single - Yugoslav - nation. The existence of three *tribes* ('plemena') (as the official ideology treated Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but not any other ethnic group within Yugoslavia, like the Bosnian Muslims, Montenegrins and Slavonic Macedonians), who had lived in different empires (Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman) and had different religions, was recognized as a transitional fact. Yugoslavia would be a vehicle for the development of a *Yugoslav identity* and a *Yugoslav nation*. The ideas of separate political identities should be suppressed and eliminated from political life. The constitutional structure of the *Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* (as the first South Slav state was called) was constructed to help the transition of identities: from tribal separateness to *Yugoslavism*. The country was first administrated in 31 units, deliberately organised to transmit these identities, then in nine counties (*banovine*), none of which was named after a dominant *tribe* (Dragnich, 1995).

This idea basically corresponded to the nation-state vision of Yugoslavia, with a Yugoslav nation being only in the process of being built. The Yugoslav idea as it emerged among the South Slavs in Austro-Hungary was a nationalist idea. The emergence of the Yugoslav state in December 1918 was the result of the principle of self-determination, and of the understanding of its main

creators that the South Slavs (both those within the former Austro-Hungary and those in the South-Slavonic regions that belonged to the Ottoman Empire), if not already one nation (unfortunately divided between two empires), then were for sure becoming a nation. Once they had created their own state, they would have naturally strengthened their *oneness*. The state institutions, and most of all - the King himself - were in the first place *constructors* of a Yugoslav identity. Once this identity emerged, the country could be fully democratic, but in the meantime it should be *guided towards this goal*. Although the very idea of Yugoslav unity emerged among intellectual elites in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the state - once created - became an instrument of the Yugoslav idea promoted from 'above'. Its content came to be decided at the top of the social pyramid and to be transmitted to the base.

But this idea met with strong opposition from both Croatian and Serbian nationalists, who could not simply accept the disappearance of the separate identities of their respective *tribes/nations*. The Croats warned that Serbs were overwhelmingly dominant in Yugoslav institutions between 1918 and 1941. In the 268 months of the First Yugoslavia, Serbs held the office of Prime Minister for 264 months, the office of Minister of the Army and Navy for the entire 268 months, the interior ministry for 240 months, that of foreign affairs for 247 months, finance for 216 months, education for 236 and justice for 237 months. The Orthodox (Serbs, Montenegrins and Macedonians) formed 86.5 percent of the pre-war Yugoslav generals and 70.2 percent of the entire number of Army officers. At the same time, their share of the total population was 49.3 percent. Was it then really an impartial and *Yugoslav* policy, or only an extended Serbian policy under the name of *Yugoslavism*?

Ultimately, Yugoslavia was unified on terms closer to the Serbian proposals for a new Kingdom, which was to be organised on the idea of national unity and therefore centralised to a large extent. The readiness of Croats to agree to Serbian ideas was largely determined by fears of Italian, Hungarian and Austrian *revanchism* - and it seemed that they were united more by *negative considerations* (what would happen if they did not unite?) than *positive bonds*.

The Croat question, therefore, became the fundamental question of the First Yugoslavia. It was strengthened by the fact that the Croats were themselves unified within one state for the first time in their political history. To Yugoslav integralism they opposed their own Croatian integralism; to Yugoslav nationalism - their Croatian nationalism; to the project of *Yugoslav unity*, their own project of Croatian rights to their own state. This was a conflict of two emerging polities, which could not grow up together, since they feared that the very existence of the one would necessarily endanger the identity of the other.

On the other hand, many Serbs also had a problem in accepting Yugoslavism. Having a state of their own before unification, some of them challenged the very reasons for unification and the benefits for the Serbs themselves from it. The political conflicts in the new country split Serbian public opinion into *pro-Serb* and *pro-Yugoslav* policy orientations. This division was to become a constant in the Serbian polity up to the present day.<sup>1</sup>

Negotiating with both Serbs and Croats, the King Alexander entered into open conflict with both sides, though (in view of the nature of their demands and the strength of their manifestation) more with the Croats than with the Serbs. His rule became more autocratic than any side wanted. His *idealistic Yugoslavism* conflicted with the reality of strong nationalist support for the Serb and Croat hard-liners. All of this only helped to build separate national identities for the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes - a goal completely opposite to the wishes of the *integralist Yugoslavs*.

In such circumstances Yugoslavia went from one crisis to another. Formed as a result of the Great War, its very existence was challenged by the revisionist claims coming from neighbouring countries, both in Central and Southeast Europe. Powers that were traditionally influential in the region but excluded from the Versailles negotiations, Germany and Russia (since 1922: Soviet Union), questioned the *Versailles* structure of Europe, of which Yugoslavia was part and in which it played a prominent role. Unable to find an acceptable path of internal cohesion, Yugoslavia seemed to be kept together more because of the common fear their constitutive *tribes* felt in the face of external threats than because of internal pressure for unity. However, it should not be forgotten that the tradition of Serbo-Croat co-operation, developed first between the Serbs and Croats in the former Austro-Hungary, did not completely vanish. Both the opposition and the government were of multi-ethnic composition. Though the national question was a serious and unifying force (especially for the Slovenes and Croats), the vote for each of the largest parties was still derived from various parts of the country (Banac, 1984: 389). Coalitions between parties were trans-ethnic as well.

When the Croat leader Stjepan Radić died after he had been wounded by a Montenegrin (Serb) nationalist MP Puniša Račić in the chamber of the Yugoslav Assembly in 1928, Alexander declared a personal dictatorship, abrogated the Constitution, banned political parties and announced a new wave of Yugoslavization. The country was finally named Yugoslavia, with an Army General as prime minister. Although Alexander intended to further strengthen Yugoslavism by banning all separate national parties and renaming the country, his action was

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<sup>1</sup> For this see Pavković (1997), and also Čosić (1992) and Popović (1985). More on the debate between *Serb* and *Yugoslav* groups within the Serbian political and cultural elites in Chapters Three and Six of this thesis.

also an act of recognition that only ten years after the all-embracing unification, the Yugoslavs were brought to defend their state unity by a Royal *coup d'etat*. Being defended by a dictatorship, the Yugoslav idea could not expect to win approval among the Yugoslav democrats. Although Alexander's authoritarianism was not a unique phenomenon in inter-war Eastern Europe (nor should it be compared with the dictatorships of Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s) the first attempt to build a democratic Yugoslavia clearly failed. The symbolic death of this the concept of 'national unity' was to be seen in the assassination in October 1934 of the Unifier King Alexander by Croat and Macedonian separatists in Marseilles.

### 2.1.2. Prince Paul's *Sporazum* Yugoslavia (1939-1941)

King Alexander's cousin Prince Paul reigned on behalf of the late King's son Peter who was still a minor from 1934 to 1941. The fear of internal dissolution and the external threat to the security of Yugoslavia made him think of a new constitutional arrangement between the country's constitutive nations. Since the *Croat question* was the most important issue and increasingly threatened to become an international issue as well as an eternal obstacle to any sustainable internal unity, Prince Paul moved towards a policy of a new agreement between the Serbs and the Croats.

After several failures, he succeeded in softening both Croat and Serbian radical demands. On the Serb side, he had to secure support for a substantial change to the *integral Yugoslavism* doctrine. On the Croat side, ideas of separatism (which were encouraged by foreign forces, particularly by Italy) had to be defeated.

The final agreement was reached in August 1939 between the Yugoslav Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković (the Prince Regent's personal representative, a leader of the Yugoslav Radical Union), and the leader of the opposition, the Croat Vladko Maček. According to the *Sporazum (Agreement)*, the Croats were given autonomy within the administrative unit called *Banovina Croatia*. Both the name of the newly established unit, and the competencies that were given to it (all but foreign policy, financial policy, the army and transport) indicated that the Crown acknowledged Croatian separateness and its right to be defined as a political entity. By this recognition, the official Yugoslav project was redefined from one of *Integral Yugoslavism* to *Agreement Yugoslavism*. Yugoslavia was no longer projected as a country which would nullify ethnic differences between its '*tribes*', but as a common framework within which there was one (Croatian) separate entity which should be recognised.

Acknowledgement of the autonomy only of the Croats and not of the others produced new political and social antagonisms between different ethnic groups in the country. The Serb intellectual and political circles argued that *Agreement Yugoslavia* was to the advantage of the Croats and to the disadvantage of the Serbs (Dragnich, 1983:123-134). It is difficult to agree entirely with such a conclusion. First, because it was still a country in which the Serbs kept the most important positions, such as the monarchy, the army, the police and the main political posts. Secondly, because the Agreement really made the common institutions stronger. While the Croats before had no policy for Yugoslavia, considering Yugoslavia almost to be only an area of Croat foreign policy (A. Djilas, 1991:134), they now accepted some responsibility for the future of the country.

However, the opposition to the *Agreement* was sufficiently strong to check its implementation wherever possible. There were several sources of criticism. First, the *integralists* (with strong support in the military) argued that it led to Croat separatism and that it was basically unconstitutional. Another group of critics was organized within the previously *United Opposition*, which considered Maček's agreement with the ruling party a betrayal of the opposition. They were basically right when they argued that Maček was not interested in democracy so much as in the solution of the Croat question. Finally, two groups that were not very influential at that time (but played an important role later, during the second world war) also opposed the *Agreement*. The Croat separatists, located then in Italy and Hungary under the command of Ante Pavelić (later the Head of the Independent State of Croatia) saw the Agreement as nothing but a *life-boat* for Yugoslavia that was to be sunk in the *new world order* promised by the Nazis and Fascists. On the other hand, the Communist Party (the fourth strongest Yugoslav party in the 1920 parliamentary elections, outlawed a year later) had an ambivalent attitude towards the *Agreement*. They welcomed the abandonment of *integral Yugoslavism* and Prince Paul's move towards the real politics of ethnic separateness. But they considered the new compromise to be only an agreement between two national *bourgeoisies*, that had nothing to do with the real problems of the people. For the Communists, the real problem was that of social revolution. The real solution of the national question, Communists believed, could come only when exploitation ended. For both problems - the social and the national - there was only one solution - revolution (Kardelj, 1939).

All three opponents of the *Agreement* (separatists, communists, integralists) had been awaiting a suitable moment to attack it. When the government signed the acceptance of the Tripartite Pact (on rather good terms for Yugoslavia, and only in April 1941, when the rest of Europe had been either already occupied or was under severe attack from Germany) (Balfour, MacKay, 1980:215-240), they saw their moment. The *integralists*, led by the Air Force Commander Gen. Dušan

Simović, overthrew the Government in a *coup d'etat* on 27 March 1941. Prince Paul (Pavle) was replaced by King Peter II (still a minor) and forced to leave the country. The crowd on the streets of Belgrade claimed: *Better War than the Pact* ('*Bolje rat nego pakt*'), a slogan which entered the Yugoslav (especially Serb) mentality and remained there for years to come. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared that the Yugoslavs have found their soul. But soon afterwards they lost their country. After 17 days of resistance, the Yugoslav Army surrendered to the overwhelmingly stronger forces of occupiers, whose aim was not only to defeat Yugoslavia militarily, but also to dismember it.

The other two anti-Agreement forces - the Croat separatist Ustashas and the Yugoslav Communists - came also onto the stage. Yugoslavia, a formally non-existent country, occupied by four countries, entered on a liberation war, and at the same time (and sometimes with even greater intensity) a civil war between these three groups: Croatian separatists (Ustashe), Yugoslav integralists (under command of General Mihailović - linked with the royal government-in-exile) and Yugoslav Communists (led by Josip Broz Tito). Although the divisions were to a large extent between ethnic groups too, they often crossed ethnic lines, especially with the emergence of the only almost all-Yugoslav military and political force - the Partisans, Yugoslav anti-fascists led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It should be stressed that, although they differed in their stands on foreign occupation, the largest difference between these three forces was that they had different answers to the main questions: *What is Yugoslavia?* and: *Should there be a Yugoslavia at all?*

### **2.1.3. Tito's *Brotherhood and Unity* Federalist Yugoslavism**

Emerging out of the liberation struggle led by the Communists, the New Yugoslavia contrasted fundamentally with the Yugoslav Kingdom. As early as 1943, the King was temporarily and from November 1945 permanently banned from returning to the country. His troops on the ground (the Yugoslav Home Army under the command of General Draža Mihailović) were considered to be the main internal enemies (Djilas, 1981:12; Seton-Watson, 1985: 118-131).

In the years immediately after the Yugoslav unification (1918), the Communists had some specific difficulties regarding the Yugoslav idea and the Yugoslav state itself. They had changed their views on Yugoslavia several times between 1919 and 1936, regularly being a step behind the current Comintern policy. On the one hand, they argued that Yugoslavia was a product of the Versailles order which was an expression of imperialist intentions. Yugoslavia was a product of the anti-Soviet policy of 'containment' and also the 'Great-Serbian' bourgeoisie whose policy was driven by its imperial goals of exploiting other ethnic groups and classes in the country. But,

on the other hand, Yugoslavia was a chance for the working class to unite beyond the ethnic borders. The unification of the South Slavs was, therefore, considered as a positive step, provided that the 'second phase' of revolution (the proletarian one) followed the first - the bourgeois revolution of 1918. At one time, the Yugoslav Communists saw the future Communist Yugoslavia as the core of a future Balkan federation which would be a step towards the world-wide revolution, ending in a world-wide Soviet Union of Socialist Republics.<sup>2</sup> Another source of controversies was the internationalist orientation of the (Yugoslav) Communists. As defined by the 'national unity' concept, Yugoslavia was an instrument of Yugoslav (South Slav) nationalism - its main purpose was to create a Yugoslav nation. Being internationalists and recognising the separateness of the various 'constitutive nations' of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav communists opposed such a concept. However, exactly because they were internationalists, they also supported notion of co-operation and unity between (South Slav) nations within a wider framework of Yugoslavia. The controversy between co-operation between Yugoslav nations on the one hand and fears of 'unitarist concepts' of creating one single nation out of the various Yugoslav ethnic groups on the other, remained present throughout the existence of the post-war Yugoslav state.

The other reason for the scepticism of the Yugoslav communists towards the existence of Yugoslavia was to be found in the Marxist and Leninist doctrine the state should 'wither away' as communism approached. The very success of the Communist Party could be measured by the level of the state presence in reality. Now, if the state was withering away, did this mean that the Yugoslav state would disappear as well? How, therefore, could patriotism be reconciled with Communism? These dilemmas regarding Yugoslavism caused continual conflicts and purges within the Communist Party of Yugoslavia between 1919 and 1937.<sup>3</sup>

The Communist Party was banned in the Law on the Protection of the State (1921), after which the police took severe measures against its members. There was no political group in the country that hated Alexander more than the Communists did. Starting as the fourth largest political party in the first Yugoslav elections (1920) with 198,376 votes (Banac, 1984:389), they were reduced to no more than 700 members in 1924 (Pavlowitch, 1992:119). In the late 1930s the CPY had 1,500 members, most of whom were either imprisoned or had emigrated from Yugoslavia. However, being internationalists and having their supporters from various parts of the country,

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<sup>2</sup> Remnants of this thinking could be seen in Tito's policy towards Albania, Greece and Bulgaria in 1945-1948 period, and later in the *Balkan Pact* with Greece and Turkey in the early 1950s. As Dragosavac says in the interview conducted with the author in April 1998, Tito was the key figure in Balkan politics in the whole post-war period.

<sup>3</sup> More on this in Vlačić (1984). Vlačić (1978) and A. Djilas (1991) are good sources for understanding the CPY policy towards the 'national question' from the first days of the CPY (1919) throughout the inter-war period.

the Yugoslav Communists were the most ethnically pluralistic political group. But the members of the CPY were not really representatives of their national groups. They were united in revolutionary action by the international proletariat. For the Yugoslav Communists, the national question was the main potential source of revolution. Linked to the 'peasant question' (in the policy of the dominant Croat Peasants Party), it became the weakest point of the regime in the 1930s. In the whole inter-war period, but especially after the assassinations of the CPP leader Stjepan Radić (1928) and King Alexander (1934), the national question became the main source of popular discontent. Encouraged by Prince Paul's relatively moderate policy towards the opposition and by the Comintern *Popular Front* policy (1936-1939), the Yugoslav Communists (from 1936 effectively, and from 1937 officially, led by Josip Broz Tito) strengthened their ranks by paying special attention to the national question. At the Fourth Party Conference in 1934, Tito reportedly held the view that the Communists 'must take the lead in the national-liberation movement'. Consequently, in what was seen as 'the inauguration of the course towards creating a people's revolutionary party instead of an isolated, sectarian one',<sup>4</sup> two years later a separate Communist Party of Slovenia and in 1937 the Communist Party of Croatia were created by the CPY leadership. This was already a significant change towards recognising the ethnic separateness of Slovenes and Croats as a political fact two years before official Yugoslav politics moved towards the same recognition in the Serbo-Croat Agreement.

It was no surprise that Tito and Edvard Kardelj, the two leading men of the new CPY leadership after 1937, were opponents of 'integral Yugoslavism' and 'Panslavism'. Not only because they themselves were a Croat and a Slovene,<sup>5</sup> but because – as Communists – they had no reason to be fascinated by a policy that outlawed their party and imprisoned their comrades and themselves. But – more importantly than anything else – they saw the national question as the main potential starting-point of the social revolution in Yugoslavia. And also, they firmly believed that the national question could not be solved without a social revolution. The 'Great-Serbian bourgeoisie' was the common denominator for both types of exploitation: it exploited the working class as a bourgeoisie and it exploited at the same time the small Yugoslav nations for the sake of the 'Great-Serbian ideology'.

By the formation of the two national communist parties within the Yugoslav CP, the leading Yugoslav communists demonstrated their belief that the class and national questions were linked together. Slovenia, for example, could not be freed unless the 'Great-Serbian bourgeoisie' was

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<sup>4</sup> This assessment was given by an official document of the 11<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress in 1978: 'Three decades of the struggle of Yugoslav Communists for the socialist transformation of society and for new relations in the world' (1978:107-86).

<sup>5</sup> Actually, Tito's father was Croat while his mother was Slovene. He was born in a village next to the 'border' between the two 'countries' and spent the first seven years of his life with his family in Slovenia.



overthrown. Integral Yugoslavism and Pan-Slavism were not much more than a cover which had hidden the great-Serbian nature of the new state. The Slovene bourgeoisie, Kardelj said in his speech at the constitutive Congress of the CP Slovenia, were concerned not with Slovene interests, but with their own class interests. The best it could offer, Kardelj concluded, was cultural autonomy within Yugoslavia. But, the national question was not only a cultural or linguistic issue, it was a political issue as well. Consequently, the Slovene question could be solved only when the Slovenes formed their own state, with the full right to self-determination as whether or not they wanted to be united in a larger multi-national state such as Yugoslavia.<sup>6</sup> And they could remain a part of Yugoslavia only if and when they were not exploited but treated as an equal people in their own state. The bourgeois character of the state, Kardelj argued, was the main reason why the Slovenes did not have any more positive feelings for Yugoslavia than for the former Austro-Hungarian or Italian state. They were, the Declaration of the Founding Congress of the CP Slovenia said, divided between four countries by the Versailles peace accord, becoming, therefore, one of the main victims of post-war European imperialism.<sup>7</sup>

When Yugoslavia was occupied and divided into various administrative regions supervised or directly governed by the occupier in 1941, Kardelj's conclusions about 'bourgeois treachery' were easily seen as a good prediction. One Royal Government signed a treaty with Hitler, another went into exile as soon as the first bombs reached Belgrade.<sup>8</sup> There was, of course, no such option for the Yugoslav Communists, and when the Soviet Union was attacked on 22 June 1941, they invited the Yugoslavs to fight against the occupation.

But the Yugoslav Communists did not fight for just any Yugoslavia, nor did they think the old idea of Yugoslavia was worth fighting for.<sup>9</sup> They promised a fundamentally new Yugoslavia, one in which their constitutive peoples would be equal and free and in which the social justice would be achieved. In Tito's words, expressed as early as 1942:

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<sup>6</sup> This view was upheld by Slovenian politicians throughout the post-war Yugoslavia, and only re-emphasised with Milan Kučan (1986). Slovenian membership in Yugoslavia was conditional upon preservation of Slovene national identity.

<sup>7</sup> The four countries being Hungary, Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia. Slovenian efforts to re-unite their national territories within the new Slovenian republic (by including Carinthia and Trieste in it) characterised the whole post-war period until the mid-1970s. The resolution of this problem was also linked to the prevalence of Kardelj's concept, which claimed that borders between states would eventually disappear, and that Yugoslavia would then become an example of various ethnic groups living peacefully together. (See more on this further in this thesis).

<sup>8</sup> The accusation of 'treachery' was the reason why the Yugoslav Communists considered Gen. Mihailović's Chetniks to be their most dangerous internal enemy. If successful, Mihailović's troops would not only bring the old bourgeois system back, but would also show that this charge was unfounded. Additionally, Mihailović's troops were also the most radical exponents of the 'Great-Serbian' ideology.

<sup>9</sup> This view was repeated in the late 1980s by Josip Vrhovec, the Croatian representative in the Yugoslav Federal Presidency and on several occasions by Milan Kučan, the Slovene Party leader. Unlike the day of unification (1 December

'The words *national liberation struggle* would be nothing but words, and even deception, if they did not have, together with their meaning in the overall, Yugoslav context, a specifically national meaning for each people individually, if they did not mean, together with the liberation of Yugoslavia, the liberation at the same time, too, of Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, Macedonians, Arnauts [Albanians], Moslems and the rest; if the national liberation struggle did not contain the substance of effective freedom, equality and brotherhood for all the peoples of Yugoslavia. This is the real essence of the national liberation struggle' (Tito, 1942:3).

The new type of Yugoslavism, the vision of a federation of equal nations, motivated many non-communists (especially in areas outside Serbia) to join the communist-led Partisans. At certain moments, it looked as if the idea of national emancipation was emphasised much more strongly than the idea of social justice and revolution. In doing so, the Yugoslav communists demonstrated not only political pragmatism, but loyalty to its major allies in Moscow and London, who urged them to eliminate or suppress their revolutionary notions for the sake of Yugoslavian liberation. For a long period of time, the Yugoslav communists, including Tito himself, hesitated to reveal their ideological background, speaking only of Yugoslav patriotism (Seton-Watson, 1981:220). The slogan of 'brotherhood and unity' expressed this notion in the most graphic way. This notion, as well as open rejection of the 'old Yugoslavia' and its main institutions (foremost the Monarchy) seemed appealing to non-Serbian ethnic groups in the country. At the same time Yugoslav orientation and the courage of the Partisans demonstrated in battle against the occupier attracted many Serbs (especially those from the territories within the Independent State of Croatia - in today's Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) to Tito's Partisans. In fact, as Gow argues (1992:54), by the end of the War the Serbs made up 75% to 80% of the National Liberation Army, followed by 15% to 20% of the Croats and less than 4% of Slovenes. The balance between Serb dominance in its rank-and-file and Tito (Croat) being the Supreme Commander, offered certain hopes to all constitutive nations that the new Yugoslavia might indeed respect their interests.<sup>10</sup>

The new Yugoslavia was formed in November 1945 as a federation of six Republics and their five constitutive nations (Bosnian Muslims were not at that time recognised as an ethnic group

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1918), the day of the Second Session of the AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Yugoslavia - 29 November 1943) was the national holiday. It was on this day that the new Yugoslavia was conceptualised as a federation.

<sup>10</sup> At the same time, however, the imbalance between overwhelming Serbian participation in the military and their 'under-representation' in the highest echelons of politics of the Party, sowed the seeds of the future rhetoric of 'Serbs, winners in wars, but losers in peace'. The 'imbalance' continued in the post-war period. As Gow argues (1992:54), while in 1972 Serbs made up 60.5% and Croats 11.7% of the full-officer corps in the YPA, the structure of the YPA High Command was very different: 38% were Croats and 33% Serbs. The Serbs, therefore, concluded that even in the Army they were in fact disadvantaged, since their chances of being promoted to higher positions were much lower than those of members of other nationalities. Many Serbs thought that Slovenian complaints about 'unbalanced structure of the Yugoslav People's Army' in the late 1980s entirely ignored the overwhelming dominance of Serbian fighters in the Liberation War of 1941-1945. Furthermore, the arguments about 'Serbian control' over the Army were seen as not only unreasonable, but insulting. More on this in Chapters Six and Seven.

and were treated as 'ethnically undeclared' until the late 1960s). The three 'tribes' (Slovenes, Serbs and Croats) were now recognised as *nations*, as well as two entities (Macedonians and Montenegrins) whose separate identity was not earlier recognised. But, closely copying the Soviet blueprints, in reality the whole country remained centralised in regard to the most important functions, such as defence, foreign policy, economic and financial policy, transport, ideology and culture. The Communist character of the new Yugoslavia now became more obvious. Of course, as a Communist federation it was firmly led by the Communist party leadership. Despite its federalist claims, and though the leadership was composed of people from different nations, in practice Yugoslavia developed a political system which allowed no more than 'regional cultural autonomy combined with the most rigid political centralisation' (Seton-Watson, 1981:339).

This fact created a new paradox: in words and indeed in ideological justification, the Yugoslavism of the Yugoslav Communists was fundamentally (i.e., revolutionary) different from that of the inter-war period. Yet, it was equally centralised and even less democratic (in the sense of representative democracy) than the Yugoslavism of King Alexander and Prince Paul.

It is often emphasised (Bunce, 1999) that, unlike most other East European party leaderships, this one had the legitimacy of a successful liberation movement behind it. The whole legitimacy of socialist Yugoslavia was built on victory over foreign forces and internal 'quisling' forces. The bourgeoisie was identified as the source of internal betrayal in the War. Tito used the evils of civil war to legitimise and strengthen his power.<sup>11</sup> He considered opposition to his rule to be rooted either in the 'integralist Yugoslavism' of the pre-war bourgeoisie or in the 'quisling' forces during the war. He justified the one-party system by interpreting the old multi-partism as the main cause of the Yugoslav dissolution in the Second World War. In his interpretation multipartism was the road which led directly to fraternal slaughter.<sup>12</sup> The new Yugoslavism the Yugoslav Communists promised, would guarantee 'no return to the past'.

Yet, despite their opposition to 'Pan-Slavist and Yugoslav illusions' (Kardelj, 1962:138), in the first post-war years Tito hesitated to abandon the South Slav dimension of Yugoslav cohesion. He believed that the South Slavs should be in one country because they were South Slavs

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<sup>11</sup> For this purpose, the already high numbers of victims of the War were multiplied for ideological reasons, while the memory of the war was kept alive by state propaganda. This produced a reaction among the nationalists (for example, Tudjman) which influenced the events in the late 1980s and the wars in the 1990s.

<sup>12</sup> This was a misinterpretation since, of course, it neglected the fact that the Yugoslav idea did not disappear with the occupation of Yugoslavia. Quite the contrary, it proved to be strong enough to launch at least one (and possibly even two) significant liberation movement(s). Tito's interpretation also neglected the fact that Yugoslavia did not have a proper political pluralism after 1929, since it was a 'guided democracy' with limited possibilities for political association.

(Dedijer, 1980:76). This idea of South Slav unity motivated him to propose closer links with the only South Slav country outside Yugoslavia - Bulgaria.<sup>13</sup> Not only did the two countries share South Slav ethnic origins, but they were united by the common goal of building socialism. If the South Slav concept and the revolutionary idea were the two cohesive elements for the Yugoslavs, why should Bulgaria remain outside such a country? Yugoslavs and Bulgarians therefore entered serious negotiations, signing an agreement on a new federation in 1948 (Kardelj, 1982:94-97), which was immediately vetoed by Stalin.

The hesitation of the Yugoslav Communists to entirely abandon the South Slav concept of Yugoslavia caused, however, serious problems with the Albanians, the only non-Slav group living on the compact territory of Kosovo, a province in the south of Serbia. The Albanians felt alienated from any concept of South Slav Yugoslavia. Although in the war and in the first three years afterwards the Yugoslav Communists had a very close relationship with the Communists in Albania, and in spite of Stalin's proposals that they should 'swallow' Albania to Yugoslavia if they liked, it never happened. A federation between Albania and Yugoslavia would definitely have disturbed the South Slav concept of Yugoslav unity. The preference that Yugoslav Communists gave to their links with Bulgaria over links with Albania was a strong indicator of their *brotherhood* and unity concept, which did not abandon the South Slav dimension.

Being expelled from the community of socialist countries in 1948, the Yugoslavs had to find a new road in a complex world situation, and a source of new legitimacy within the country. On both fronts, their cohesive ideas were challenged. If they dropped revolution from their programmatic agenda, and relied upon South Slav brotherhood and unity only, how different were they becoming from Alexander's or Paul's Yugoslavism? If they abandoned the concept of South Slav unity for the sake of international revolution, this would have weakened popular support for Tito and enlarged foreign support for his opponents.

Hypothetically, there was, of course, a third way, that of a democratic republic, sufficiently different from Alexander's authoritarianism on both accounts - as being democratic and as a republic. This meant a complete change of rhetoric and practice on the part of the Yugoslav leadership. But this was impossible without a re-institutionalisation of representative

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<sup>13</sup> In his speech at the Founding Congress of the CP of Serbia on 11 May 1945 Tito said: 'With the Bulgarians we are trying, and they are trying as well, to make our relationship of brotherhood and unity firm. We have deeper ambitions with the Bulgarians and we have wanted to realise them, but the English and the Americans have not allowed it. Fine, we shall not (do it) now. But, no one can stop us in this. We are Slavs, and they are Slavs as well, and they have always been in the hands of reaction. It is up to us, the Yugoslav Communists to develop the consciousness that we need to live with the Bulgarians in the closest relationship, so that between us and the Bulgarians there should not be any greater contradictions than between Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. We shall act so that the Bulgarian people will be happy, as we shall be too, when we unite in a country of the South Slavs' (Tito, 1945:214).

(parliamentary, multi-party) democracy and abandoning of communism.<sup>14</sup> Though the first signs indicated that some of the Party leaders might have been willing to move towards a partial if not a full democratization (Djilas, 1981), and in spite of being overwhelmingly encouraged from the West to do so, they never reached the point of a break with the one-party monopoly and revolutionary logic. The ideology was for Yugoslav Communists always more than just a formal justification of their political actions – it was the very core of their policy. Instead of abandoning it, the Yugoslav Communists tried very hard to show that it was the Soviets and not they who had deviated from Marxism. To the accusation of being ‘revisionists’, they replied with the same counter-accusation against the Soviets. The Yugoslav identity was now created against not only the past concepts of Yugoslavism but against the Soviet concept of socialism. These two *others* (the inter-war bourgeois Yugoslavia and the Soviet type of socialism) became the two landmarks against which the Yugoslav mirror-image was to be created. The new Yugoslavia became constructed as an antipode to its own past and to the other model that claimed to be the blueprint of socialism.<sup>15</sup>

This Yugoslav nationalism was among the main reasons behind the Stalin – Tito split in 1948. Tito's ambitions to unify and lead all the South Slavs (and one day, if Georgi Dimitrov's ‘incautious’ remark about an ‘East European Federation’ were to be realised - possibly of all East European Slavs or even all East Europeans) made Stalin think that Tito was primarily a nationalist and a rival socialist leader (Dedijer, 1980:167-8; Kardelj, 1981:104-12). In Tito's hesitation to abandon the ethnic dimension in the *new Yugoslavia's* identity, Stalin recognised a deviation from internationalist principles and the remnants of the *old world*. At the same time, the revolutionary dimension of the new Yugoslav identity distanced Tito from the other world power ‘entitled’ (by the Moscow Conference in 1944) to control the region: the British.

A new reading of Marx proved to be extremely fruitful for the new identity-building of the new phase of socialism in Yugoslavia. In 1952, the name of the Party was changed to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia based on the example of Marx's Communist League of 1848. The idea of self-management appeared out of this reading in 1950. It was not a finished project, but more a slogan for the new, Yugoslav road to Communism. However, it had a relevant symbolic value in the early fifties. Finally, as regards foreign policy, Yugoslavia accepted the idea of non-alignment (formulated between 1956 and 1960), which gave Tito and his country what he always wanted - a

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<sup>14</sup> However, one here needs to ask if there was really such a possibility for Yugoslavia in the by then already strictly divided spheres of influence within Europe. Would it not have been just another proof that Stalin was ‘right’ when accusing the Yugoslavs of being ‘hidden capitalists’ under a ‘communist mask’?

<sup>15</sup> This had enormous consequences for the final years of Yugoslavia in the 1980s. Once the Soviet model ceased to represent a real threat, only the fear of a renewal of inter-war Yugoslavia remained. In Milošević's attempts to re-unite Yugoslavia, Slovenian and Croatian leaders saw such an intention. More in Chapters Six and Seven.

distinctive and prominent role, this time in the world arena. Although the concept of brotherhood and unity had not been completely abandoned (Tito, 1975:35), it was replaced step by step by the idea of 'Yugoslav socialist patriotism', which emphasised the socialist over the South Slav dimension of Yugoslav identity. Now that its borders had become safe due to the world power balance and 'internal enemies' had been finally defeated, the existence of Yugoslavia was no longer in question. It was a time for social change which would definitely eliminate the last vestiges of the national question. What the resistance to the Soviet Union did in terms of the external legitimation of Yugoslavia, Western economic and military support did in terms of the internal legitimation of its leadership.<sup>16</sup> Being boosted by Western loans, and having an increasingly important say over the main problems of international relations (Middle East Crisis, Cuba, East-West relationships, etc.) Yugoslavia entered its *golden age*. In the sixties, she was the most developed of all the socialist countries, with a promising level of GDP growth. The Yugoslavs felt more independent and wealthier than any of their Eastern neighbours, and - indeed - any of their Balkan neighbours too. It seemed that internal conflicts had been put aside. Tourism, which started in the mid sixties, encouraged limited private initiative and small family-enterprises all over the Dalmatian coast. The borders were relatively open. The war was mostly forgotten. The repression of the first years of revolution (1945-50) had been stopped. The Yugoslavs dreamt their dream of prosperity and international influence.

However, economic development reopened questions that - the leadership believed - had been answered once and for all. The development of tourism, mostly along the Croatian coast, had a crucial significance here. Encouraged by both the main principles of self-management (which argued that the workers should decide upon the results of their labour) and by market reforms launched in the mid-1960s, many Croats started thinking economically - whose money was earned in tourism? How much of it went to Belgrade, and why was it proportionally distributed to all republics and provinces? Was this not an unnecessary redistribution? Should not money earned in Croatia be distributed from Zagreb, rather than from Belgrade? The same argument applied to remittances sent by Yugoslav Gastarbeiter, which also started in the mid 1960s.

The other parts of Yugoslavia had an argument against such proposals. Yugoslavia was one country, and without Serbian agriculture and the Bosnian work force, Croatian tourism would not be successful. However, twenty years after the socialist revolution, the *Croatian question* seemed to return to the agenda, reminding many of the inter-war disputes between ethnic

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<sup>16</sup> In the period from 1950 to 1959, the Yugoslavs received more than 1,5 billion US dollars of economic assistance. In addition, 724 million dollars was given as 'military aid' (Warner Neal, 1962: 3). Lampe concludes that between 1950 and 1964 US aid covered up to 60% of the deficits in the Yugoslav balance of payments (quoted by Denitch, 1990:137). For more on American assistance to Yugoslavia see Lees, 1997.

segments of the *bourgeois* political elite. At the same time, all the developed areas questioned the necessity and efficiency of supporting the less developed areas of Yugoslavia - Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and particularly Kosovo. For the first time after the war, the unity of the political elite seemed to be cracking on issues of the further development of socialism. Discussion was held on several levels, but the main dimension was that between centralizers and decentralizers. On the other side, among those who agreed that Yugoslavia had to be decentralised, the argument was whether it should be decentralised to only ethnic or also (and primarily) to 'functional' units of various 'communities of self-managing interests'.<sup>17</sup>

This conflict within the elite was fuelled by the facts that President Tito was approaching an advanced age (he was 70 in 1962), and that he had already been in office 17 years (plus the four war years). Legally, it was no longer possible to elect him President once again. The extensive intra-party struggles for at least the 'No.2 position', if not openly for the succession were becoming stronger.<sup>18</sup> Although nobody openly challenged his undoubtedly exceptional position, everyone was thinking of the post-Tito period, trying to secure the best possible starting position. As early as 1960 the serious question appeared for the first time: What would happen to Yugoslavia after Tito?

#### 2.1.4. The Emergence of Kardelj's concept

The first discussions on this issue occurred in 1962, when the Party leadership held a session behind closed doors, discussing the situation in the country. The party's long-term ideologist Edvard Kardelj was the most explicit, maintaining that the leadership still had too much power, that *self-management* was more or less a *paper house* without real roots in society, and that *bureaucratism* was growing above the sustainable level. But, his main objections were about the *illusion* that a new 'Yugoslav' nation was emerging out of the Yugoslav state. Socialism itself (just like any other ideology) can neither make nor deny the existence of nations, Kardelj wrote in the preface to the second edition of his (1939) book 'The Development of the Slovene National Question'.<sup>19</sup> In 1961 he warned that 'our federation is not a framework for any new Yugoslav

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<sup>17</sup> Among issues debated within this dilemma were: whether the Federal Assembly should be composed of two or three chambers, the third being 'the Chamber of Associated Labour', and also - whether the Party organisation should be structured along 'functional' or only 'territorial' lines (see Rade Končar's amendment rejected by the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress in 1982). The territorial (and thus to large extent ethnic) argument won over the 'functional'. Vladimir Bakarić's notion of 'national economies' within Yugoslavia was an expression of Kardelj's conclusion that Yugoslav nations were 'completed' and, therefore, they ought to have their own economic systems, including their own 'working class'.

<sup>18</sup> For the importance of succession in communist regimes, see Bunce (1999) and Keeler (1993). More on the struggle to 'replace Tito' after his death in 1980 can be found in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

<sup>19</sup> In this conclusion the second edition (1957) differs from the first (1939). While in 1939 Kardelj fully shared Stalin's definition of the nation as the result of the bourgeois epoch, which is present in socialism only as a remnant of this old epoch, in 1957 he defines nation as a 'product of the socio-economic relations of the epoch of capitalism' which is a

nation, nor for any national integration about which in their time some advocates of hegemony and denationalizing terror used to dream' (Kardelj, 1979:237).<sup>20</sup> For Kardelj, 'Pan-Slavist and Yugoslav illusions' were the main potential danger for the future of Yugoslavia. They were the product of the epoch of bourgeois expansion and nationalism and, therefore, had to be defeated by the socialist revolution. But also - and even more dangerously - they were potentially attractive to 'dogmatic forces' and the new socialist bureaucracy, which was pursuing a policy of 'Great-State Centralism'.<sup>21</sup> Kardelj said clearly that there was a danger from 'Great-State ideology' when the old revolutionaries passed away. In 'The Development of the Slovene national question', Kardelj wrote that the Communists were the only force that could offer a viable solution of the national question in Yugoslavia. But, also, in the new circumstances, it was from the ranks of the Communist bureaucracy that the main potential danger came. It is, therefore, the struggle with bureaucracy that should be given high priority in party and state policy.

As early as the beginning of the 60s, Kardelj concluded that even the idea of *socialist Yugoslavism* was no longer feasible, since the Yugoslav nations had become *fully constituted* nations.<sup>22</sup> Yugoslavia had helped them to reach the level at which they wanted to have their own nation-states, staying in Yugoslavia as long and only as long as it suited their common interests. These interests, Kardelj concluded in 1970, could arise mostly in three areas: first - in the common defence policy; second - in the common goals of the revolutionary transformation of the country; and third - in developing a common market area. In all other areas, Kardelj said, the countries of Yugoslavia had become mature enough to take care of their own interests.

Consequently, Kardelj argued that Yugoslavia ought to make a decisive step forward from a supra-state to a *federation of sovereign nation-states*. It was only then that both the inter-war concept of Yugoslavism and the Soviet model of the centralised state could be defeated in reality. The interests and identities of the *constitutive nations* should be the basis for a genuinely new Yugoslavia. A multi-ethnic state which would not protect the independence and state structures

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product of 'the social division of labour'. Since under socialism the division of labour still exists, so does the nation. Kardelj himself admits that the second edition dropped elements of Stalin's influence. For the importance of this change, see Filipović (1979:157).

<sup>20</sup> He repeated an almost identical sentence in his speech to the Federal Assembly on 20 September 1962 (1962:138).

<sup>21</sup> The phrase *Great-State Centralism* ('veliko-državni centralizam') was a post-war replacement for 'Great-Serbian centralism'.

<sup>22</sup> Kardelj used term *completed* or *fully constituted* nations ('završene nacije'), emphasising that the republics in Yugoslavia became states after the socialist revolution in 1945. Observing from his Slovenian experience of living in two multi-ethnic states which treated their ethnic groups as cultural, but not political entities (Austro-Hungary and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), Kardelj was a fierce opponent of any similar attempts in post-war Yugoslavia. For relations between Kardelj and the Austro-Marxist tradition see Nečak (1991).



of small nations would not be in their interest. Although Kardelj was an advocate of the existence of a Yugoslav state, Yugoslav unity in his concept now became conditional on the agreement of its constitutive parts. Already in 1957, Kardelj used words such as 'today' and 'at this moment' when concluding that Yugoslavia was in the interest of all Yugoslav nations (1957:47,62). And it existed because nations were 'complete national organisms wishing to live in a community with all other peoples, and especially with the Yugoslav peoples' (1969:226). But Yugoslav unity was neither a matter of ethnic similarities, nor of ideals, but of interests and historical necessities.

'The unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia is not based so much on their ethnic relatedness as on joint interests deriving from a common destiny and above all on their joint struggle for socialist relations among men and nations' (1975:141).

In fact, the existence of Yugoslavia was desirable 'provided [that the state] was founded on the free will and equality of all peoples'. Kardelj believed that the socialist character of Yugoslavia, and not ethnic similarity, was the main unifying force of the country. He was in favour of a socialist Yugoslavia also because he believed that small nations could not remain independent in the world of 'imperialism'.

'Unity was to their advantage not only because of their momentous bonds from the past or from the standpoint of the brotherhood of nations in the future, but also in terms of shared economic interests and the interests of socialism. Above all, unity was to their advantage in safeguarding their very existence and independence. In the modern world, the power of the reactionary force of imperialism and political hegemony is still extremely great. The Yugoslav nations would need each other's support to be able to guarantee their economic and political independence' (Kardelj, 1967: 54).

The Slovenian separatists, whom he often criticised, were 'cutting the branch on which they themselves were sitting' (1969:237) and were 'killing the ox for a pound of meat' (1969:238). In the world of the two blocs, it would have been virtually impossible for Slovenia (or for any other Yugoslav nation) to be independent to the degree that it was in Yugoslavia. In 1967 he referred to American policy towards Vietnam as a good example of what would happen to small independent states after the potential disintegration of Yugoslavia. They would become 'a provincial appendage of the imperialist world, which is today again showing its true face in Vietnam' (1967a: 203). At the same time, however, he warned the Yugoslav 'unitarists' not to provoke ethnic separatism but to allow any nation to create its own state within Yugoslavia. Only when the Yugoslav nations secured their own states within Yugoslavia, when they really governed themselves would ethnic separatism be finally defeated.

'For a free decision of a nation on the form of its cooperation with other nations, it is first necessary that this nation has control over itself, and only then can it make a free decision' (1957: 47) .

Kardelj's writings and speeches in the 1957 - 1966 period met, if not with open criticism, then certainly with serious resistance among the advocates of *Yugoslavism* and *South Slavism* within the party and state leadership. The most prominent among these critics was the state Vice-President Aleksandar Ranković who controlled home affairs. Although a Serb himself, he was recognized as more of a Yugoslav Centralist than a Serb representative in the federal leadership. For the democratic and liberal opposition Ranković was the embodiment of central state power. As a party practitioner (the organisational secretary of the LCY and the main controller of the state security services) and not an ideologist (as Djilas and Kardelj were), he was a symbol of the bureaucracy and state apparatus. In Kardelj's criticism of 'Great-Statist tendencies' and 'bureaucracy' he, therefore, recognised himself. Although he was very loyal to Tito and had never voiced any public dissent about state policy, Ranković was widely perceived responsible for the belief that Yugoslavia meant more than just the sum of the six republics and that it was necessary to keep the federal institutions (especially the Party, Army and the security forces) independent of the influence of republican leaders.<sup>23</sup> The conflict between the two options for Yugoslavia's future went on from 1962 to 1966. Since Kardelj and Ranković (together with Tito and the once jailed Djilas) were considered as the core of the war and first post-war leadership, their conflict was perceived as the conflict between the only possible successors of Tito. In this conflict, Ranković seemed to have a few important advantages over Kardelj: he was a party practitioner (not an ideologist) with a finger on the pulse of the party and state cadre policy. He was also very popular in the Army, Party and state security institutions and was considered to be more acceptable than Kardelj to the Soviet Union, despite his radical action against the 'Cominformists' (Soviet supporters) in the 1948-1953 period. Ranković's rare public addresses were uttered in simple words, which was in sharp contrast to Kardelj's theoretical discourses. Finally, Ranković was a Serb, a logical choice for leadership after the Croat-Slovene Tito in a country in which the balance of power was traditionally based on the relationship between the Serbs and Croats. But, at the same time, all these 'advantages' - and especially the last two - were somehow also 'disadvantages'. In a highly ideological society, the second most powerful position was always reserved to the main ideologist of the regime. Additionally, while in the Soviet Union ('state socialism') being a member of the largest nation and in charge of the state

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<sup>23</sup> By the very fact of being the main 'Serbian' politician, Ranković was, just like his successors in this 'post' somehow 'automatically' suspected of hegemonism and Great-State (even Great-Serbian) tendencies. The trend of 'accusing' all Serbian leaders of 'hegemonism' was what Slobodan Milošević opposed two decades after the dismissal of Ranković. For more on perceptions of Ranković in the 1980s see Chapter Six.

apparatus of coercion and repression could indeed be the main advantage in the power-struggle, within the Yugoslav system of 'anti-statism' this was not the case.

From 1962 to 1966 Tito was puzzled by the discussion between Kardelj and Ranković. He seemed to switch his support from one side to the other a few times. Deep in his heart, says Djilas, Tito believed that one day all the differences between the Yugoslavs would disappear, both in the social and in the national sense. Milovan Djilas, once his *enfant terrible* and then his best-known prisoner, recalls a discussion on Yugoslavism with Tito in 1953:

'Tito believed that the nationalities of Yugoslavia would ultimately merge into one true nation. When I remarked that King Aleksandar Karadjordjević thought so too, he retorted: 'Ah, but there was no socialism then' (Djilas, 1981:134).<sup>24</sup>

Tito was also a pragmatist, who understood well the importance of real instruments of power. On the other hand, what were the prospects for socialism if the nations of Yugoslavia were not satisfied regarding their national demands? And what was the future of Yugoslav independence if Yugoslavia were not able to create an effective and radical alternative to Soviet 'state socialism'?

The series of internal party discussions between 1962 and 1966 showed a deep divide between the two options for the future of Yugoslavia. This debate, in which Kardelj won over Ranković (ousted from power in July 1966) determined the course of events that constituted the prelude to the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the last two decades of its existence. Kardelj's main argument in this debate – the one that finally swayed Tito to his side – was that Yugoslavia would not be different from the two *antipodes* unless it further decentralised. The main goal of socialism was that everyone decided upon the results of their labour. This principle applied to nations as well.<sup>25</sup> The de-centralisation of Yugoslavia was a pre-condition for self-management to work. Since self-management was the only real democracy, de-centralisation was a precondition for democratisation too. On the other hand, the continuation of a centralised Yugoslav state would endanger both the *national* and *socialist* dimensions of the Yugoslav revolution. Finally, Kardelj

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<sup>24</sup> In his memoirs, the former Yugoslav Foreign Secretary Mirko Tepavac concludes that 'Tito was a Yugoslav in the good meaning of this word, and even a unitarist. To him, even Yugoslavia as it was was somehow too small' (1998:154).

<sup>25</sup> This explains why Yugoslavia refused to accept Soviet supreme authority and to join the Warsaw Pact. Since Yugoslav nations were 'completed', Yugoslavia itself came close to becoming a 'pact' between the newly created national states on its territory. It is not only that various republics therefore spoke of Belgrade (the federal centre) as a supra-national force with no right to 'intervene' in their 'domestic affairs', but Kardelj himself contemplated Yugoslavia more as an international conglomerate than a state in any 'classic sense'. Once it arrived in 1991/1992, full state independence was perceived by the non-Serbian republics of Yugoslavia (primarily Slovenia and Croatia), in rather similar terms to the non-Soviet countries of the bloc, as 'liberation' from a supra-national centre. For the Serbs, of course, this was not a valid interpretation, since they certainly did not see themselves as 'the Soviets' of the Yugoslav 'bloc'. On the contrary, as I have shown here and will further elaborate in Chapter Six, they felt disadvantaged in Yugoslavia.

underlined that the state was *withering away* in the *transitional period* and that the model of governance should be transformed towards direct democracy.

Tito, who believed that the key to socialist transformation lay in the Party, not in the state, accepted that the state should be decentralised, but requested that the Party should remain united. He agreed to strengthen the Party and to weaken the state. If the Party were sufficiently strong to organise socialism, then the national question would be solved. Furthermore, Tito shared Kardelj's argument that the dissolution of Yugoslavia was not a realistic option because it would change the whole international balance of power. If this was so, then the nationalism and separatism had no chance for as long as the communist remained in power. And this would be so, for as long as the communists demonstrated they could offer more independence to nations than either 'imperialist forces' or 'the forces of (Soviet) statist socialism'. Since, in principle, there could be no 'return to the past', the real danger originated in a different, statist type of socialism.

'For, as I have already stated, the alternative here is not whether Yugoslavia will survive or not but whether it will continue to develop as a socialist, self-managing and democratic community of equal peoples, or whether it will fall into the hands of hegemonic forces in any political or ideological guise' (Kardelj, 1981:228).

By 'hegemonic forces', Kardelj meant Soviet-type communists or any other type of great-statist ideology, which would 'naturally' rely on the strongest nation, the Serbs. Kardelj insisted that these forces must be denied any possibility of succeeding to the Presidency and that Tito's role in achieving this was crucial. No other 'social critics' (as Kardelj called them in his 1965 book) represented such a real danger for the Yugoslav project of socialism as those who advocated different 'directions of the development of socialism'.<sup>26</sup> Since the *old society* 'had absolutely no chance of success, it may be claimed that today the... choice [is] between socialist self-management... and the system of bureaucratic-technocratic statism' (1973:286). The future of Yugoslav socialism depended – in both its national and its class aspects – on who would define and lead socialist policy. Neither the liberals nor the nationalists could succeed, both because of 'objective laws' of social development and because of international and domestic reality. The

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<sup>26</sup> In his 'Notes on Social Criticism in Yugoslavia' (1965), Kardelj analysed four types of opposition: 1) bureaucratic (or: Stalinist); 2) nationalist-separatist; 3) 'the radical left' (Praxis philosophers) and 4) liberals. It is in his Marxist belief in General Laws of History that one needs to find the explanation for Kardelj's conclusion that nationalists and liberals had no real chance of overthrowing communists. 'A man who would today try to make gold following the recipes of medieval alchemists would be considered a charlatan or a ridiculous ignoramus,' says Kardelj, concluding that the same rule of natural science should apply to the social sciences, where the creation of an 'ideal society' was attempted 'with the aid of an alchemical mixture of abstract eternal truths about humaneness and freedom, in disregard of the objective laws which govern social life and regulate the relations between man and nature' (1965:64). Kardelj's criticism of liberals and 'right-wing' critics was a typical example of the 'scientific' rhetoric of the Yugoslav Marxists, who claimed that Marxism was scientific socialism.

future of Yugoslavia, thus, ultimately depended on 'subjective forces', among which the Party played an exceptional role.<sup>27</sup>

In this conclusion, Kardelj had the support of the younger cadres, the newly elected leaders of the republics and provinces. Not only did they share his enthusiasm for further changes of the 'bureaucratized system', but they also sought more autonomy for their republics and more security for their positions in the post-Tito era. Since none of the Republics (not even Serbia) had a majority of votes to control the federal leadership on their own, all of them preferred the 'second best' option: to have as much autonomy as possible in their own territories and to prevent any drastically unfavourable outcome. Since the federal leadership was firmly in Tito's hands, they were all expected to be only republican representatives. They were, therefore, used to conducting only 'republican' politics, thinking of Yugoslavia in an increasingly similar way to the pre-war Croat leader Stjepan Radić - as an arena for their republic's 'foreign' policy.<sup>28</sup>

The victory of Kardelj's concept over the one symbolised by Ranković in 1966 marked the end of the third *constitutive concept* of Yugoslavia, and introduction of the fourth, which we here call Kardelj's concept of *Brioni Yugoslavia*. The new concept, based on Kardelj's interpretations of Marxism and of Yugoslav political reality, was defined in the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate and codified in the 1974 Constitution. As both Tito and Kardelj admitted, the changes introduced on this occasion had a *revolutionary character*. Further in this chapter we analyse the main elements of the last constitutive concept of Yugoslavia.

## 2.2. The Elaboration of Kardelj's Concept

### 2.2.1. A Biographical Note on Kardelj

Edvard Kardelj was the most prominent ideologist among the Yugoslav Communists throughout the Tito period (1937-1979). When Ranković was ousted in 1966, he remained the

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<sup>27</sup> Ironically, Kardelj's belief that the future of Yugoslavia depended on the future of Party and - ultimately - on the Yugoslavs themselves today sounds almost like prophecy. Despite the optimistic predictions of the last Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković and of most Western analysts, the disintegration of Yugoslavia indeed followed the collapse of the Party in January 1990. In the following chapters we shall take a close look at the struggle within the LCY and Yugoslav society in general over the different options for Yugoslavia after Tito and Kardelj.

<sup>28</sup> On symbolical level, a good illustration of this shift is decision of Edvard Kardelj to move from Belgrade to Ljubljana in the early 1970s. The main Croatian leader, Vladimir Bakarić, had never moved his house to Belgrade, but always - even when member of the Yugoslav Presidency (1974-1983) lived in Zagreb. In the 1970s, Belgrade was left to Tito, federal ministers and federal administration (largely domestic, i.e. Serbian), while real politics shifted to republican (and provincial) capitals.

only member of Tito's closest wartime leadership still in power. Tito himself considered him his closest political aide, and 'an illuminating figure [that] will be an inspiration to generations to come as an example of a consistent Communist, tireless revolutionary and a wonderful man' (Tito, 1979:385).<sup>29</sup> His Slovenian origins, Yugoslav political orientation and Marxist beliefs provided the major context in which Kardelj's actions in the post-Ranković years should be analysed. Although a Slovene, Yugoslav and Marxist, Kardelj opposed Slovenian nationalism, Yugoslav unitarism and Soviet 'state socialism', building up his own interpretation of Slovenian interests, the Yugoslav constitution and Marxist principles. Although Kardelj's views on these three major issues had been developed in almost 30 years of his writings prior to 1966, it was only now that he saw the real chance to transform his beliefs into a new constitutive concept and make it the pillar of the new (fourth) Yugoslavia. Unrestricted by any other member of the political elite except Tito himself, Kardelj proceeded to see his ideas transformed into the constitution, laws and political decisions, creating what would become *Kardelj's* Yugoslavia. Before I move to expound his views in detail, a brief biographical note is necessary in order to explain the origins of Kardelj's ideas.

An event which, as he himself later explained, 'decisively influenced' his decision to join the Communist Party, was the conflict between the Communists and members of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA) which occurred in his youth in the Slovene mining town of Trbovlje. In 1928 (at the age of 18), while a student at the Teachers' Academy, Kardelj joined 'anti-unitarist' and anti-monarchist forces. His first public appearances were indeed closely linked to discussing the national question in the light of Marxist theory. In his first article ('The National Question as a Scientific Question', 1932) Kardelj concluded that 'every nation has the right to an independent life, but such freedom will be won only by the constant struggle of the working people, because – as we have seen – the national problem is in its essence not a cultural, but a social problem' (Filipić, 1979:154). This idea was further developed in Kardelj's 1939 book on 'The Development of the Slovene National Question', which marked a turning point in the

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<sup>29</sup> Several sources confirm that Tito considered Kardelj as his potential successor. West (1994) and Dedijer (1981) say that in a situation of despair after the first unsuccessful actions of the Yugoslav Partisans in Serbia in December 1941, Tito offered his resignation from the post of Party General Secretary and proposed Kardelj as his successor. Ridley (1994:332) mentions that Kardelj was 'acting president' during Tito's visit to India in 1953. However, the Tito-Kardelj relationship had its bad days as well. In the early 1960s Tito supported the 'hardliner' Ranković and not the 'liberal' Kardelj. In Dec 1962 Kardelj went on a private visit to London without telling Tito that he was going. Tito thought that Kardelj had deserted him (Ridley, 1994:371). It is not clear why Kardelj spent almost two months in London, but Kardelj's wife told me in 1987 that this was for health reasons. In Summer 1962 Kardelj had been shot and injured in a hunting expedition and needed to recover. The Croatian historian Bilandžić told me in an interview conducted in December 1995 that the tense relationship between the two lasted between 1961 and 1964, when Tito finally changed his mind. Ridley explains why and how. From then on, Kardelj was undoubtedly Tito's closest political ally. However, in an interview I conducted in October 1997, Stipe Šušteršič, once President of the LCY Presidency, said that Tito and Kardelj disagreed about the future of Yugoslavia even in their last years. According to Vidoje Žarković, the Montenegrin representative in the Party and state leadership, they addressed each other formally ('Vi', not 'ti') by the end of their lives. The texts discussed in this chapter were written mainly in between 1965 and 1979.

Communist understanding of the national question in Yugoslavia. After several years of illegal political activity in Slovenia and several prison sentences (some of which – the most extensive ones<sup>30</sup> – were served in Belgrade prisons), in 1934 he went to Moscow to attend courses and teach the history of the Comintern at the Communist University of the National Minorities in the West (KUNMZ), and at the International Leninist School. After two and a half years spent in Moscow, he returned to Yugoslavia in February 1937, when he joined Josip Broz<sup>31</sup> who was this year appointed General Secretary of the CPY by the Comintern. Kardelj remembered Broz from his spectacular 1928 trial in Zagreb, when Broz was jailed for five years for attempting to organise an uprising in Zagreb.<sup>32</sup> They soon became close, fighting against the ‘factionalism’ and ‘sectarianism’ of the CPY. The new political leadership, Kardelj said from a distance of 30 years in 1967, ‘dropped sectarian slogans’ and offered ‘the unity of democratic forces in the struggle against the anti-democratic regime and against the growing fascist menace’ (1967:12-3). There were, Kardelj acknowledged, four major focuses of the party’s new policy: a) the fascist threat – especially after the Austrian *Anschluss* in 1938; b) the economic situation and increasing poverty of the working class and masses; c) the anti-democratic political system; and d) the national question. But, as much as the Communists later emphasised Tito’s autonomous role in consolidating the Party, it was nevertheless a fact that these four issues were entirely in accordance with the new approach favoured by the Comintern itself. This was the time of ‘the popular front’ policy, which urged the Communist parties to approach and co-operate with other ‘progressive’ social and especially national movements in their respective countries. Anti-fascist fronts, of which the Communists were a part, had been formed in France and Spain at the same time. Within the Comintern, as well as within almost each of its national sections, the supporters of the old policy of the struggle of ‘class against class’ were replaced by the supporters of the new policy of the ‘popular front against fascism’.<sup>33</sup> The internal party conflict between the two approaches to Fascism was strong in the Yugoslav party as well and was not resolved until the Fifth Party Conference in Zagreb 1940. At this conference Tito was confirmed as the Party Secretary, while Kardelj was elected to the Politburo. Tito and Kardelj, therefore, came to the top of the Party as both Comintern loyalists and as exponents of less sectarian and more open politics for the renewed Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

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<sup>30</sup> A detailed description of Kardelj’s imprisonments is given in Dedijer (1953:70-81).

<sup>31</sup> Kardelj first met Broz (later: Tito) in Ljubljana in 1934. On this meeting see Kardelj’s interview with Veljko Bulajić on 26 February 1977 recorded for a documentary on Tito, and published as ‘My First Meeting with Tito’ (1980:209-55). Tito’s memories on his first meeting with Kardelj are recorded by his official biographer Dedijer: ‘Comrade Kardelj was a calm, quiet man, and it was just his equanimity that impressed me most. He was an honest revolutionary at a time when many were corrupted by factionalism’ (Dedijer, 1953:96).

<sup>32</sup> About the *Bombaški proces* see Sobolevski (1977). At this trial, Broz publicly declared his communist beliefs and refused to recognise the legality and legitimacy of the Yugoslav Royal Courts. In fact, he said: ‘I do not recognise this court. The only court I recognise as relevant is the Court of my Party’.

<sup>33</sup> On the ‘class against class policy’ see Vlačić (1989).

During the war, Kardelj was among the main organisers of the Slovene anti-fascist resistance. Practising the policy of a wide anti-fascist coalition of the main political forces in the country, the Slovene 'Liberation Front' (*Osvobodilna Fronta*) became a unique political formation. It was not led by a Communist, but in fact by a man who started a public polemic with Kardelj's book in 1939.<sup>34</sup> But, Kardelj himself was its vice-president. The formation of the 'Liberation Front', containing representatives of the three main currents of the political spectrum (Christian Socialists, Liberals and Communists), was a sign of wide co-operation with the Communists from the beginning of the occupation. Partly, it was also an expression of the Slovene political tradition, which is often characterised as 'corporatism'.<sup>35</sup> But it was also Kardelj's 1939 book that made many believe that the Communist movement did care about Slovene national interests and that the anti-fascist struggle would result in a Slovene state based on social justice and national freedom.

Between 1941 and 1945 Kardelj was the most prominent Slovene representative in Tito's headquarters. He was one of the two main creators of the 1943 AVNOJ Declaration (the other being Moše Pijade), which declared the wish of the Yugoslav Partisans to establish a federation after the war. In 1943 Kardelj became Vice-President of the newly established National Committee of the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ). He drafted the Agreement between NKOJ and the Yugoslav Royal Government in 1944 (The Tito-Šubašić Agreement). In 1945 he became Vice-President of the Yugoslav Government and Minister for the Constitutive Assembly. He was Yugoslav Foreign Secretary, and Head of the Yugoslav Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>36</sup> He was also the main Yugoslav participant in many talks with Stalin in Moscow between 1945 and 1948.<sup>37</sup>

In the whole post-war period, Kardelj was in charge of the structuring of the political system and ideology. Milovan Djilas, his colleague in the Yugoslav party leadership, remembers that Kardelj was - together with him - the main creator of the 'self-management' doctrine. Writing about the first days after the conflict with Stalin in 1948 Djilas says that Kardelj and he had to convince Tito 'that without an ideological squaring of accounts with the Soviet system, without ideological

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<sup>34</sup> Josip Vidmar. Vidmar was not a Communist, and in his criticism of Kardelj in 1939 he opposed his Marxist views on nation.

<sup>35</sup> For this see Lukšič (1994).

<sup>36</sup> On this period of his political activity see Kardelj's 'Reminiscences' (1982).

<sup>37</sup> Like Djilas, Kardelj published several accounts of his talks with Stalin. Some of them are in his 'Reminiscences' (1982) and in Dedijer's 'Tito' (1953).



backing for our positions, we would lose our bearings, our confidence and our stability' (Djilas, 1981:33). In Djilas' words, Tito accepted self-management only after initial hesitation, and 'was never exactly passionate about it' (1981:76). On the contrary, Kardelj was - on Djilas' account - a genuine democrat within the Party. He belonged to a 'liberal group' within the party leadership (1981:157), not only immediately after 1948, but also later - from the early 1960s.

But, although Djilas remembered Kardelj as 'resourceful, clever, tolerant, civilized and cunning' (1981:159), he also saw him as a political realist to an even greater extent than Tito himself was. In 1954, a year after Stalin's death, Tito was showing signs of wavering about 'self-management'. Milovan Djilas was the first victim of the new circumstances. In January 1954 it was Kardelj who claimed that Djilas was a 'revisionist' under the 'anarcho-liberal' influence of the ideas of Bernstein. More like Tito, Kardelj believed, Djilas says, that 'without organization and without power, ideas are little more than a pipe dream' (Djilas, 1981:159).<sup>38</sup> Although he 'cherished a secret desire for what is democratic', Kardelj, Djilas believed, was 'without the guts to fight for it, to sacrifice for it' (1981:149).<sup>39</sup>

Djilas' characterisation of Kardelj explains his wording of the Programme of the CPY, which was accepted at the Seventh Congress of the LCY in 1958, never to be changed or even amended by the Party until its disintegration in January 1990. Because of its severe criticism of the Soviet one-party system, the Programme became the source of constant dispute between the Yugoslav and Soviet Communist Parties. Consequently, Kardelj was considered to be the main 'anti-Soviet' in the Yugoslav leadership until his death.<sup>40</sup>

Within the state leadership Kardelj held the post of chief law-maker and, especially, of Constitution-writer. His most important job, for which he will be remembered in all the Yugoslav republics, was that of the chairman of the Constitutional Committee for three Yugoslav Constitutions (1946, 1963 and 1974). Being in charge of the Constitution, Kardelj formulated the normative elements of Yugoslav socialism. He did it not only through his speeches and public addresses, but also in a dozen books.<sup>41</sup> His last book 'Ways of Developing the Socialist System of

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<sup>38</sup> Some would see Kardelj's last book (1977) as a 'return to Djilas'. But, as Šušvar said in the interview conducted for this thesis in October 1997, this view is certainly an exaggeration.

<sup>39</sup> According to Djilas, Kardelj was privately very sorry about this split between the two. Before the session of the party leadership in 1954, he even told Djilas that nothing had been so difficult in his life as to write a political platform against him (Djilas, 1981).

<sup>40</sup> For more on Soviet-Yugoslav relations, including the ideological dimension of the dispute, see Clissold (1975) and Mićunović (1980).

<sup>41</sup> His published opus has about 6,000 pages, but there is almost the same amount of unpublished material, some of which is used in this chapter, courtesy of the late Mrs Kardelj who gave me access to some of Kardelj's manuscripts back

Self-Management' (written a year and a half before his death, in 1977) was accepted as a 'part of the ideological and political guidelines for the League of Communists' in preparing the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the LCY in 1978.<sup>42</sup> Together with Tito's concluding speech at this Congress, it represents the unofficial 'political testament' of the two leaders of Yugoslav socialism.

For all these reasons, it is not difficult to understand Tito's words, that Kardelj was a key participant in the 'strategy-making of [our] movement' (1979:383), and that he was his 'closest aide' in foreign policy and in formulating a new 'theory of the national question' (Tito, 1979:383). It is, therefore, justified to take Kardelj as one of the most reliable sources to reveal the Yugoslav Communists' story, their intentions and the policies that led to their realisation. Later in this chapter, I shall take a closer look at Kardelj's interpretation of who the Yugoslav Communists were and how they would like to be seen by others. In recovering Kardelj's views on Yugoslavia, I shall present the Communist concept of Yugoslav identity as projected by Kardelj in the last phase of its development before the country's actual disintegration.

### 2.2.2. Kardelj's Interpretation of Marxism

As I have already argued, there were two *antipodes* to the new project of socialism, as Kardelj's writings suggested: (1) inter-war Yugoslavia, which was considered to be unjust in ethnic and social terms; and (2) the Soviet type of socialism, which was treated as 'revisionism' from Marxism following the split between the USSR and Yugoslavia in 1948. We have already discussed the Kardeljist alternative to inter-war Yugoslavism. This part of the chapter focuses on Kardelj's interpretation of Marxism and the differences between the Yugoslav and Soviet models.<sup>43</sup>

The Yugoslav Communists claimed their project of socialist revolution was a 'practical implementation of Marxism in society' (Tito 1952 in Dedijer, 1984:610). When asked about 'Titoism', as a new doctrine, Tito fiercely rejected its existence:

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in 1987. The private archive of the Kardelj family, containing 64 boxes of correspondence and other sources collected between 1928 and 1992, is now part of the Slovenian State Archive. It is, unfortunately, still inaccessible for detailed research.

<sup>42</sup> The decision was taken at the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LCY: see Dolanc, 1978:13.

<sup>43</sup> Although both sides in the conflict - Yugoslavs and Soviets - exaggerated the differences between their interpretation of Marxism, these differences were far from being entirely insignificant. For this see Zukin (1975) and Lapenna (1964).

'Titoism as a separate ideological line does not exist... To put it as an ideology would be stupid... It is simply that we have added nothing to Marxist-Leninist<sup>44</sup> doctrine. We have only applied that doctrine in consonance with our situation. Since there is nothing new, there is no new ideology. Should 'Titoism' become an ideological line, we would become revisionists; we would have renounced Marxism. We are Marxists, I am a Marxist and therefore I cannot be a 'Titoist'.' (Dedijer, 1953:432).

As Marxists, the Yugoslav Communists believed that socialism was a 'transitional phase' from capitalism to Communism. The notion of 'transition' remained a stable part of Kardelj's concept. 'The times we live in are a typical transitional period between two historical epochs. Elements of both historical epochs exist and are operative within the frameworks of each individual country,' said Kardelj in his 1955 speech at Chatham House in London (1955:69). More than twenty years later, in 1977, in his last important study 'Ways of Democracy in Socialist Societies', Kardelj repeatedly concluded: 'We are living in a typical period of transition' (1977:18).<sup>45</sup> Transition was a long-term project, which only began with the socialist revolution.<sup>46</sup> It was also a complex project of social, economic and political changes.<sup>47</sup> These changes are permanent and revolutionary in their character. They mean the 'gradual acquisition of positions in society by the working class' (Kardelj, 1977:104) and destruction of the last remnants of the bourgeois system.<sup>48</sup> Socialism is a time of building a 'future world', which would reduce social antagonisms to a minimum, fully developing 'each individual's creative will' (1955:20). The end of the process is known - Communism.

Kardelj had a clear vision of the future world, and was convinced that a 'vision' of the future was a gift granted to exceptional politicians, such as Tito was. But, it was not only the top politicians,

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<sup>44</sup> Back in 1953, Tito still used the phrase 'Marxism-Leninism' to name the doctrine he followed. This phrase was later proscribed as a synonym for dogmatic Marxism, especially for the Albanian official interpretation of Marxism as formulated by Enver Hoxha. Following the 1981 unrest in Kosovo, many Albanians were convicted for joining 'Marxist-Leninist illegal organisations'. Indeed, several groups of Albanian separatists were named 'Marxist-Leninist' (Mertus, 1999). At the same time, Hoxha called Yugoslav 'revisionism' - 'Titoism' (Hoxha, 1982).

<sup>45</sup> The notion of transition (i.e., the transition to communist society) was the basic assumption of the Programme of the LCY, whose draft was made by Kardelj. To a similar extent to the Programme of the CPSU (1961), this was a programme for the Party in the transitional period.

<sup>46</sup> Kardelj's argument was in this respect not much different from the one expressed in guidelines to Communist Parties issued at the December 1961 meeting in Moscow. In this document, the process of transition was described in ten steps (see Wilczynski, 1981:604).

<sup>47</sup> The 'triple' transition to communism could be compared with the post-communist notion of 'triple transition' (Offe, 1991). Although their conclusion on the nature of the end result are totally different, many elements of the communist and post-communist 'transition' rhetoric are similar: both of them talk about 'revolutions' after which the 'false' and 'unnatural' course of History was reversed; they both saw the trend as inevitable in the long run, though allowing the possibility of the 'set-back' (*counter-revolution*) in the short term; they both rely on a 'scientific' approach to history and on the idea of progress in history; they both use the notion of 'transition' (*transitional period*) and - finally - they both have a strong vision of the future (*liberal democracy, communism*).

<sup>48</sup> This is why the Yugoslav - and all other socialist societies - were in a state of permanent 'reform'. Yugoslavia changed four constitutions (including the 1953 Constitutional Law) in the 28 years between 1946 and 1974. The necessity of permanent changes could only be understood within the logic of 'transition'.

but the Communist rank-and-file who were expected to be clear in their goals and 'must build [the society] in anticipation of such a future' (1977:185). The whole idea of politics in a socialist society was linked to this final aim. The very formulation of the concept of the future was the prime political activity. It involved selection of the 'new' which should be protected and helped by the state to develop, and of the 'old' which should be equally 'helped' to 'wither away'. In the order which claimed to represent the future that was coming, the political prophets (visionaries, in Kardelj words) were creating reality. As formulated in the LCY Programme (1958:266) the 'historic task' and 'ultimate goal' of the Yugoslav Communists was to 'transform the contemporary social scene, which bears all the marks of the transition period, into one in which classes and all traces of exploitation and the oppression of man by man will disappear', to create 'a society without a state, classes, or parties' (1958:267).

What politics also involved, the Yugoslav Communists argued, was to convince as many people as possible about this vision of the new society. It was the *scientific character* of Marxism which could help them in doing so.<sup>49</sup>

'Following a critical Marxist analysis of social trends, the League of Communists has arrived at scientific data about the essence of social processes. On this basis it established the directions of the further development of the revolution, ensuring its continuity. At the same time, it armed the working class with these data, making it the conscious subject of socialist development' (Tito, 1978:65).

As Tito said in his report to the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress of the LCY (1978), self-management was 'the cornerstone of the scientific theory of the classics of Marxism' (1978:66). Marxist science and philosophy<sup>50</sup> were, therefore, an essential help to socialist forces in contemporary Yugoslavia. These forces should base their activity 'upon scientific knowledge' (Tito, 1978:68).<sup>51</sup> On the contrary, 'those social sciences, which are under the influence of bourgeois science would hardly be in accordance with our socialist trends' and should, therefore, be subjected to 'ideological

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<sup>49</sup> About the scientific character of Marxism see Waller (1972:29); Graham (1966/73:65), Marx's writings in his 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' and Engels' 'Anti-Duehring'. The scientific character of Marxism was in line with the arguments of the main Enlightenment authors to which Marx referred in his writings.

<sup>50</sup> Tito urged Marxist philosophy to 'do much more to research the character, factors and development of socialist society' (1978:66). This was no different from the way in which the Programme of the CPSU urged the Soviet social sciences: to 'constitute the scientific basis for the guidance of the development of society' (CPSU Programme, 1961/1962:223). This was the main motive for the later (1985) invitation of the Serbian president Ivan Stambolić to the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts to join the political leadership in resolving political and economic crises in the country. While the 'nationalist' intelligentsia was condemned, 'constructive criticism' of the regime from within the 'progressive forces' of the intelligentsia was tolerated and supported.

<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, in the 1970s Marxism entered school curricula as a compulsory course. 'Political schools' at all levels were established to promote Marxism to the members of the LCY and general public. Political science, heavily based on Marxism, became a university study after four Faculties of Political Science were opened. In Skinner's words, one can describe this as an attempt by the ideology to control the instruments of dissemination (1988:15).

struggle'.<sup>52</sup> In Kardelj's words, change from one epoch to another was the result of organised political action, which was 'based on science and specialised knowledge, placed at the service of... the masses' (1972:45).

Such a change was inevitable and it meant a progression.<sup>53</sup> Socialist societies were 'an important historical advance' when compared with the 'political pluralism of bourgeois society' (1977:165). The main difference between the two was not primarily in the model of government, so much as in the types of interests they protected and promoted. In general, politics was about interests. A state protected and promoted the interests of the ruling class regardless of the form and political system it developed.

'The only difference [between 'our society' and 'bourgeois democracy'] is that... our defence of the system is in the interest of the overwhelming majority of working people, whereas in a bourgeois democracy there is often a hypocritical cover-up of the fact that it is the political system best suited to the capitalist mode of production' (1977:216).

Such a 'cover-up' was impossible in the long-run and would, therefore, inevitably underpin the internal conflicts immanent to a bourgeois society. Kardelj did not have any original thoughts about it, which were not already expressed in Marx's or Lenin's notion of dialectics. However, he explicitly underlined that to be 'in the interest' of the majority does not necessarily mean to be supported by the same majority. The majority might be unaware of its own best interests - it might be 'blind' about them. This is why a vanguard was needed to show the proper way and to educate the masses. This was why the role of the Party as the *collective intellectual* was crucial in the *transitional period*. 'Communists', says the Programme of the LCY, 'must educate the working people to take a greater, more direct and more independent share in the management of society, and to think and act in a socialist manner, until the very last citizen has learnt to manage the affairs of the community' (Programme, 1958:128).<sup>54</sup> There is no doubt that the Communists were seen as not only capable of but as a 'predestined' force for this task.

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<sup>52</sup> This explains the tougher stand against philosophers and some 'radical left' and 'liberal' social scientists and philosophers (such as those around the *Praxis* journal) in the 1970s. Also, it explains the reasons behind the permanent conflict between the Party and the humanistic intelligentsia ('dissidents') not only in Yugoslavia but elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Both groups believed they were entitled to a monopoly over truth. For politics as the struggle for truth in 'Gnostic societies' see Voegelin (1952). This thesis also argues that politics in Yugoslavia was to a very large extent a struggle for the 'right' interpretation of 'truth' which took the form of the struggle between the *right* interpretation of Marxism and *revisionism*, both internationally (with the Soviets) and domestically (with the various *left* groups opposed to the official interpretation).

<sup>53</sup>The idea of post-communist transition is also based on the notion of inevitable progress from 'authoritarianism' to 'democracy' following the 1989 revolutions. Anthony Giddens, for example, argues that these changes were inevitable and are irreversible, since they are the results of deeper structural reasons (see my interview with Giddens, June 1999).

<sup>54</sup> Almost identical formulation of the role of Party could be found in the CPSU Programme: 'The Party considers that the paramount task in the ideological field in the present period is to educate all working people in a spirit of ideological integrity and devotion to communism, and cultivate in them a communist attitude to labour and the social economy...'

'That democracy is not synonymous with rule by erratic impulse and that it is not the Party's role to act as a programmed executor of the 'will of the majority' are fundamentals never forgotten by the Party despite its consistent commitment to democratic goals and the masses. If the Party meant to remain the leading force of society, it had to see deeper and further than the broad mass of the people and the 'majority'. The Party had to perceive the principal historical meaning of its leading ideological and political role in elaborating the long-term goals of progressive social action and in persevering in its work of transmitting its progressive learning to the broad masses of the people' (Kardelj, 1967:47).<sup>55</sup>

Socialist democracy, Kardelj argued, was not only superior to 'political' (capitalist, liberal) democracy, but was the only real form of democracy, because it included economic, not only political equality. Socialism was a definite break with any exploitation, both within countries and between them. Ultimately, democracy is possible only when exploitation has been abolished.<sup>56</sup> Democracy is not only a procedure. It is not a system either. It is not acceptable *per se*, but only if socialist. Socialist democracy is – as the CPSU Programme (1961/1962:32) declared – 'a new type of democracy – democracy for the working people'. There could be no genuine democracy in a capitalist society, because democracy was primarily the possibility to fully decide upon the results of one's own labour. In Tito's words, 'only in socialism could an individual be regarded as totally equal, because equality always has an economic basis. The economic basis makes democracy in socialism real' (Tito in Dedijer, 1984:610). This was why both Tito and Kardelj believed that self-management was the highest realistically possible level of democracy applicable to Yugoslav experience. Self-management was the key to connect 'real individual liberty', which 'is made through the economic process' (Tito in 1952, Dedijer, 1984:611), with the freedom of social groups, such as class and nation. On both accounts – as a strategy for social justice and national equality – self-management was seen to be the perfect solution. In contrast to pre-war Yugoslavia in which centralisation meant both national and class exploitation, the 'new Yugoslavia' was – at least in theory – based on the principle of full autonomy in deciding the outcome of one's own labour.

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(1961/1962:202). Statutes of other organisations of the Yugoslav regime, such as the Socialist Youth Organisation, or the Socialist Alliance of Working People, used the word 'education' to define the goals of these organisations.

<sup>55</sup> Only by understanding this can one explain why the Party mattered more than the state in a socialist society. It was the position of the General Secretary of the Party, not the state president that held real power. When thinking of resigning his post as state president in 1971, Tito wanted to remain the Party president – not vice versa (Tripalo, 1991). Tito could accept the federalisation of the state, but not of the party. The federalisation of the party would mean *real* federalisation, not a *symbolic* one. All political conflicts in Yugoslavia took the form of intra-party divisions. Even as late as 1987, the Serbian State President thought it was 'unthinkable' to use his state position to act independently from the Party (more in Chapter Six). In its final phase, the LCY Central Committee became the real 'parliament' of Yugoslavia. Ultimately, this explains why the disintegration of the Party meant the end of Yugoslavia as a state.

<sup>56</sup> The link between the 'man's emancipation from exploitation, which is what primarily constitutes social justice' and democracy is established also in the CPSU Programme (1961/1962:40).

Kardelj made a significant effort to explain self-management as the result of Yugoslav political tradition, which was not that of the developed capitalist mode of production. The autonomy of the Yugoslav partisan movement from Moscow, as well as its relatively broad scope among the population, were now used as the main sources of new system-building. Kardelj also emphasised that the Yugoslav bourgeoisie did not leave any significant heritage of democratic institutions, characterised by strong parties, parliamentary tradition or impressive record of human and political rights. But even if it had been much different, a socialist country could not just simply take over the institutions of bourgeois society without re-adjusting them to new social goals. Of course, it had even less reason to establish them where they did not previously exist. The institutions of bourgeois society, Kardelj says, in fact 'blur the true class nature of the system' (1977:108), when claiming they represent 'abstract citizens' or 'the whole society'. In reality, however, a citizen had no say in bourgeois democracy dominated by political parties. In fact 'he often feels as though he were living in a jungle in which there is a constant struggle going on between interests and forces which are alien to him and incomprehensible, so that he retreats into the only world which is left to him, the world of the 'lonely consumer' (Kardelj, 1977:112). However progressive it was in previous periods of social development, 'political democracy' was now only a farce, a false and misleading external picture, a façade of capitalist society,<sup>57</sup> which promoted a real economic and political inequality among its citizens.

Parliament and political parties are the main institutions of such a system. Kardelj rejected them both. In his conception, parliament was an embodiment of the representation of 'abstract citizens'. Thus, it was no more than a place for the stabilisation of class-power, which was concentrated outside it, in many circles of 'extra-parliamentary power'.<sup>58</sup> Subsequently (and from this conception, of course, logically), Kardelj attempted to build the Yugoslav political system on exactly the opposite grounds. Yugoslav Communists, he says, have no reason to buy 'second-hand' clothes from the bourgeoisie. They had no interest in re-building political parties, which had never found their roots among the people and which were not 'the last word' in social development (1977:130). Parties and parliaments were the product of the bourgeois phase of social development: they did not exist before, nor they will necessarily exist after it. One day when socialism became the indisputable and dominant system in the world, we would look at political parties in the same way as we did now at the institutions of feudalism, Kardelj was convinced.

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<sup>57</sup> The whole bourgeois system 'gives the masses the illusion that they are in charge of society or that at least they have an opportunity of running society, even though in fact society is being managed by the top echelons of the political parties and the state executive, and above all by the leading forces of extra-parliamentary class power' (Kardelj, 1977:109).

<sup>58</sup> 'By extra-parliamentary power we mean the real power which is exercised by the ruling class by virtue of its right to private property' (Kardelj, 1977:109).

What makes Kardelj different from the Soviet critics of bourgeois democracy, however, is his criticism of 'one-party systems' as well.<sup>59</sup> Kardelj refutes the Soviet-style one-party system as incompatible with self-management.

'Furthermore, the one-party system becomes more vulnerable to deformations the farther way it gets from the initial stages of revolution' (1977:118).

In a powerful attack on 'one-party systems', Kardelj went so far as to conclude that in Eastern Europe one party had taken over the role that was performed by many parties in the West. And that was all. This very change, however, had not changed much. Certainly, it did not open the doors to direct democracy - which was Kardelj's ideal. Politics had not become more accessible to the people, but was controlled by the top leadership of the party. It was all contrary to what self-managing democracy was intended to be. Kardelj's criticism of the Soviet model was as strong as his rejection of Western democracies.<sup>60</sup> For Yugoslavia, he was constructing a *third way* in what he considered to be a real alternative to both sides of the Cold War divide.<sup>61</sup>

The attempt to offer an alternative to both East European models and the Western democracies was the reason behind the *revolutionary* restructuring of the Yugoslav political system. The old parliamentary structures were destroyed. New 'delegate assemblies' were created and thousands of people really became members of 'delegations', 'working councils', 'self-managing interest communities', etc.<sup>62</sup> Instead of professional politicians as in parliamentary democracies (who were declared 'subservient to extra-parliamentary class power'), the Assembly delegates were only spokespersons of their delegations. In most cases, they had to vote as they were instructed, and were replaceable at any time. A complex electoral system was introduced which abandoned

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<sup>59</sup> In Tito's words soon after the split with Stalin (1952, dialogue with Dedijer): 'The role of the party is historically limited to a certain period... The party withers away gradually. That does not mean that a one-party system will be superseded by a multi-party system. It merely means that the one-party system, having superseded a multi-party system, will in turn vanish... Therein lies the very difference between our view and that of the Soviets' (Dedijer, 1953:430-1).

<sup>60</sup> Having this in mind, it was not surprising that strong criticism of 'state socialism' and 'statism' was not only permitted but encouraged by the elite. Criticism of Soviet models of 'state socialism' (or even 'Stalinism') was a major problem in relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia. In the late 1980s, Slobodan Milošević attempted to re-affirm the role of the state, but this was immediately recognised as 'state socialism' and 'Stalinism'. The most loyal supporters of Kardelj's concept (in Slovenia and Croatia, but also - as will be demonstrated in Chapter Six - in Serbia) recognised in his demands exactly what Kardelj criticises most: 'great-statist' tendencies coming from a 'Serbian nationalist'. More on Milošević in Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>61</sup> This is how one can explain *non-alignment* as the main foreign-policy orientation of Yugoslavia. Kardelj believed that Yugoslavia could offer a model of national independence and social justice to the Third World. This definition of national interest was based on these ideological premises.

<sup>62</sup> In 1977 there were about 75,000 delegations altogether, comprising over a million citizens: thus nearly one in five of Yugoslav adult workers were directly involved in the process of self-management (Wilson, 1978:255).



equal representation of citizens, replacing it with functional representation of social groups.<sup>63</sup> The Party still kept the *leading role*, but without being named a *party* (since 1952: the League of Communists), and was supposed to run society by persuasion of the workers and citizens (assembled in the Socialist Alliance of Working People), not directly. The system of self-management was to replace the state, which was de-centralised on its way to withering away. Even the defence system was – in theory – replaced by the concept of general people’s defence.<sup>64</sup> Finally, the functions of the Yugoslav Federal state were drastically reduced, while the functions of the republics were increased by the new constitutive concept. The reform of the federation in the 1967-1974 period was a logical consequence of the introduction of Kardelj’s concept, which was accepted by all relevant participants in Yugoslav politics. Here I argue that one cannot understand the motives of political actors in the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate without understanding the narrative they had followed. This narrative was based on Kardelj’s interpretation of Marxism, which included the notion of the gradual decentralisation of state towards its ‘dying out’ at the end of the transitional period towards Communism.

### 2.2.3. The Notion of State in Kardelj’s Concept

On both accounts – as a supra-national body and as a potential ‘nest’ of ‘bureaucracy’ – the federal state had been increasingly seen as a potential danger. Apart from this, if the Yugoslav Communists wanted to offer a real alternative to both the inter-war Yugoslavism and Soviet Communism, they had to make a significant step towards further de-centralisation of the federal state. It was in this belief that one has to look for the motives of the constitutional reforms.

Kardelj was not an anarchist and was a severe critic of ‘theories of spontaneity’.<sup>65</sup> He believed that the state had an important and progressive role in securing the results of the revolution,

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<sup>63</sup> More on the new structure of the Yugoslav political system in Potts (1997) and Cohen (1989).

<sup>64</sup> On the GPD concept see Gow (1992). More about what happened in reality will be said in the following chapters of this thesis. It was not only that the system was never fully put in practice (since it would have seriously destabilised the real pillars of power, including Tito’s and Kardelj’s role) but the results of actions that were taken were often directly opposite from the declared intentions. A system that claimed the working people to be its cohesive force became divided into thousands and thousands of small units. Bureaucracy was not defeated either in its size or in its real power. On the contrary, the possibility of manipulation increased, both because the new ‘delegates’ had no political experience or adequate education, and because they had no courage to voice their own opinion, since they were always accountable to ‘delegations’ they had to represent. The system of government became extremely expensive and complex. Millions of anonymous self-managers were formally ‘responsible’, while ‘extra-parliamentary’ centres held real power. Instead of moving towards ‘direct democracy’, voters in Yugoslavia had an opportunity to elect only members of ‘delegations’, not even a delegate herself. The whole structure soon became an example of real disenfranchising, which made many people feel manipulated and powerless.

<sup>65</sup> Although Marx believed in the inevitability of *progressing* from capitalism towards the classless society, he also argued that this process could not be the result of its autonomous logic, but could only happen if the ‘subjective forces’ organised and led it. In his pamphlet ‘What Is to Be Done’, Lenin wrote: ‘All worship of spontaneity of the working-class movement, all belittling of the role of the *conscious element*... mean... strengthening the influence of bourgeois ideology

especially in its immediate aftermath. But, the state was still a product of the past historical epoch, which was inevitably to be substituted at the end of the 'transitional phase'. It was not the aim of socialism to 'create a state-sponsored democracy, but rather to socialise state functions and to promote self-management and self-managing democracy' (Kardelj, 1977:140). Once direct democracy was promoted, the 'state apparatus will turn into a specialised public service of the self-managing society' (1977:140).

Contrary to the Soviet optimistic predictions of the Khrushchev period that the state would wither away in 20 or 30 years,<sup>66</sup> Kardelj thought that it would take several generations before that happened. But the process of the 'withering away of the state' was relentless. And it began with the revolution itself. The promotion of the Yugoslav model, therefore, demanded transformation of the state by transferring its functions to 'society'.<sup>67</sup> In 1969, Kardelj declared that the Yugoslav state was not a 'classic' state<sup>68</sup> but a 'self-managing community of working people, nations and nationalities', and that therefore terms like 'federation' or 'confederation' were not any longer applicable to describe the *new Yugoslavia*.<sup>69</sup> Although the state was still named the 'Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia',<sup>70</sup> 'federation' was – Kardelj said – an 'outdated category, which can solve nothing in our system' (1969:246). The same applied to the term 'confederation'.

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upon the workers' (Lenin, Works, V:354). This was the main argument Kardelj used against Djilas' proposals to reduce the role of the Party back in 1953-1954.

<sup>66</sup> The official CPSU gazette *Komunist* declared in 1959 that the 'main elements [of the transitional period] should be completed within the next fifteen years' (De Koster, 1964:151).

<sup>67</sup> This process was called the 'socialisation of state' (*podruštvljavanje države*). Instead of 'state property' – 'social property' was introduced, while administrative units (such as municipalities, regions, republics and the federation) were named 'socio-political communities'. This was all done in order to demonstrate the differences between 'social self-management' and 'statist socialism' as practised in the USSR. An excellent account of the debates between Soviet and Yugoslav Marxists on the 'withering away of the state' is given in Lapenna (1964). For 'socialisation of defence' see Gow (1992).

<sup>68</sup> As Bettelheim argued (1971:34), the socialist state was 'no longer completely a state because it is the instrument of the exercise of power by the working masses themselves', and not an instrument of control and repression against them. I argue that the incredible weakness of Yugoslav state to resist the pressure it faced in the late 1980s had its deep roots in this 'anti-statist' rhetoric and action. It was precisely in Yugoslavia, in which the state 'withered away' faster than in other cases in Eastern Europe that the consequences of this process were most obvious.

<sup>69</sup> Kardelj's concept introduced many new words into the Yugoslav political vocabulary. Old words were considered to be unsuitable to describe the new reality. Creating new words was in fact the first step to changing the world. In this dissertation I prefer using the official (Yugoslav government) English translation for these terms, if it exists. I realise that, outside of their ideological contexts, some of these terms are easy to misunderstand.

<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, it was reported that Slobodan Milošević, then a student at the Law Faculty in Belgrade, was the member of the LCY who proposed that the country be named the Socialist Federative, rather than (as Kardelj originally had suggested) the Federative Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The emphasis on socialism, rather than on the form of the state, somehow suited both Ranković's and Kardelj's concepts. While within the concept of the *Third Yugoslavia* (pre-1966), the socialist character of the state was emphasised, in the fourth concept (Kardelj's) the form of the state was to be rated second to the 'form of social order'. Rating 'federal' (character of the state) second to 'socialist' (type of social order) was, therefore, in their common interest. Milošević's proposal was accepted by his Party organisation (Law Faculty in Belgrade) and later by the Party leadership itself.

'Both the federation and the confederation ... represent categories of the multinational state, which was a form of bourgeois political society in the capitalist epoch' (1969:246).

These forms of state played a progressive role in their time, but – just like as parties and parliaments – were not suitable for the new epoch.

'Briefly, present-day Yugoslavia is no longer a classical federation, nor can it be a classical federation, but is a socialist self-managing community of peoples, which in many respects represents a substantively new category in relations among nationalities' (1969:248).

Finally it was not only that words to describe the institutions of the *new Yugoslavia* had to be invented, but the entire structure of the state was unique. The functions of the Yugoslav Federal state were drastically reduced mainly to common defence and foreign policy, but even in these areas the federation itself became 'more the initiator, executor and agent of adjustment ... than an autonomous decision – maker' (Kardelj, 1974:292).<sup>71</sup> And these areas were left to Tito himself, who acted almost as if foreign and defence policy were his private domain.<sup>72</sup> According to Kardelj's interpretation of the national question, the federal state had no autonomy in itself, but was only a tool of the (by then already divided) working class and their nation-states. Federal bodies were not independent of the republics, but formed directly by them. The republics handed over to the exercise of the federation only those powers which they 'explicitly determined in the federal constitution', which could be amended only with the consent of all members of the federation. 'The power of the federation... derives from the republics, not the other way round', was the principle realised in the Yugoslav legislature (Kardelj, 1973:279).

Consequently, Yugoslav citizens as such were not directly represented in any of the federal institutions. As Zagreb professor Žarko Puhovski said (1984), they were fictive political beings:

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<sup>71</sup> Republics increased their influence over appointments of ambassadors and intensified their bilateral relations with foreign states. (This included the relations between Kosovo and Albania, which would cause many controversies in the following decades.) In defence policy, although the Army was highly centralised and under Tito's full control, the republics were allowed to form units of *Territorial Defence* and the military strategy re-emphasised the partisan (local) tactics as opposed to frontal army activities only. (The territorial defence units would a decade and a half later become the main source for the emergence of separate armies in the republics, while the concept of self-defence via Partisan war in fact provided suitable training of civilians, many of whom used this knowledge in the post-Yugoslav wars).

<sup>72</sup> Tepavac remembers that while the ministers of defence and foreign and internal affairs were in constant personal contact with Tito, the speaker of the parliament and the prime minister could not see him even after repeated requests. 'However, Tito's direct contact with the republic governments and LC leaders became more important as their autonomy increased. With these leaders he met regularly, if not frequently... republican delegations officially reported to Tito and increasingly turned to him for approval of many measures they believed could not be adopted through constitutional channels. Furthermore, Tito was inclined to agree with everybody. When a problem arose between two or more republics, republican leaders learned to approach Tito separately, instead of meeting together. Tito often would satisfy the parties individually, sometimes at each other's expense, and without resolving the underlying issues' (Tepavac, 1997:74-5). This explains why Tito's death left Yugoslavia without effective federal government. More on this in Chapters Four and Five.

'And since the system of representation through federal units, which means through ethnic identities, has been taken to be decisive for any political participation, there can be no place for those who have cancelled their belonging to such a system.'

Another professor of politics, Jovan Mirić (also from Zagreb), concluded:

'As long as a citizen remains an outsider, an unrecognised element of the community, the awareness of belonging to this community will not develop. A community (in contrast to a society) can be built and destroyed in our own minds. It cannot be constructed externally, from somewhere outside ourselves' (Mirić, 1985:45).

But the concept of citizenship that both Puhovski and Mirić had in mind, was a liberal concept, and, therefore, was not acceptable to Kardelj. As he explained in his 'Notes on Social Criticism' in 1965, the Yugoslav political system should not be based on the liberal notion of 'abstract citizens', because an 'abstract man' is 'non-existent' (1965:74). He existed only in liberal models, which 'try to transform man into a God' instead of accepting that man's life was dependent on both society and on nature. Instead of basing their criticism on man as he was, they criticised him from the position of man 'such as he ought to be' (1965:73). On the contrary, Kardelj believed that his concept should enable representation of existing interests, making sure that the interests of the majority (i.e., *working people*) were satisfied. It was because of these beliefs that he saw no problems in basing the entire structure of the Yugoslav political system on separate interest groups, rather than on the equality of abstract citizens.

The fact that the citizens of Yugoslavia were politically non-existent was, therefore, the logical result of Kardelj's Marxist beliefs as well as of his views on the national question. Since the idea of a 'Yugoslav nation' was condemned as 'great-state, nationalistic, unrealistic and profoundly harmful and reactionary', people who wanted to declare themselves as ethnic 'Yugoslavs' could in the 1971 census register only as 'undeclared/Yugoslavs', not as a separate ethnic group. Unlike the recognised 'constitutive nations', and even the 'nationalities' and 'national minorities', they were not represented in politics.<sup>73</sup> This was a legal expression of Kardelj's belief that 'socialist forces would be making a big mistake if they allowed themselves to be carried

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<sup>73</sup> On this issue, Tito and Kardelj seemed to disagree. Although in 1964 Tito for the first time declared himself a Croat (rather than a Yugoslav), at the 8<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress elections he opposed 'witch-hunts' against Yugoslav patriotism, as seen in his passionate speech against Croatian nationalism in December 1971. What did it mean to be against Yugoslavism, he rhetorically asked his colleagues in the party leadership? 'If it means to be against the old Yugoslavism of King Alexander, then of course I am against this sort of Yugoslavism. But, if it means to love my country, to feel a Yugoslav in the first place and to be proud of it, then I must tell you that I am Yugoslav. Of course, as you know, I am from Croatia, but I am also a Yugoslav and I have spent all my life working for Yugoslavia.' But, Tito was already an exception, both in constitutional and in real political terms. No other politician would escape the label of 'unitarist' if he repeated Tito's words. At the same time that Tito declared himself a Yugoslav, Kardelj was writing that the illusion of Yugoslavism represented the greatest danger to Yugoslavia itself.

away by futile ideas of creating some new kind of nation', since 'this would only intensify nationalism and chauvinism in the existing nations' (1957:127).<sup>74</sup>

One of the greatest controversies in Kardelj's writing (and in the ideology of Yugoslav communism) was his argument against the federal state at the time when republics were declared states themselves. Why was Yugoslavia on its way to *withering away* at the same time as separate nation-states of its *constitutive nations* were to be created and strengthened? Was it because he still considered Yugoslavia to be an 'artificial creation', as Comintern argued for almost the entire inter-war period?<sup>75</sup> Was it because he believed that multi-ethnic states were in principle only a *transitional creation*, an incubator which helped small nations to become *completed* and then – subsequently – to create their own separate states? In the decades to come, Kardelj's critics (especially those from Serbia) pointed to this controversy as the main evidence of Kardelj's (Slovenian, ethnic) nationalism.

Kardelj himself offered only a few explanations of this controversy. As has been already mentioned in this chapter, he believed that no supra-national state (such as the Austro-Hungarian or the Yugoslav) could create a 'supra-nation', especially when its constitutive nations had been 'completed'. The failure of the concept of 'national unity', which attempted to create a Yugoslav nation in inter-war Yugoslavia, was the main historical lesson to be learnt by the Yugoslav Communists. Nations would gradually be transformed into 'something else' as the world approached communism. But, in the meantime, they were a reality and should be treated as a reality.<sup>76</sup> Socialist society should be a step ahead, a better alternative to a liberal-led 'melting pot of nations'. Multi-ethnic federations made sense to their constitutive nations only if they increased 'the feeling of security of the peoples' that constituted them (1975:148).

The recognition of republics as nation-states followed yet another of Kardelj's arguments about the future. In an expression very reminiscent of present-day *globalisation theory*, Kardelj argued that the international process of integration constituted 'the present and the future of mankind'

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<sup>74</sup> A similar type of argument was later used by Milošević and Kučan. They were both 'saving Yugoslavia' by 'satisfying' national demands, in order to 'prevent' ethnic nationalists taking power and destroying Yugoslavia. Milošević was also 'saving' Yugoslavia from 'anarchy', arguing that anarchy would lead to a totalitarian response.

<sup>75</sup> In an interview conducted for this thesis in December 1995, Dušan Bilandžić, the Croatian politician and historian, recalls a talk with Kardelj who told him in 1971: 'We have tried every possibility so far to preserve Yugoslavia: first, it was a unitary state, then it became a federation, while now we are moving towards a confederation. If this proves to be yet another unsuccessful attempt, then it remains only to admit that the Comintern was right when arguing that Yugoslavia was an 'artificial creation', and that we, the Yugoslav Communists, have made a mistake.'

<sup>76</sup> In 1970 Kardelj declared that socialism had not changed the nature of the nation and the character of its demands significantly (1970/1979:270). These views were somewhat different from what Tito said on several occasions – that the national question had basically been solved after the socialist revolution. Many Yugoslav communists – as Milka Planinc said in an interview I conducted with her in April 1999 – believed the same as Tito and were surprised when the national question re-appeared in the 1960s. More in next chapter.

(1975:175). This globalization is an inevitable result of technological revolution and a 'natural result' of 'scientific and technical progress' (1969:246) which would bring about new communication and cultural links between nations. Kardelj was convinced that this was a sufficient guarantee for the future of Yugoslav togetherness.

'It is beyond any doubt that Yugoslav society, all Yugoslav people and in all situations, will find enough strength to resist all disintegrating tendencies' (1969: 228).

This argument was only strengthened by the global political situation, in which the two blocs were clearly opposed to any disintegration of Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the eventual disappearance of the two world military and political blocs would be very much a confirmation of the far-sightedness of the Yugoslav non-aligned policy.<sup>77</sup> Whatever happened, thus, would only confirm Kardelj's belief that 'the alternative here is not whether Yugoslavia will survive or not, but whether it will continue to develop as a socialist, self-managing and democratic community of equal peoples, or whether it will fall into the hands of hegemonistic forces' (1969: 228).

Now, with the existence of Yugoslavia guaranteed, Kardelj turned to satisfy the needs of its nations within the globalised world. The creation of nation-states within Yugoslavia was Kardelj's attempt to find a new balance between increasing globalisation in the world and the wish of the Yugoslav nations to protect their national identities. In Kardelj's concept, to increase 'national feelings' was not incompatible with globalisation: as long as they were well balanced, these were two sides of the same coin. Problems would emerge only if 'globalisation' went too far: this would necessarily increase nationalism and the separatism of Yugoslav nations. Without a balance between *globalisation* and *securing national identities* the whole Yugoslav house was endangered.<sup>78</sup> He saw discontent with the possible violation of national rights as the main potential danger for the future of Yugoslavia. Although the main conflict even in socialist society was still a class and not a national one (1975 a: 268), the national question, Kardelj warned, could be used to undermine Yugoslavia in the same way as it was used by the Communists in the inter-war period against the bourgeois government. Ten years after the disintegration of

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<sup>77</sup> For this, see his 1970 speech at the 12<sup>th</sup> Session of the LCY Presidency (Kardelj, 1970). In fact, Kardelj was thinking of Yugoslavia as a multi-national corporation, as a core of the prospective wider integration in the region, rather than as a state. When the time came, Yugoslavia would be an ideal example of different nations in different states living under the same roof. Yugoslavia was once again (not only in an ideological sense, but also as a state) meant to be a *transitional* entity, as something that might well be transcended in a broader post-Cold-war political structure of Europe. More on the views of other Yugoslav leaders about the prospects for Balkan and other regional integration in the late 1960s will be said in the next chapter.

<sup>78</sup> Anthony Giddens' recent conclusion on *fundamentalist traditionalism* as a reaction to globalisation comes close to Kardelj's views (see interview I conducted with Giddens, published in 1999).

Yugoslavia, one can safely conclude that this was one of very few of Kardelj's predictions that did indeed materialise.<sup>79</sup>

### 2.3. Conclusion

The Yugoslav political system underwent 'revolutionary political changes' from its third to fourth (Kardelj) constitutive concept, following the new interpretation of reality that was expressed in Kardelj's texts after 1957. The new concept was the result of Kardelj's interpretation of Marxism, but also of contextual circumstances, such as the attempt to construct a system that would be an *antipode* to both inter-war Yugoslavism and the Soviet model of socialism. Once it had been formulated as a - more or less - internally coherent vision of reality, Kardelj's interpretation became a blueprint for political action. It became a new *platform*, a 'Party line' to be followed by all Yugoslav Communists. In a society in which politics was primarily a representation of ideals and not of reality, the dominant interpretation of *truth* was to be protected by the state apparatus and implemented in reality, despite all resistance. Any opposition to such an interpretation was treated as 'contrary to the truth of history' and would be defeated as 'a representative of untruth in history' (Voegelin, 1952:59).

But in the Marxist conception, the purpose of knowledge of the *truth* is to change reality and to construct the new world. Knowledge makes sense only if it becomes action.<sup>80</sup> Revolutionary theory is a weapon in the revolutionary transformation of societies. This is why Kardelj's interpretation was so crucial to the political events that followed in the last two decades of Yugoslavia. To use Voegelin's description of *Gnostic societies*, his interpretation of reality and vision of the future presented 'a dream-world which itself is a social force to motivate attitudes and actions' (1952:167). Within this conception the transition meant the denial of one reality and the construction of a new reality, which should come as close as possible to the ideal, non-existent, 'dream-world'. The Communists were entitled to lead such societies not because they

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<sup>79</sup> In his last public addresses Kardelj uttered some pessimistic predictions about the future of the Yugoslav project. At a closed session of the Party leadership in 1974 he warned that the 'Chilean scenario' could happen in Yugoslavia if the country did not stop taking loans immediately (Unpublished papers, and also Šuvar, interview for this thesis, April 1998). In his dramatic speech at the 11<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress in 1978 he (already suffering from terminal cancer) concluded that social consciousness had not changed much and that it was still equivalent to that of pre-war Yugoslavia (Documents, 1978). This meant that the main task of the Party - to change people's consciousness - was far from being achieved. Indeed, Kardelj earlier even said that 'many democracies collapsed because they could not control their internal contradictions and antagonisms and defend their own social system from the pressure of contrary tendencies, either revolutionary or reactionary' (1969:219). I heard from several of his colleagues in the Party and state leadership that I interviewed for this thesis (such as Jure Bilić, Josip Vrhovec, Dušan Dragosavac, Raif Dizdarević et al.) about Kardelj's disappointments in the last years of his life with what had been achieved.

<sup>80</sup> As Marx famously explained - the point is not to describe reality, but to change it.

were the only ones who could interpret the existent, but because they represented the *future*, which would inevitably one day become reality.<sup>81</sup>

But even if the *future* 'works', present reality might not. In fact, it is characteristic of *Gnostic societies* to neglect reality for the sake of the future. By neglecting reality, however, they often fail to recognise the need to react to it in a real and adequate way. Being convinced that the future must come in the way they predicted, communists in fact underestimated the real danger from the real world. Their vision of the future blurred their ability to view the present. Their almost religious belief in the power of words and beliefs made them react by moral condemnation, resolutions and propaganda, rather than measures that belonged to the world of real politics. They, therefore, engaged in endless criticism of 'deviations'. They 'reformed' the system relentlessly in order to be more efficient than both Western representative democracies and Eastern 'state socialist systems'. But at the same time, they allowed an almost anarchic situation under the name of 'self-management'. As will be demonstrated in detail in Chapters Four and Five, the disintegrative processes were a direct consequence of their belief that the state should decentralise in order to 'wither away'.<sup>82</sup> Instead of supporting 'integration across borders', the system collapsed into various small units, all becoming more and more 'autarkic'. Instead of enabling direct democracy within 'self-management', it became more bureaucratic than ever.

Although Kardelj's concept had materialised in the laws and political actions of the Yugoslav communists, the results of these actions were different from what Kardelj intended. His own disappointment about the reality only three years after the new constitution had been introduced<sup>83</sup> offers a good example of failed predictions, which were entirely based on what he believed was the *scientific* analysis of politics. They also form not only a useful, but a necessary prelude to the disintegration of Yugoslavia – an outcome that Kardelj felt he was preventing by

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<sup>81</sup> A nice illustration of this belief is to be found in a report of a certain Lincoln Steffens after visiting Russia in 1918, as quoted by Sweezy and Bettelheim (1971:80). Steffens, a Communist, said: 'I have been over into the future and it works.' Communists often referred to Communism as the 'bright future', or the 'future of mankind'. Some of this rhetoric is preserved in Slobodan Milošević's speeches in the 1984-1987 period, analysed in Chapter Six.

<sup>82</sup> In this respect, one can only share the conclusion of Warren Zimmermann, the last American Ambassador in socialist Yugoslavia, who asked himself why the other socialist countries of Eastern Europe succeeded while the Yugoslav reforms failed? 'The key reason is that those countries had strong central governments; Yugoslavia did not' (1999:49). Indeed, as I argue in Chapter Four of this thesis, both economic and political reforms in the 1980s failed for this reason.

<sup>83</sup> In 1977 Kardelj accepted criticism by the Serbian leaders, recognising that the way the Constitution was implemented in reality produced results opposite from those desired. His wife Pepca Kardelj told me of his disappointment with the general situation in the country in the final years of his life. He felt sidelined and misunderstood by his colleagues in the federal leadership. Also, he felt that Tito had lost the ability to change things any more. More on this in the next chapter.



offering his new concept. The end of the Cold War ten years after Kardelj's death indeed offered a chance to Yugoslavia to transform itself towards a new 'association of sovereign states'. But, although more realistic than many of his contemporaries, Kardelj still underestimated the strength of anti-globalisation tendencies among the Yugoslavs, and, especially, within the political elite itself. Instead of being a *vanguard* of further globalisation, the Yugoslav party elite became an ally of the forces of disintegration. It was because of his loyalty to the Marxist interpretation of the *General Laws of History* that Kardelj failed to see this danger. Although he perhaps understood reality better than any of his contemporaries in the Yugoslav leadership (including Tito), it was still his own vision of the future that prevented him from taking reality as the basis for his action.

In the next chapter we analyse why other relevant participants in the Yugoslav politics accepted the Kardelj concept and how they transformed it into the institutional and constitutional structure defined in the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate. I argue that the main reason was to be found in their beliefs and perceptions about political realities. These beliefs were best expressed by Kardelj himself. Of course, they interpreted some of Kardelj's ideas in their own ways, depending on the context in which they operated. But, the cohesion of the Yugoslav house was possible primarily because the relevant political participants shared the same concept of what Yugoslavia was, what it was not, what it should become, and what was to be prevented. In the Fourth and Fifth chapters we analyse the political actions of the Yugoslav communists who tried to change reality to fit their vision of the future. I argue that in doing so they clashed with reality and failed to react to the challenges they faced in real politics. On the contrary, they reacted in the way described by Voegelin: by condemnations and resolutions only. In the meantime, the problems in reality remained unresolved. Defending their vision of the future, the Yugoslav Communists in the end lost touch with the present. Once they realised the vision itself was not adequate to explain and change reality, they lost both the present and the future.

## Chapter Three:

# The Constitutional Debate 1967-1974:

## Why did Serbia Accept the *Kardelj* concept and the 1974 Constitution?

'Ranković's whole line was conservative. In Serbia, we felt him to be a heavy burden... Tito exercised full control over foreign policy and the Army, while Ranković controlled the Party and police. We wanted to put the lid on this... Everything that Kardelj initiated and promoted in our political system, distinguished us from the East and it was a guarantee that we would not return to the past. In general, he was a reformist and a Yugoslav.'

Petar Stambolić, 1992.

At no time and in no place was the mistake of granting more rights and wider possibilities for the development of smaller nations and nationalities (than necessary) committed. History does not ever record that such a 'mistake' has been committed towards the nationalities and national minorities.'

Marko Nikezić, June 1968.

### 3.0. Introduction

Kardelj's concept was transformed into legislation during the long constitutional debate in which members of the Yugoslav political elites representing the interests of republics and provinces engaged between 1967 and 1974. In this chapter I examine this debate, in order to show why the Yugoslav republics (and especially Serbia) agreed on the proposed compromise and accepted the 1974 Constitution. Most observers would today argue that the 1974 Constitution became one of the least logical and most unchangeable Constitutions in the world and that it became the crucial catalyst of the dissolution of the country.

But, how was it possible that such an 'illogical' constitution found support in the Yugoslav republics and provinces? In this chapter we concentrate on explaining why this happened. The main question of this chapter follows the main aim of the dissertation as a whole: to explain why certain political decisions, which in different contexts seem to be so clearly 'irrational' were nevertheless taken by responsible political actors in given circumstances. Without

understanding why these decisions made sense to the actors we will be unable to explain why they were taken.

When discussing the constitutional debates of the 1968-1974 period, most authors focus their research on the 'Croatian Spring', the reformist attempt of the Croatian leaders that re-opened the 'Croatian question' and initiated nationalist tendencies within Croatian society. My focus in this chapter is, however, not on Croatia but on Serbia. More precisely, I focus on the reasons behind the decision of Serbia's leaders to accept the Kardelj concept and the constitutional compromise of 1974. The reason for this is provided by the further course of the events that preceded the disintegration of Yugoslavia. First, dissatisfaction with the implementation of the Constitutional compromise originated in Serbia. The 'Serbian question' (both in its internal dimension – the question of the relations of Serbia with its two provinces – Kosovo and Vojvodina; as well as in its external aspect – its relations with other republics and the Yugoslav federal centre) dominated *Brioni Yugoslavia*. Finally, it was in Serbia that the 1974 Constitution was first rejected by the political elite (though not before 1989), which had an enormous impact on the final stage of the Yugoslav crisis.

Here I ask: why did the Serbian political elite in 1967-1974 agree on such a Constitution, which is today seen in Serbia as the main cause of 'Serbian dissatisfaction' with Yugoslavia? I argue that only by taking into account Kardelj's concept and the interpretation of Serbian interests based on this concept by the relevant political actors in the historical context in which the decision was taken, can one understand this political action. If one wants to avoid the *prolepsis fallacy* (as described by Skinner), one should focus on the beliefs, intentions and expectations of the relevant political actors (members of the Serbian political elite) at the time when the decision was taken, rather than on later results and recent interpretations of their decisions once Yugoslavia had already disintegrated. I argue that a different approach cannot accurately explain what happened in reality, since it cannot explain why the Serbian elite accepted such an 'unfair' and 'illogical' compromise. On the contrary, by examining the interpretation of reality by the members of the elite, which was based on Marxist ideology and Kardelj's explanation, one should be able to understand the action.

Although this chapter is focused on Serbia's acceptance of the 1974 Constitution, its conclusions address the other Yugoslav republics as well. It is today widely accepted that the other Yugoslav republics accepted the 1974 Constitution because it offered them better status in terms of national rights and autonomy than any previous concept of Yugoslavia. But, although national issues played a significant role in the Constitutional debate, it was also the context of the Kardeljist interpretation of wider social goals (such as – above all – social self-management as the main element of Yugoslav identity when compared both with the East and the West) that made the leaders come to support it. The main motive for their decision was to be found in

their firm belief that state should gradually be weakened and decentralised, as explained in Chapter Two. As the debate we examine in this chapter confirms, it would be misleading to reduce all the reasons for the acceptance of the 1974 Constitution to the national question. Finally, overestimation of the 'national question' among the motives for the acceptance of the 1974 Constitution would necessarily fail to explain why Serbia agreed to it.

While Chapter Two focused on the emergence of Kardelj's concept within its historical and ideological context, this Chapter places this concept in its practical context, that is 'the problematic political activity or relevant characteristics of the society the author addresses and to which the text is a response' (Skinner, 1988:10). It addresses the question of 'how ideological change comes to be woven into ways of acting' and analyses the relations between political ideology and political action. It also focuses more closely on the dominant Serbian interpretation of Kardelj's concept, which has been permanently contested within Serbia itself, only to be replaced by alternative concepts which emerged in the 1980s.

### 3.1. Did Serbia Accept Kardelj's Concept Voluntarily?

Three frequently stated arguments should be discussed before we answer the question of this chapter:

First, that the republics (including, or even especially, Serbia) had to accept everything that Tito and Kardelj dictated, because of the nature of the autocratic system in which any opposition (primarily) to Tito would be marginalised and purged. Consequently, it was Tito (and Kardelj) who imposed the 1974 Constitution on Serbia, contrary to its interests and regardless of the real wishes of its leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, that the Serbian politicians of the time were not interested in Serbian national interests, but were either a-national (as Communists also inter-nationalist), or too opportunistic to risk their personal privileges.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Borisav Jović, the president of the Serbian National Assembly in March 1989 when the 1974 Constitution was significantly amended, talked about the 'imposed Constitution'. The SANU Memorandum (1986) uses the word 'prescribed [by the leader]' (*oktroirani*) to describe the 1974 Constitution. 'Serbia must openly say that this order [of the 1974 Constitution] was imposed on Serbia' (Krestić, 1986/1995:145).

<sup>2</sup> Antonije Isaković, the Chairman of the Commission for the SANU Memorandum, says that the SANU academicians thought Ivan Stambolić, the President of Serbia (1986-1987), a 'traitor to his own people' (interview conducted in April 1996). Similarly, Slobodan Milošević said in June 1989 that 'no nation would tolerate such weakness in protecting its national interests as was demonstrated by leading Serbian politicians in the past' (*Politika*, 29 June 1989).

Finally, that the Serbian elite was illegitimate in democratic terms and that therefore they did not reflect the political preferences of the population which were significantly different from those represented by the elite itself. In this respect, it was irrelevant whether the elite itself agreed or disagreed with Tito and Kardelj, since their decisions lacked (democratic) legitimacy.

It is important to examine these three arguments, since they created the dominant discourse in the contemporary Serbian debate on the 1974 Constitution, influencing the political actions of the Serbian leaders in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Here I argue that although there are elements of truth in all of them, all three arguments disregard or greatly misrepresent the motives of the relevant political actors in accepting the 1974 Constitution.

### 3.1.1. Relationship Between Tito and Republican (Serbian) Leaders

First, we should examine the statement that Tito was too authoritarian to be opposed by republican elites. Available primary sources (interviews with Tito's former aides, memoirs of the leading Yugoslav politicians in the late 1960s and early 1970s, etc.) confirm that Tito indeed had an extraordinary and central role in Yugoslav political decision-making processes. Such a position was the result of both his personal role in the formation of Yugoslav institutions (the Army, the re-organisation of the Party, the formation of the Yugoslav Communist Federation, the role of Yugoslavia in international politics, etc.) and of the offices of the President of the Republic (which he held since 1953) and of the Party (since 1937). But none of this had really prevented other politicians from being critical of his initiatives, especially in face-to-face or more confidential debates. This criticism was particularly strong during the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate, when it originated mostly from the Serbian leaders (Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, Latinka Perović, Marko Nikezić, Petar Stambolić, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

This criticism of Tito's position by Serbian leaders sometimes (and not only on subordinate issues) influenced Tito's further decisions. Tito's closest aides say that far from initiating conflict, he tried to avoid disputes with other leaders whenever possible.<sup>4</sup> He spent four crucial years (1962-1966) before taking an active part in the conceptual disputes that emerged within the closest circle of his aides – between Edvard Kardelj and Aleksandar Ranković.<sup>5</sup> Throughout

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<sup>3</sup> For direct criticism of Tito by other members of political elite see Tepavac's account of the dispute between the Vice-President of Yugoslavia Koča Popović and Tito (1998:127), on the argument between the Yugoslav Ambassador to the USSR Veljko Mićunović and Tito in 1961 (Tepavac, 1998:134), on the dispute between the Macedonian politician Lazar Koliševski and Tito (Djukić, 1989:117-20), etc. Many examples are to be found in Draža Marković's memoirs, frequently quoted in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> For this see Tepavac: (1997:74-5), quoted in footnote 72 in Chapter Two.

<sup>5</sup> Leon Geršković, one of the two main constitutional lawyers who co-operated with Kardelj and Ranković in writing the 1963 Yugoslav Constitution said in an informal conversation with Mladen Babun that Tito's hesitation to take a stand on the differences between the two men resulted in a constitution that had to be replaced immediately after the overthrow of Ranković three years later.

the first phase of the Constitutional debate (1967-1971) Tito hesitated to take a direct part in it, avoiding direct confrontations with either side. In such moments of wavering, all the participants in the debate tried to influence Tito, some of them more successfully than others. The compromises Tito suggested were, therefore, the result of interaction between him and republican leaders, as well as between him and Kardelj, and not simple proclamations of Tito's personal views. This is how Tito re-affirmed his central role without antagonising the republics and provinces. At the same time, however, by promoting direct talks between himself and republican leaders, Tito reduced the role of other federal institutions (the Party federal presidency, Federal Assembly, etc.) and prevented any collective action by two or more republics against others and against himself.<sup>6</sup>

Available sources indicate that Tito's relations with the Serbian leadership were especially strained throughout the constitutional debate. In his diary (published in 1987 and 1988) the leading Serbian participant in the Constitutional debate Draža Marković describes several occasions in which the Serbian leaders opposed Tito.<sup>7</sup> When one sums up Marković's recollections, the following list of disagreements between Tito and Serbia appears:

1. The Serbian leaders thought that Tito favoured the Croatian leaders (especially when compared to the Serbian leadership).<sup>8</sup> The Serbs felt that Tito publicly criticised what he saw as deviations in Serbia's politics while he kept his criticism of Croatian politics (then already developing its 'Croatian Spring' policy) hidden from the public and restricted to 'inner circles' of the federal leadership, or even to *tête-a-tête* talks with the Croats. The Croats also believed that Tito was the main political ally of the (otherwise isolated) Croatian leadership, which made the Croats tough participants in the constitutional debate. The impression of the Serbian leaders that Tito was the main sponsor of the 'Croatian Spring' was shared by other republics (including Slovenia's Kardelj, the main critic of the Croatian leadership's 'avangardism'). It is not surprising that Tito in the end accepted Serbian demands that he should act more resolutely to bring Croatia back to negotiations. The Serbian leaders felt that without Tito's support Croatia would be much

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<sup>6</sup> In an informal conversation we had in 1993, Miko Tripalo (then member of the Federal Party Presidency for Croatia) said that Tito and Kardelj were 'mediating between Serbs with Croats but in such a way that they really did not want them to act united'. He thought Tito decided to move against both Croatian and Serbian leaders in April 1971, when Serbo-Croatian agreement on confederalisation seemed to become more realistic than ever before. Tito and Kardelj feared not only for the future of Yugoslavia, but also for their position if this happened.

<sup>7</sup> Marković, at the time President of Serbian Assembly (the highest 'state' position in Serbia) describes conversations of 15 May 1971 (1987:284), 26 June 1971 (1987:288), 4 July 1971 (1987:289), 30 November 1971 (1987:317), 14 May 1972 (1987:357), 5 November 1972 (1987:399), 14 April 1973 (1987:433-4), 10 June 1973 (1987:446), and many other talks after the 1974 Constitution had been enacted, which is not the subject of this chapter. Another important Serbian politician Latinka Perović, the Secretary of the LC CC Serbia, describes some of her talks with Tito during 1971. Although in 1972 Marković and Perović went different ways in intra-Serbian political divisions, there is no major disagreement between these two accounts. For talks between Tito and Croatian leaders see Tripalo (1990), Bilić (1988) and Dragosavac (1988).

<sup>8</sup> Marković, 1987: 6 March 1971; 15 May 1971; 26 June 1971; 30 November 1971; 10 December 1971; 15 November 1972, etc.

more willing to negotiate<sup>9</sup> with others in Yugoslavia during the Constitutional debate.<sup>10</sup> However, it is not clear to what extent Tito really wanted to replace the leaders of the Croatian Spring, and how much he was really forced to remove them by those (unnamed) persons who had told him 'either them or you', as Tripalo recalls Tito's words.<sup>11</sup>

2. The Serbian leaders also objected to Tito's harsh public criticism of many Serbian institutions (such as Belgrade University, the *Student* newspaper and the Belgrade media in general), of Serbian intellectuals (the Praxis group, etc.), Serbian politicians (Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, etc.) and the general political situation in Serbia. Tito's criticism of the 'Belgrade Čaršija'<sup>12</sup> was seen as criticism of the Serbian political leadership and its inability to prevent 'anti-socialist activities'.<sup>13</sup>
3. The Serbian leaders were dissatisfied with Tito's inclination to make concessions to the demands of the two Serbian provinces - Kosovo and Vojvodina. Serbian politicians believed Tito was too soft on Kosovo and Vojvodina, and ready to accept political compromises with them even when this was clearly against the main principles of the new Constitution. In this respect, they considered Kardelj to be much more principled than Tito.<sup>14</sup> To some extent, it is correct to say that Serbia's (and other republican) leaders preferred building up institutional politics with clear rules rather than leaving too much power to Tito personally. But, for many reasons, this was not a realistic option. They had

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<sup>9</sup> Perović (1990:141) and Marković (30 November 1971).

<sup>10</sup> It seems that Serbian criticism initiated a change in Tito's views on the Croatian leadership of Savka Dabčević Kučar and Miko Tripalo. Marković reveals that ten days after a difficult talk he had with the leadership of the City of Belgrade, Tito sharply criticised Croatian politicians, giving them a 'final warning' at a closed meeting in Zagreb and Brežice, 4 July 1971. He asked them to act more resolutely against Croatian nationalism. On the very day of his meeting with the Croats, Tito spoke to Draža Marković for more than two hours. Marković recalls: 'He was very worried about the situation. He spoke about the attacks on him: he talked about himself, his past, emphasising that he had devoted his whole life to the cause of the working class, to revolutionary struggle; he was very critical about the situation in Croatia and the LC of Croatia. He told me he would leave for Zagreb that day, and that he would be absent from Belgrade for two months. He was interested in my assessment of the situation in Serbia and Belgrade; almost directly he asked for guarantees of stability and security in this period' (4 July 1971; 1987:289).

<sup>11</sup> Tripalo, 1990:187. Tito, for example, tried to convince Tripalo not to resign, saying that he did not have to. Tripalo, however, resigned in protest, saying to Tito that the attacks on the Croats were in fact directed at him, and that once he (Tito) had left the scene, the forces that had initiated the removal of the Croatian leaders would 'publicly hang us both'.

<sup>12</sup> Čaršija is a word of Turkish origin, used to describe semi-public but influential circles among Serbian intellectuals, which used to criticise the regime at various 'private' and semi-official gatherings. Tepavac says that 'Serbia always worried Tito more than any other republic, because he sensed the volcanic potentiality of Serbian nationalism' (1998:154). Tito was kept informed of their views by Secret Police reports. This gave the impression of massive surveillance of leading Serbian intellectuals, and left room for speculation about how much the role of the secret police had really changed after the dismissal of Aleksandar Ranković (1966). Several affairs involving police information emerged during the Constitutional debate, most of which were used to try to blacken its participants in Tito's eyes.

<sup>13</sup> In return, this helped Serbian leaders and the opposition to build some bridges between them, since they both felt attacked by Tito. This explains why the political elite tried to soften Tito's demands for legal prosecution of the leading Serbian intellectuals. Marković's diary reveals his frequent contacts with some of them - like Antonije Isaković and Dobrica Ćosić. In this sense, the Serbian (and other) intellectuals were not really dissidents in the sense in which this word was used in other Eastern European countries. They always managed to find a segment of the political elite to act as their protector.

<sup>14</sup> This is how Petar Stambolić describes Kardelj and Tito (Djukić, 1992:241).

to adapt to Tito's extraordinary position, but they used any opportunity to influence him.

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4. In line with the previous objection, Serbia's leaders (but also those of other republics) were suspicious of Tito's tendency to use his enormous influence with the Security and Military apparatus and to take advantage of his charismatic status with the broad Yugoslav population in order to stop or reverse political processes in the republics and the country in general.<sup>16</sup> They feared Tito's personal links with the masses, as well as his support in the international arena, both of which enabled him to act as a fully independent participant in Yugoslav politics.
5. The Serbs (even more than others) objected to the violation of intra-party rules and procedures by Tito, especially when it came to the selection of Serbian candidates for various federal posts. Serbian leaders asked Tito to clearly state that some of the 'Serbian' cadres in the Federation (such as Defence Secretary Gen. Nikola Ljubičić and Foreign Secretary Miloš Minić) were his appointees and not those of Serbia.<sup>17</sup> Serbian leaders were even more dissatisfied with Tito's attempts to decide even upon cadres for various positions in Belgrade and Serbia, including civil servants (mostly Serbs) in the President's private office.
6. All Yugoslav republics, but again especially Serbia, were suspicious of Tito's 'acceptance' of his closest associates' manipulation of his name and authority, especially after 1972. In this year, when Tito was 80, the newly created collective leadership of the Federation moved to take over several of Tito's duties, and to restrict access to the ageing (and ailing) leader. An 'inner circle' of leading federal functionaries that kept daily contact with the President was reduced to not more than ten people (the Foreign, Defence and Home Secretaries, Chairman and Secretary to the Party's Central Committee, Vice-President of the Federal Presidency, Kardelj and Tito's Chief of Cabinet).<sup>18</sup> However, Tito maintained contacts with his personal friends, who now influenced him more than the political

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<sup>15</sup> In an interview conducted for this thesis, Milka Planinc, who was the President of the Croatian Central Committee (1972-1982) and the Yugoslav Prime Minister (1982-1986) told me that 'leaders of all republics would meet Tito separately, in order to avoid direct discussion between them, and when they returned - they would argue that Tito had supported their position, not that of the other republics.' This was in accordance with Tito's tendency to appear impartial and not deeply involved in political arguments between republican elites in Yugoslavia.

<sup>16</sup> The direct link between Tito and a wide range of the population is explained in Županov's theory of 'social contract between the highest and the lowest positions in society' (see further in this and next chapters).

<sup>17</sup> Tito did this in the case of General Ljubičić. In proposing him for a third term in the office of Defence Secretary in 1978 he disregarded the rule which banned anyone from being twice re-elected to such a post, but on Serbian insistence he clearly stated this was his decision. Tito's other appointee, Miloš Minić, was removed from politics two years after Tito's death (see more in Chapter Five: section on 'the case of Draža Marković').

<sup>18</sup> This list was composed after interviews with Josip Vrhovec, Jure Bilić, Dara Janeković and Dušan Dragosavac, who - at least in some periods - had direct access to Tito.



leaders. Marković's memoirs reveal Serbian dissatisfaction with the role played by many of these friends (such as the Croat Ivan Krajačić Stevo, whom they considered to be a Croatian nationalist), and those played by Tito's wife Jovanka Broz,<sup>19</sup> the Chiefs of Cabinet and other semi-officials from his entourage. Other republics were also discontented with this, but none of them so much as Serbia. Tito was also influenced by the secret police reports that he relied upon. Many political struggles in the 1970s were fought for the control over the state security apparatus.

In many respects, 1971 was the most critical year in Serbian relations with Tito. Since 1968 Serbia had tried to persuade Tito to influence Croatian politicians, who isolated themselves in the Constitutional debate. By April 1971, the Serbs felt that the Croatian demands in the Constitutional debate had become intolerable and that only Tito could and thus had to stop them. They were not prepared to accept, as they said in a conversation with Tito on 15 May 1971, the permanent suspicion under which Serbia and institutions in Belgrade had been kept by the other republics and the federal centre. During an extremely open meeting, the Serbian leaders told Tito that before the fall of Ranković they had been suspected of being the 'basis of conservatism', while they were now accused of 'technocratic deformations'.

'We are identified with unitarism and centralism, although our position on these issues is very clear and principled; we have been treated as the bearers of resistance to the changes [Constitutional amendments], although today all the others have greater reservations about them than we do,' they told Tito (Marković, 1987:284).

Marković describes the tense atmosphere in the President's Office:

'The tone was occasionally sharp, very unpleasant. Tito told us a few times: 'Well, you came here to attack me, didn't you?' We denied it, arguing that we did not want to attack anyone, but to inform and to clarify certain points. This was accepted and respected... At the end of the talks we concluded that a full-stop should be put to all this, and that we should all together move towards serious tasks ahead and look to the future, rather than to the past' (Marković, 1987:284).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Dissatisfaction of the closest circle of political and military elites with the role of Jovanka Broz resulted in her 'separation' from Tito in 1977. Immediately after Tito's death in May 1980, Jovanka was forcibly evicted from all state estates and kept under surveillance (see Toma Fila's interview to *Globus*, 20 September 1999). Jovanka Broz blames General Ljubičić and Stane Dolanc for 'misinforming Tito about the real situation in the country' to which she reacted, but was stopped by the closest circle of political dignitaries. Dara Janeković, the journalist very close to Tito and Jovanka Broz, confirmed this interpretation in an interview I conducted in April 1998. Janeković says Dolanc and Ljubičić prevented Tito from giving her an interview in 1978, despite his previous intention to do so.

<sup>20</sup> Latinka Perović writes that Tito commented on this meeting to a Montenegrin politician Veljko Vlahović in the following words: 'The Comrades from Serbia came to talk to me. They made me very angry at the beginning. No one has talked to me like that in the past 30 years. But, it is good that we have people like them in our Party.' (1991:263). Tito was surprised to see the Serbian leaders united in opposition to his recent statements and actions. He decided to accept some of their criticism, but – as Latinka Perović said – never forgave them such an independent way of thinking (1991:263). In this and many other conversations Perović finds the main reason for Tito's decision to eliminate both Croatian and Serbian leaders in 1971 and 1972.

However, when talks like this became almost a regular practice, Tito concluded that some Serbian leaders represented a 'different concept, a different policy' (Marković, 1987:357) and he initiated changes in the Serbian leadership. Clearly, the Serbian leaders' independence indicated that Serbia was not a passive but a very active participant in the Constitution-making process (1967-1974). However, Tito's decision to remove some leading Serbian leaders in 1972 raises a question: does it not prove that Serbia had to accept Tito's proposals (including the Constitution) regardless of their disagreements and opposition to them?

In order to answer this question, one should emphasise the following facts:

1. Although it was true that Serbia changed leading politicians more often than any other republic between 1966 and 1972 (Ranković was removed from power in 1966, Čosić and Marjanović in 1968, 'the liberals' in 1972, also the 'silent removal' of the Executive Secretary of the LCY Presidency Mijalko Todorović in 1974 and the withdrawal of Koča Popović, the former Vice-President of Yugoslavia after Ranković, in protest in 1972), it is also true that similar changes occurred in all the Yugoslav republics, except Montenegro.
2. The fact that so many Serbian politicians were forced to leave politics does not yet mean that Tito did not command substantial support for his position from the majority of each republican political elite and from the masses in each of the republics. Political conflicts in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not only (and not even in the first place) between Tito and the leadership of Serbia and Croatia respectively, but also (and at certain moments even more so) conflicts between groups within each of these two political elites. Tito used existing differences in order to support the side that seemed to be less independent and more loyal to him. He exploited internal party 'pluralism' which offered some space for various interests to be represented in the political elite, fearing unanimity such as was shown by the Serbian leaders in his talks with them on 15 May 1971. It was precisely intra-party diversity that enabled Tito to make 'pacts' with various factions both at the federal level and in republican politics. He did not need to send down anyone from the federal leadership to introduce and implement his politics in 'disobedient' republics:<sup>21</sup> it

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<sup>21</sup> The possibility of sending 'healthy forces' from the federation was debated immediately after the Croatian Spring in 1972. In an interview with me conducted in October 1997 Stipe Šuvar confirmed that it seemed that Tito would send three prominent Croatian leaders from Belgrade back to Zagreb as his 'commissars': Mika Špiljak, Marijan Cvetković and perhaps also General Ivan Gošnjak. All three politicians had at that time been treated as 'unitarists' by the Croatian leader Vladimir Bakarić, who did not allow them to take a direct part in Croatian politics but 'sent' them to federal posts in Belgrade. However, there was no need for their return since Tito could rely on Bakarić and a clear majority of the CC LC Croatia. It is often forgotten that, ultimately, neither the Serbian nor the Croatian leaders ousted by Tito in 1971/1972 secured a clear majority in their leaderships. For example, in the five months following the 21st Session of the LCY Presidency (between 1 December 1971 and 30 April 1972) only 741 (out of 214,614) members of the LC Croatia were expelled from the Party (which makes about 0.2% of its total membership). 131 people were forced to resign, while another 280 resigned 'voluntarily'. Among them were three members of the LCY Presidency and its Conference, nine members of the Croatian Central Committee and its Executive Committee, five members of the LC Croatia Conference and 37 secretaries of the basic organisations of the LC Croatia. 85 people were removed from their state positions (at all levels) and 52 people were ousted from managerial offices. Among those expelled from the Party, four became CPY members before 1940, while 31 joined the Party during the war. 91 were Partisans, of whom 19 joined

was sufficient to rely on existing 'cadres'.<sup>22</sup> Relying on a majority in each particular republican leadership and on the mass support he enjoyed among the population, Tito managed to strengthen his already independent position and to use it to eliminate those republican leaders he disagreed with.

3. When it came to crucial issues in relations within Yugoslavia, there were no major differences between the various conflicting groups in either the Serbian or the Croatian leadership. In both cases, differences arose over how to treat non-communist political actors; these became public in the late 1960s as a result of the general democratisation of political life in Yugoslavia. The Croatian leadership remained united on the Croatian position in Yugoslavia and on the arrangements for Brioni Yugoslavia.<sup>23</sup> None of the Croatian leaders of the time was an anti-Titoist, and not many of their opponents in the various cultural, semi-political, or academic institutions were so. On the contrary, their rhetoric was very much pro-Titoist.<sup>24</sup> Contrary to many current interpretations, the main idea of the 'Croatian Spring' was not to challenge Tito's power, but to present itself as the only force in the country which truly understood, followed and supported Tito's concept of equality among the Yugoslav nations and the self-management of the Yugoslav workers.<sup>25</sup> The League of Croatian Communists insisted on describing itself as a 'progressive force', which was pushing forward in the same direction as Tito, facing the same obstacles he was facing. They tried to convince Tito that their critics were in fact targeting him when criticising them. Furthermore, it was not the Croatian leadership that initiated conflict in 1971, but Tito himself.<sup>26</sup> Tito was for a relatively long period (more

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Tito's troops in 1941. As a consequence of the Croatian Spring, 23 basic organisations (totalling 715 members) were suspended (see Official Report, 1972).

<sup>22</sup> A good illustration of this technique is again to be found in Marković's diary on 21 October 1972. At the meeting of the Serbian leadership in October 1972, Tito interrupted the Serbian leader Mirko Čanadanović when he said he wished to argue against Draža Marković: 'You may argue against me, but you would then argue against me as well, since I agree with Draža' (1987:392). This was how Tito supported one group against another in all the republican leaderships.

<sup>23</sup> Tripalo (1990:117-26 and 163-9). Tripalo, the leading politician of the 'Croatian Spring', says that groups within the Croatian leadership differed on the importance of the excesses which had occurred at public rallies, on what measures should be taken against the 'anti-socialist forces' and on what endangered the system more: nationalism or unitarism. They differed on how to approach the 'opposition' but not on how to structure Yugoslavia. In this sense it really was a conflict between reformists and conservatives within the LCY, but not between 'confederalists' and 'federalists', or 'centralists' and 'federalists', as often presented.

<sup>24</sup> An excellent example is Savka Dabčević Kučar's toast to Tito in Zagreb, in September 1971. She said: 'I raise this glass to the man whose personality most vividly expresses the glory, unity and successes of our past, the revolutionary socialist strength of our present, and the bright prospects of our future; to a great revolutionary, thinker and statesman, to a real fighter for workers, national and human rights and freedoms, to the greatest son in the history of the Croatian and all our other nations and nationalities, to our dear Comrade Tito and to Comrade Jovanka' (Perović, 1991: 296-302). This toast was proposed less than three months before Tito decided to remove the Croatian leadership (headed by Savka Dabčević Kučar) for being 'nationalist'.

<sup>25</sup> Serbian leaders complained about Croatian 'avangardism'. Interestingly, the term *avangardism* held a negative connotation, although the Party itself was treated as the 'vanguard' of the working class.

<sup>26</sup> An interesting parallel could be drawn between the current interpretations that the Croatian leaders 'split' with Tito's autocracy, and Tito's claim that it was he who 'split' with Stalin in 1948. Both interpretations are incorrect, but both entered public discourse, producing important myths.

than three years) the main protector and sponsor of such *avangardism*.<sup>27</sup> Finally, when he decided to withdraw his further support, as one of the most prominent Yugoslav and Croatian leaders of that time witnesses now,<sup>28</sup> he started re-emphasising his Croatian origins. To conclude: the change of leadership in 1971 in Croatia was only a partial replacement of various (minority) factions within the republican leadership, in which the majority (including the leading Croatian politician Vladimir Bakarić) not only survived but were promoted to higher posts. The majority of the Croatian Central Committee and the vast majority of the Croatian political elite in general supported Tito and not the ousted leaders.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the changes in Croatia changed the Croatian position neither on the Constitutional changes, nor on Tito in general.<sup>30</sup>

The same applies to Serbia, as can be documented by even more sources available at the moment.<sup>31</sup> Two main actors, one of whom (Latinka Perović) was forced to resign in 1972 as the Secretary to the Serbian LC Central Committee, while the other (Draža Marković) in 1972 became the leading Serbian politician over the next 15 years, both confirm that differences had been significant not on issue of the status of Serbia within Yugoslavia, but on the relationship

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<sup>27</sup> A myriad of examples of this could be found in Tripalo's book. Tripalo describes Tito's personal participation in writing the conclusions of the Tenth CC Croatia session in 1970, which subsequently became the turning-point in the emergence of the Croatian Spring (1990:112). Stipe Šušteršič (in an interview of 11 October 1997) confirms that Tito's role in supporting the Croatian leadership of Savka Dabčević Kučar and Miko Tripalo was crucial, and to some extent directed against Vladimir Bakarić.

<sup>28</sup> Jure Bilić, in an interview I conducted on 9 January 1998 said: 'I would not say that Tito was biased, but I think it is true that he felt better in Croatia than anywhere else in Yugoslavia... I could even say that Tito became 'more' Croat after 1971 than he was before. For example, I remember him telling me that he proposed that Franjo Herljević (Bosnia-Herzegovina) should take up the post of the Federal Minister of the Interior. He told me: 'You know, he is a Croat!' In these words exactly! It was perhaps true that he felt more obliged to protect 'Croatian interests' after 1971 than before.' Miko Tripalo in his book (1990) recalls his conversation with Tito in May 1970. Tito criticised the Croatian leaders, but he also said: 'I think you understand my position very well. You know that I am from Hrvatsko Zagorje, which is the cradle of Croatia. And, when it becomes needed, I shall give you my support' (1990:117).

<sup>29</sup> Support for this conclusion may be found in the growth of the LC Croatia membership from 206,985 in 1972 to 350,513 in 1982. Only when the economic and political crisis in the country emerged in the early 1980s did the Croatian League of Communists (just like the others) start losing its membership. In 1984, for example, the LCC left 12,050 members, while only 6,653 were admitted. This year, 77.7%, of the LCC basic organisations did not admit a new member (73.2% in 1983) (IP CK SKH, 5/1985 and 6/1985).

<sup>30</sup> It is often asked to what extent the ousted Croatian leaders participated in the process of Constitution writing before 1974, and whether the Constitution was not the result of their 'pressure'. The 1974 Constitution was certainly not written by the Croatian leaders ousted in 1971, but, as we have said, their successors did not differ from them when it came to the main issues treated in the Constitution. Also, one needs not to forget that the main directions for the new 'constitutional concept' were drawn up in the 1967-1972 amendments to the 1963 Constitution.

<sup>31</sup> Dušan Dragosavac disagrees with this conclusion, saying that Perović's 'liberals' acted more on the line formulated by (Serbian 19<sup>th</sup> century social-democrat) Svetozar Marković, for which reason the Croatian leadership preferred them to the much tougher stand taken by Draža Marković and Petar Stambolić (interview, April 1998). However, Dragosavac admits that both Marković and Stambolić proved anti-nationalists in the late 1980s, opposing Milošević's new nationalism. In an interview for this thesis, Dragosavac says: 'They proved they were not ethnic extremists, although they had been perceived as Serbian nationalists by other leaderships in Yugoslavia'. Dragosavac's comment shows how easy it was to become perceived as nationalist, even if one was a member of the highest state leadership. In fact, both in the 1967-1974 period and in the late 1980s, both 'liberals' and 'conservatives' opposed what they saw as Serbian nationalism and Yugoslav unitarism.

towards the inner or external 'opposition' to the regime.<sup>32</sup> Even when the Serbian leaders disagreed on the issue of the Serbian position in Yugoslavia, this was also a result of their 'soft' or 'hard' approach towards the opponents of the regime.

In his account of points of disagreement between his group and the 'liberals' (Latinka Perović, Marko Nikezić and Mirko Tepavac) Draža Marković lists the following elements:

- 1) freedom of the press in Serbia ('the liberals' advocated more media freedom, while Marković accused them of having a 'media monopoly' since they controlled the main Serbian daily Politika);
- 2) the replacement of one generation of leaders (Partisan Veterans, still committed to the concept of Pre-Brioni Yugoslavia, and somewhat displeased with the removal of Ranković) with another (the young 'technocrats'<sup>33</sup>: Marković saw this as unnecessary while the 'liberals' argued it was a *sine qua non* for modernisation);
- 3) control over some important institutions in Serbia (primarily the police forces);<sup>34</sup>
- 4) some ideological disagreements, expressed in mutual accusations of being 'liberal' or 'conservative'.

From this account one could conclude that the two groups in the Serbian leadership fought over the issues of the *democratisation* of Serbia and Yugoslavia and not over the Serbian position in Yugoslavia.<sup>35</sup> At the end of July 1972, Marković wrote in his diary that 'the issue of socialism or non-socialism' was at stake (23 July 1972; 1987:378). For a Communist, there could be no more important issue than this one. To conclude: the fall of the Serbian 'liberals' in October 1972, therefore, did not mean a radical change in the Serbian position on the Constitutional debate, but it did mean a change in treating opposition and opposing various 'anti-socialist activities and groups'. Both factions of Serbian politics ('conservatives' and 'liberals') accepted

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<sup>32</sup> Although showing much more respect for the 'liberals' Perović and Nikezić than for the Tito loyalists Marković and Stambolić, Dobrica Ćosić still criticises them for accepting the Constitutional amendments of 1967-1972 and for not protesting against the methods used in purging Ranković in 1966 (Djukić, 1989:225).

<sup>33</sup> In order to eliminate the conservative Veterans from important positions, the 'liberals' issued a recommendation that only those having higher education could occupy executive posts in factories, state organs, etc. This met with strong opposition from the Partisan generation, exemplified by Marković (17 June 1972; 1987:368).

<sup>34</sup> Marković opposed 'the liberals' attempt to control the Serbian Interior Ministry, which was the stronghold of conservative forces in the leadership (15 July 1972, 1987:372).

<sup>35</sup> In his diary Marković explicitly confirms this, saying that 'the liberals' had not been at all interested in the Constitutional debate. When they could not entirely avoid debating these issues, their contribution was counter-productive for Serbian interests, since they made 'too many concessions to the provinces, especially to Kosovo'. They were also 'indifferent towards the Yugoslav centre'. But more importantly, they ruled out ('were not prepared for') any use of 'administrative measures' against 'the groups of enemies' in any situation.

the Constitutional changes when the reform of the federation was debated, and thus the objection that the reform was imposed on them by Tito or by other federal units proves to be incorrect.

### 3.1.2. Serbian Leaders and 'Serbian National Interests' in the 1967-1974 Debate

The second question to be discussed here is – were Serbian politicians at all interested in 'Serbian national interests'<sup>36</sup> or were they only concerned with remaining in power, without showing any concern for public issues, such as Serbia's position in Yugoslavia. This question reappears throughout any political analysis. In Chapter One I argued that Communist politics was very much an attempt to implement visions in reality. The analysis of the differences between Serbia's leaders and Tito in this chapter shows that Serbian leaders were surprisingly negative towards Tito's pragmatic politics, arguing in favour of principles as they understood them, rather than too many political compromises. But in their views the principles they followed did not clash with the real interests of Serbia and Yugoslavia. It was by following these principles (based on a Marxist interpretation) that the interests of each Yugoslav nation could be best served. To separate interests and principles, was impossible for them, and thus should prove unproductive as an approach for us. Principles drove their action, but this action was also held to be in the interest of those they believed they represented.

The Serbian (and other leaders) could perhaps have found much more convenient means of securing personal power than by opposing Tito on so many occasions that Tito finally decided to remove some of them from office. Yet, their beliefs drove them to such a situation.<sup>37</sup> They were not 'soft' negotiators, nor were they ready to accept everything Tito and the other republics asked them to accept. They had been very firm in not accepting Kosovo as the seventh Yugoslav republic, for example. They had also been interested in securing sufficient autonomy for Serbia within Yugoslavia, with which Serbia had been identified in the perceptions of other republics for much too long: during the whole inter-war and to some extent even in the post-war period until 1966. Finally in March 1971 they came very close to realising that other arrangements for Serbia might also be in the Serbian best interest.<sup>38</sup> Only Tito's move against

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<sup>36</sup> The concept of 'Serbian national interests' is not, of course, an objective, fixed and once-and-for all agreed concept, but – as we can see from this chapter – not much more than a perception of these interests by the relevant political elite. However, nationalist criticism of Serbian leaders for their acceptance of the 1974 Constitution insists on their 'betrayal' of Serbian national interests, as if they were fixed categories.

<sup>37</sup> The same argument goes for Tito and, indeed, for Milošević two decades later. As Tepavac, the Yugoslav Foreign Secretary in the late 1960s and early 1970s argues, in some of his controversial foreign policy decisions, Tito 'was not a slave of Russian pressure, so much as he was slave of his own ideological beliefs' (1998:60). As examples, Tepavac lists the diplomatic recognition of Eastern Germany and the breaking up of diplomatic relations with Israel in 1967. As I argue in Chapter Six, it would be too simplistic to treat Milošević as a 'pragmatist', as if he had no ideological beliefs. On the contrary: I argue that it is lack of pragmatism and firm ideological beliefs that have often driven him to conflicts with many others.

<sup>38</sup> According to Tripalo (1990), in April 1971 the Serbian and Croatian leaders were close to agreeing on a more confederalist structure for Yugoslavia. This possibility moved Tito and Kardelj to act against both republics.

the Croatian 'mass-movement' (which was, to a large extent initiated by 'Serbia standing up for herself', as Tito said in April 1971) convinced them to re-think the consequences of such a move.

For this reason, neither the position of the Serbian nor of the other Yugoslav leaders in the Constitutional debate can be understood without explaining the main principles of Communist nationality policy, shared by all Communists. This is especially important since it was over this principle that the advocates of the Pre-Brioni and the Brioni Yugoslavia argued during the constitutional debate. The central question was: was it possible to be at the same time an advocate of Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, etc., national interests and a Communist? While the advocates of the Pre-Brioni Yugoslavia found it extremely difficult to reconcile the two, thus yielding always precedence to *Communist* over *national* affiliations, the new concept (*Kardelj's Brioni Yugoslavia*) argued that the two not only did not clash but always went together. As will be shown in the following sections of this chapter, the majority of the Serbian leaders in the Constitutional debate accepted the *Brioni* rhetoric, believing that the national and the Communist did not exclude each other.<sup>39</sup>

The second important principle in the Communist movement was that the Communists were expected to oppose nationalism primarily in their own nation and only later (or, in practice, almost never) in other nations. This necessarily drove the Serbian Communists to act against Serbian nationalism, leaving aside Albanian, Croatian and all other nationalisms. In such a situation, however, to the Serbian public it seemed that the Serbian Communists overstated the presence of Serbian nationalism, while underestimating the danger of other nationalisms, especially the growing Croatian and Albanian nationalism of the late 1960s and early 1970s. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same was felt by other Yugoslav nations - that the Communists overestimated the danger of 'domestic' nationalism. Paradoxically, by fighting nationalism in the ranks of their own nations, the Communists now found themselves under the accusation of being the 'gendarmes' of their own nation. In return, this only added to the arguments by nationalist forces, which now found it easier to promote their conclusions about the 'treacherous' role of national Communists.

Of course, the Serbian Communists (just like the others) expected Communists in other nations to fight their nationalism. But, in the late 1960s, it seemed that more autonomy for the republics

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<sup>39</sup> A good illustration of this belief was offered at the 14th session of the Serbian Central Committee by Milojko Drulović, who used an example from the Paris student demonstrations which took place at this time: 'The rioting masses, and Communists among them, raised both red flags and French national three-colour flags; the masses were singing both *the Marseillaise* and *the Internationale*. I ask you: why would it be a problem for French Communists, when they demonstrate, to feel at the same time both French and Communist?' (1968:195). In this context, it was argued that it was these Serbian Communists who argued in favour of Kardelj's concept that showed more concern for the 'national question' than those who stood for the *Pre-Brioni* concept of 'brotherhood and unity' and 'socialist Yugoslavism'.

might lead to a situation in which not everyone in Yugoslavia would have the same criteria as to what nationalism was and how to fight it. It was the rather mild stand of the Croatian Communists towards the 'Croatian Spring' that displeased the Serbian leaders. At the same time, they felt they were losing the institutional and political tools to do anything to change the situation.

Also, the Serbian politicians were aware that the position of Serbia remained somewhat specific, since Serbs were the largest nation in Yugoslavia, the one with the historical burden of inter-war Serbian domination strongly felt on its shoulders. This specificity did not allow Serbia to revise its position towards Serbian nationalism. The Serbian Communists felt that their opposition to Serbian nationalism must be unconditional and forceful, since, as Petar Stambolić, the President of the Serbian Central Committee said in May 1968, the Serbian nation was the only one that could 'realistically become hegemonic' (1968:142).<sup>40</sup> Belonging to the largest Yugoslav nation, many members of the Serbian elite felt disadvantaged in opposing ever new demands by the smaller Yugoslav nations.<sup>41</sup> The Serbian Communists thus found themselves more than any others caught between the principles in which they believed and the reality they faced. Disappointed by what they saw as the reluctant reaction in the past of other Yugoslav Communists to nationalism in their own nations, and unwilling to offer additional arguments to those who argued that the only realistic danger for the Yugoslav decentralised system came from 'Great-Serbian hegemonism'<sup>42</sup> (either in the form of a renewed inter-war 'bourgeois' Yugoslavia, or as a Soviet-style centralisation) Serbian Communists found themselves in a frustrating situation, between two fires. This frustration would remain a permanent source of political crisis in Serbia and Yugoslavia throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

### 3.1.3. The Serbian Leaders and the 'Lack of Democratic Legitimacy'

Finally, the third objection to the view that Serbia voluntarily accepted the 1974 Constitution relates to the issue of the legitimacy of the Serbian political elite. This objection could equally be

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<sup>40</sup> This attitude remained unchanged until 1987, when Milošević introduced a new rhetoric in the LC Serbia. Already in 1984 he said: 'For a long time, and for no reason, a complex of unitarism and a sense of guilt over the behaviour of the Serbian bourgeoisie in the past have been imposed on Serbian Communists... Serbian Communists have always been in a situation to remove this shame which does not belong to them, and acquit themselves when it came to issues of unity and the Yugoslav state, just to avoid being accused of unitarism. We have no reason whatsoever to bow our heads to anyone' (1984/1989: 34).

<sup>41</sup> To some extent this could be compared with the position of the Czechs in Czechoslovakia and even the Russians in the USSR. However, there is an important difference: while the Czechs and Russians were the majority in their respective states, the Serbs (although the largest ethnic group) made up less than 40% of the total population. In addition, the Yugoslav system was much more decentralised than the Soviet and Czechoslovak systems at the time. This all decreased the chances of Serbian domination. However, it did not eliminate the wariness of other Yugoslav nations towards the Serbs.

<sup>42</sup> As explained in Chapter Two, Kardelj avoided the term 'Greater-Serbian', using 'Great-state hegemonism' instead, except when explicitly referring to pre-war Yugoslavia. However, it was a common understanding that the two terms were synonyms.



raised about the political elites in Yugoslavia in general, including the elites in those republics where the issue of legitimacy regarding the acceptance of the 1974 Constitution has never been raised. The Serbian leadership was not less legitimate than, for example, the Croatian or Slovenian. In no Yugoslav region (with the possible exception of Kosovo, which from today's perspective seems surprising) had any significant protest against Kardelj's concept been expressed.<sup>43</sup> Between the elite (especially Tito himself) and a wide range of the population there was tacit agreement on basic political issues.<sup>44</sup> Whenever Tito wanted to remove the political elite in one or another republic, he would rely on the direct link between himself and the population.<sup>45</sup> He was always capable of securing wide support from the population, in which sense he really was a populist. The only occasion described by Serbian politicians in which Tito faced criticism from the population originated from positions of 'radical egalitarianism' and not from a demand for greater democratisation or more national rights.<sup>46</sup>

Tito's popularity amongst the masses had its origin in several factors, extensively examined in the relevant literature on Yugoslavia. *The Washington Post* correspondent in Belgrade (1973-1976) Duško Doder writes on his talks with the Yugoslavs:

'Out in the country Tito has a real hold on the people. It was my impression that if by some miracle free elections were suddenly held in Yugoslavia, Tito would get a majority of the votes, even if his Communist party would not' (1978:118).

Doder quotes from various Yugoslavs he spoke to about the reasons for such support. When one sums up what they said, one main reason appears central – the fear of Soviet domination. Tito was seen as the guarantor of Yugoslav independence and the chief defender from the Soviet Union. Doder quotes a textile worker from Pirot, a small town on the border between

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<sup>43</sup> By 'significant' I mean – public protests that would force the leadership to rethink its position. There were several protests against the main principles of the Constitution among the intellectual elite, especially in Serbia, and Čosić's and Marjanović's criticism of the majority of the Serbian CC in May 1968. However, these protests were not forceful enough to have a significant impact on the policy-making process. One could say that no public protest would have been allowed in Yugoslavia at that time. However, several protests against the elite in other East European countries (Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, Poland 1980, etc.) prove that no regime could prevent protests if the population were really dissatisfied. No similar attempts to convey discontent with the leadership occurred in Yugoslavia, with the exception of the 1968 demonstrations of Belgrade students, which ended up in support of egalitarianism and of Tito personally, not against him.

<sup>44</sup> The reasons for this agreement are explained in Chapter Four of this thesis ('personal network of survival') and in Županov's notion of the pact between elite and masses.

<sup>45</sup> A month and a half before ousting the Croatian leaders, Tito took a trip throughout Croatia, and a month before replacing the Serbian leaders he did the same in Serbia. Tito's personal popularity was especially strengthened after the 1968 student demonstrations in Belgrade, when he briefly sided with demonstrators against 'bureaucracy'. The idea of 'anti-bureaucratic' revolution, promoted by Slobodan Milošević in 1988, had its origins in Milošević's attempt to re-establish the direct link between himself and the population against the 'bureaucracy' as Tito used to do.

<sup>46</sup> Draža Marković describes the exceptionally favourable perception by the Serbian population of Tito in his diary on 30 October 1969, 14 May 1972 (1987:148 and 358). He also writes about the expression of discontent which the workers of the 'Ivo Lola Ribar' factory conveyed to Tito when he visited them in 1972. The workers demanded radical measures against 'bureaucracy' and inequalities in society. In order to restore support from the masses of the population, Tito issued two Letters to party organisations and the general public in 1972 and 1973, insisting on more equality and social justice. Although they were reminiscent of Mao Zedong's rhetoric of the time, the letters were very well received by the population.

Serbia and Bulgaria. When Doder asked him why would the Russians come to Yugoslavia, the worker 'motioned eastward toward Bulgaria' and said: 'Ask them, over there' (1978:118). He received a similar answer in Slovenia from a Roman Catholic clerk: 'God bless his [Tito's] soul. Had it not been for him, we would have been another Bulgaria or Czechoslovakia today' (1978:118). Or in Zagreb: 'I do not like him. But I guess we all respect him for having stood up for the Russians and kept us out of their clutches' (1978:118). All other reasons were derived from the comparison with the Eastern neighbours of Yugoslavia.<sup>47</sup> Tito was praised for being a 'mild ruler', for not murdering his political foes, for allowing private initiative in the country, for importing goods and encouraging consumerism, for keeping the country peaceful, united and respected and for promoting the 'third way' between the two blocs. Based on Tito's resistance to Fascism and Stalinism, a myth of the special place that Tito held for Yugoslavia in world politics was promoted by the media. The facts of life seemed to support this myth: Yugoslavia's leader was the most prominent figure within the non-aligned movement, while maintaining good relationships with both East and West. Yugoslav economic successes and political stability were widely admired, while Tito was seen as the main guarantor of Yugoslav stability. Were there any reasons for the Yugoslavs not to share this belief?

While the political and intellectual elite expressed some criticism of Tito's role and of the system he had shaped, a wide range of the population proved to be far less critical and much more supportive of Tito. There is no better illustration of this than a diary note by Dobrica Ćosić (the leading Serbian anti-Titoist) on the day of Tito's death in May 1980. Describing the reaction of the Serbs to the news of Tito's death, Ćosić says:

'With my anti-Titoist feelings, I am here alone... I felt desperation and coldness walking on the opposite side of the street from the people; I felt alone, completely detached (from them). For the first time in my life I felt this loneliness, detachment from the people of my country' (1992:22-3).

When, a week after Tito's funeral, Ćosić saw several kilometre long queues of people waiting to see Tito's mausoleum, he wrote (on 13 May 1980):

'All anti-Titoists are confused by the way people are reacting to Tito's death. Such grief, especially among the young people, is confusing' (1992:39).<sup>48</sup>

The popularity of all the Yugoslav leaders was largely dependent on Tito, and not the other way round. Several groups of Serbian leaders had been removed between 1966 and 1974, but no

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<sup>47</sup> The *Eastern danger* was also stronger than a *Western* among the members of the elite, as Petar Stambolić's explanation of the reasons for supporting the fall of Ranković explains (Djukić, 1992: 212-4, quoted later in this chapter). This is also illustrated by Bakarić's fears of the Russians during the Czechoslovak crisis (see footnote 92, this chapter).

<sup>48</sup> I should here also mention a very positive views on Tito expressed in the West. See more in Pavlowitch (1992).

serious political strike was organised, nor even did any civil disobedience to the Titoist system gather strength.<sup>49</sup> The only exception to this was the 1968 Belgrade student demonstrations, which did not seek to stop but actually to speed up the removal of 'the bureaucrats' (all but Tito) from their offices. The only real outcome of these protests was the strengthening, not weakening of Tito's position in the country. They had a negative effect on the process of liberalisation, which had started a few years before 1968. The protests of 1968, like later protests in Kosovo (December 1968) and Croatia (1971) only helped Tito to send a clear signal to local leaders – that their position and the stability of the country ultimately depended on him.<sup>50</sup> The public protests helped the President to restore his position, somewhat weakened by the pressure from republican elites and the federal apparatus.

'Tito could once again say that only he himself expressed authentically the interests of the masses. [In 1968] he once again accused his fellow leaders of being unwilling to listen to his advice. Such overwhelming [plebiscite] support, he would say, could be compared only with his popularity immediately after the liberation of the country. There was nothing he could not do. In fact, he was rather economical with his own power. He was more cautious than those who were inviting him to use it,'<sup>51</sup> said Latinka Perović, a leading Serbian 'liberal' politician (1991:59).

In conclusion: the Serbian leadership represented the Serbian population when supporting Tito's proposals for the reform of the federation, but it also showed significant independence (both from Tito's views and from its own population) when defending what they saw as Serbian national interests. They considered the proposed reforms to be in the Serbian interest, although they objected to several ideas, asking Tito and others to change their original proposals and to offer more guarantees for the equality of Serbia in Yugoslavia. By doing this, they found themselves permanently squeezed between two sides: Tito and the mass of the population on the one hand, and the intellectual opposition (*critical intelligentsia, dissidents*) on the other. In what was a process of negotiation beneath the surface of unanimity, they tried to satisfy all sides, but ended up being denounced as 'liberals' (by radical egalitarians) and as 'traitors to Serbian interests' (by nationalists). Still, while they differed on issues of democratisation, the Serbian leaders remained fairly united when the issue of the Serbian position in Yugoslavia and the reform of the Yugoslav federation came onto the agenda.

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<sup>49</sup> Certainly, one must not neglect the fact that public criticism of Tito was impossible, since the regime, which situated Tito in its centre was in absolute control of the media. It is, however, impossible to explain the *tacit* consent between the population in general and Tito only by coercion.

<sup>50</sup> The same happened in Croatia, where no significant protests followed Tito's decision to remove the popular leaders Dabčević Kučar and Tripalo. Their popularity, one might conclude, was largely due to the support they enjoyed from Tito.

<sup>51</sup> A similar conclusion was drawn by Miko Tripalo (Croatia), who says that the 'already hesitant leadership' used the 1968 demonstrations to halt any radical reforms, in the economic sphere and in terms of democratisation of the country (1990:89).

For all these reasons it seems that much of today's dominant interpretation of the intentions and actions of Serbian leaders in accepting the 1974 Constitution fails to explain their motivations. Later in this chapter they will be re-constructed. It is here that we shall answer the main question of this chapter: why did it make sense to Serbian leaders to accept the arrangements of the 1974 Constitution?

### 3.2. The Serbian Leadership Between Ranković and Kardelj

In order to answer this question, we should first explain why the Serbian elite accepted the removal of Aleksandar Ranković, the most distinguished Serb in Tito's political and military leadership since the late 1930s, and why it abandoned the concept of the AVNOJ (*Pre-Brioni*) Yugoslavia, to which Ranković was fully committed? Then, we shall also analyse their reasons for refusing to criticise Kardelj's concept, as they were expressed by two leading Serbian intellectuals, themselves members of the political elite - the writer Dobrica Ćosić and the historian Jovan Marjanović - at the 14th session of the Serbian CC LC (29-30 May 1968). Both events signified divisions within Serbia's political elite throughout the 1960s and were the subject of debates among Serbs - between those who advocated the *pre-Brioni* and those who argued in favour of Kardelj's *Brioni* Yugoslavia. Once again, the main political conflicts remained confined within the same ethnic group, not between them, while political alliances (like the one between the main Serbian leader and the Slovene Kardelj) extended beyond them.

The reasons for accepting the removal of Ranković were explained by the main political actors of that time. Twenty-five years after this event (when it became extremely unpopular to criticise Ranković and the concept he symbolised) the then (in 1966) Yugoslav Prime Minister Petar Stambolić said:

'Ranković's whole line was conservative. In Serbia, we felt him to be a heavy burden. I remember my talk with Milentije Popović [another leading Serbian politician] in 1963. Both of us concluded that it would be a great misfortune if Ranković replaced Tito. One should remember that everything that happened at that time was linked to the issue of the Russians, because we feared very much that they would again draw us into their Bloc... There was a time when I thought we would join them. It is at this time that there was a lot of debate about Tito's successor. It is in this framework that one should situate the Ranković's case. Tito exercised full control over foreign policy and the Army, while Ranković controlled the Party and police. We wanted to put the lid on this' (Djukić, 1992:212-4).

The Serbian leadership saw the fall of Ranković in July 1966 as a unique chance for the emergence of a modern, democratic<sup>52</sup> Serbia, relieved from the permanent suspicion of being a 'guardian' to everyone else in Yugoslavia. The young generation of Serbian leading politicians hoped to decrease federal influence over Serbia, to the same extent as over all the other republics (Perović, 1991:42). They saw their acceptance of the decentralisation of Yugoslavia as the ultimate evidence that Serbia was not and did not want to be a 'tutor' in the country. Aware of their historical burden, the leading Serbian politicians believed that any centralisation was contrary to Serbian interests, since there was a temptation to identify Yugoslav centralism with Serbian hegemony. As the Serbs did not in fact dominate in Yugoslavia, the accusations on this account were, they believed, unjust and incorrect. There was only one way to eliminate them – by accepting the de-centralisation of Yugoslavia, which would bring more autonomy to Serbia as well. The constitutional changes of 1967-1974 were acceptable 'because they also strengthened the position of Serbia as an equal among equals, thus reducing further pressures on her, and (minimising) the chances for renewal of hegemonic tendencies in the political, economic and cultural areas in Serbia itself', says Latinka Perović (1991:268). It is easier to understand the logic of such reasoning once we know about Serbia's dissatisfaction with some of Tito's decisions. A looser Yugoslav federation would mean, the Serbian leaders believed, a weaker position for federal institutions, which were in fact reduced to tools of Tito's personal politics. This would also secure more independence for Serbia, enabling her to develop as the real centre of a modern, democratic Yugoslavia, and as the strongest promoter of reforms in a post-Titoist Yugoslavia.<sup>53</sup> Serbia, they felt, had to change her image. From being a rural, conservative country, suspected by everyone, it should become the centre of democratic transformation in Yugoslavia, a modern and technologically developed republic. As Draža Marković said, the Serbian post-Ranković leaders were 'constructing Serbia with a different face and different qualities', which would be 'closer to the Serbia of the future, than to the Serbia of the past' (1 March 1970; 1987:180-1). To a large extent, they were successful in doing this. Not only in the late 1960s but even later, right up until Milošević, Serbia was perceived as a democratic stronghold in Yugoslavia.<sup>54</sup> This made Serbia think of keeping the central role in the

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<sup>52</sup> As I explained in the Introduction, the terms democracy and democratic should be understood in the context of self-managing, not liberal democracy. Liberalism, as the removal of the 'liberals' in Serbia illustrated, was a proscribed doctrine, almost to the same extent as 'nationalism' (for this also see Chapter Two).

<sup>53</sup> It should not be forgotten that Tito was already 80 when he decided to replace the Croatian and Serbian leaderships (in 1971 and 1972 respectively). As in the case of Djilas (1954) and Ranković (1966), the large-scale replacements in the early 1970s were another episode in the permanent struggle for the succession. Tito ended this struggle by declaring himself the President 'without limitation of term' in the 1974 Constitution (Article 333, finally formulated by Serbian leader Draža Marković), and promoting collective leadership in state and party institutions (in 1972 and 1978).

<sup>54</sup> For this see Doder (1978). The positive image of Serbia was in a sharp contrast with the terrorism of émigré Croatian separatists, who organised several hijacks of Yugoslav planes, bombing campaigns at railway stations, on airplanes and at cinemas, and assassinations of Yugoslav diplomats. Consequently, the Croatian nationalist opposition to the regime was identified with this terrorism. The old images of the Second World War Ustasha atrocities re-emerged in the international press. Additionally, the Croatian non-terrorist (nationalist) opposition refused to join their Serbian and Slovenian counterparts in united action against the regime. This made Belgrade and Ljubljana (Slovenia) the two centres of anti-regime activity, with Zagreb falling into silence. In this respect the situation paralleled the one in Czechoslovakia, where the main opponents of the regime came from Prague, not from Bratislava (see Innes, 1997). One should here notice that the Serbian leaders had good reasons to tolerate and even protect the opposition in Serbia in the

future process of the democratisation of Yugoslavia. As Marković wrote in his diary on 17 January 1971:

'Although a democratisation of the country today seems impossible, since real democratisation in society is not really wanted, the trend of democratisation cannot really be halted for good... I think that Serbia is precisely the republic with the greatest chances to give the strongest boost to such a development. We should firmly remain on this orientation. This is where our strength lies. Both for Serbia and for Yugoslavia as a whole' (1987:253).<sup>55</sup>

It was not as the result of pressure or against their understanding of Serbian interests that the Serbian elite supported the Constitution but because of their firm belief that the Constitutional arrangements were in Serbian interests. For these reasons, the Serbian leaders respected Kardelj, the main architect of the new explanation of Yugoslav reality. If their relations with Tito were defined by pragmatic reasons, their relationship with Kardelj was influenced much more by sharing the common ground of ideology. In the Summer of 1991, Petar Stambolić, by then a retired and heavily criticised (but in 1967-1974 still central) figure of Serbian politics, said that he had been and remained Kardelj's supporter, since 'Kardelj's mistakes were also mine'. Stambolić repeated the most common argument of the Kardeljists:

'Everything that Kardelj initiated and promoted in our political system distinguished us from the East and was a guarantee that we would not return to the past. In general, he was a reformist and a Yugoslav.'<sup>56</sup>

To some extent, the Serbian leaders criticised Kardelj less than Tito, since they believed that Kardelj was a man of principles, while Tito was a pragmatist, ready to give too many concessions to other republics, and especially to the provinces.<sup>57</sup> The difference between the two became obvious in the case of the 'Blue Book' (1977): while Kardelj supported the Serbian

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face of criticism from Tito and other republics. This was what they indeed were doing. The same applies to the Slovenian leadership, but much less to the Croats. Consequently, the division between the regime and opposition in Croatia was sharper than in other parts of Yugoslavia, which would seriously radicalise the Croat opposition by the late 1980s.

<sup>55</sup> Not only the Serbian, but most of the other republican elites had the same ambition: to take the central role in a post-Tito Yugoslavia. Since the late 1960s, and especially after 1972, Yugoslav politics was full of struggles for the best possible position in the post-Tito period.

<sup>56</sup> After all that has been already quoted in Chapter Two about Kardelj's views on Yugoslavia as a 'transitional community of people', it seems illogical that Stambolić believed he was a Yugoslav. But both Stambolić and Kardelj by Yugoslavia understood Brioni Yugoslavia. They both believed that it was in the interest of the Yugoslavs to live together, and that this interest, not ethnic origins, was the reason for being together. To Ćosić, Kardelj's conclusions meant abandoning Yugoslavism, since in Ćosić's concept (of the *Pre-Brioni* Yugoslavia), the Yugoslavia of Kardelj was not Yugoslavia any longer. Speaking from different discourses, Ćosić and Stambolić understood Kardelj differently – one as an anti-Yugoslav, the other as a Yugoslav.

<sup>57</sup> This relates to Tito's views on Croatia during the Croatian Spring and on Kosovo after the 'Blue Book' of the Serbian leadership in 1977 (for which see Chapter Five). For Croatia see Marković's diary on 6 March 1971, 15 May 1971, 26 June 1971, 15 and 19 September 1971, while for Kosovo see Petar Stambolić's interview with Slavoljub Djukić (Djukić, 1992:212-4) and that of Ivan Stambolić with Slobodan Inić (1995).

demands, Tito inclined towards the position of the provinces.<sup>58</sup> While Kardelj acted from the principle that 'only the republics are sovereign, thus only they decide which elements of this sovereignty they would delegate to the federation, and which to lower socio-political communities, such as provinces' (I. Stambolić, 1995:70), Tito was motivated by the pragmatic need to avoid confrontation within the political elite in what he felt would be his last years in power.

Marković's diaries reveal that his relationship with Kardelj had undergone a serious transformation in a positive direction during the Constitutional debate. While he was very critical of Kardelj in the beginning (19 October 1971, 21 January 1971, etc), considering him intolerant, dogmatic and 'schematic' (10 October 1970), as time went on Marković understood that Kardelj was not a priori hostile to the Serbian point of view. On the contrary, he witnessed several situations in which only Kardelj supported Serbia, when she was either isolated or ignored by other republics. This was especially the case with regard to the Serbian provinces, which the other republics treated as a Serbian internal question, leaving Serbia to struggle alone with their demands, being again constantly on the verge of new accusations of 'hegemonism'. In such situations Kardelj was an invaluable ally of the Serbian leadership. The extent to which they appreciated such support is described in Marković's words (24 January 1976):

'Sometimes one wonders - what would happen without him? Can the whole system be based on the authority and intervention of one man? For now, this is so. One must, however, live after him, and without him. I do not see how.'<sup>59</sup>

A year before Kardelj's death, in January 1978 Marković wrote in his diary:

'I have learnt to like him. He is the right man... clever, open-minded, a democrat. Tolerant in discussions, wide in his views' (6 January 1978; 1987:426).

Kardelj also liked Marković. The leading Croatian politician of the time Jure Bilić recalls a talk with Vidoje Žarković, the Montenegrin representative to the State (1974-1984) and Party Presidency of Yugoslavia (1984-1988). Already on his deathbed, Kardelj told Žarković that among the Serbian leaders, Marković was the most loyal to his concept. 'He is as nationalistic as

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<sup>58</sup> For Kardelj's and Tito's position on the provinces see Marković's diary on 13 November 1975, 24 January 1976, 12 and 28 February 1977 and 29 May 1977. Petar Stambolić also says that Kardelj was acting out of principle when it came to the provinces to a greater extent than Tito (Djukić, 1992:241).

<sup>59</sup> Indicatively, Marković writes of Kardelj (not of Tito) as the key figure in Yugoslavia, which only confirms our conclusion that the *Briuni Yugoslavia* was based on Kardelj's concept. It also offers an argument for the importance of his personal views in the legislative decision-making and Constitution-writing processes. Contrary to this pessimism in Marković's diary, public statements by Yugoslav politicians were extremely optimistic. They kept repeating that nothing would change after Tito.

any other Serbian leader, but he is more than others committed to the concept of self-management.'<sup>60</sup>

To conclude: the dominant explanations of the reasons for the Yugoslav disintegration underline the inter-republican and inter-ethnic conflicts as the main cause of the state and regime failure. But the sources we have quoted in this chapter show a high level of understanding and co-operation between the Slovene Kardelj, the Croat Tito and Serbian leading politicians. In what follows it will become clear that the main conflict was within republics, and not primarily between various ethnic groups and territorial units. The political conflicts in Serbia were primarily between members of the political elite belonging to the same ethnic group, as will be shown by the example of the debate between the majority of the Serbian Central Committee and two other members (both Serbs) in May 1968. The same applied to the other Yugoslav republics.

Secondly, contrary to today's dominant interpretations, the leading Serbian politicians firmly believed that Kardelj's concept projected Serbia as a republic equal to others and offered her much more autonomy than she had before. In fact, they believed that Kardelj satisfied two main goals of Serbian politics: to preserve Yugoslavia and to secure the autonomy of Serbia within it. While Yugoslavia still remained united (despite permanent political differences between its regions) Serbia's extensive autonomy ('statehood') was now fully recognised as a permanent and undeniable fact. As to the other Yugoslav republics, the principle of 'not intervening in its internal affairs' was also recognised by the federal Constitution as applying to Serbia.<sup>61</sup>

It was the 'ethnic nationalists', 'liberals' and 'Stalinists', three categories the Yugoslav Communists aimed to suppress in public life, who were left dissatisfied with the 1974

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<sup>60</sup> Bilić, in the interview conducted in January 1998. I did not have a chance to check Bilić's interpretation with Vidoje Žarković. However, Marković indeed became the strongest opponent of the nomination of Slobodan Milošević for the leading Party post in Serbia 1986. Ivan Stambolić described Marković's reaction to the election of Milošević: 'Immediately after Milošević was selected (as the only candidate), Draža told me that history would never forgive me this choice, and that the Serbian people would never pardon me for pushing Milošević through, for Milošević would spoil everything... Frankly speaking, I would feel less guilty today if Milošević had managed to blind Draža as well. It would be easier for me now. But, he could not outplay the old fox' (I. Stambolić, 1995:148-9).

<sup>61</sup> One can here ask - was this solution not against the interests of Serbs outside Serbia, since the principle of 'non-intervening' ruled out their more extensive links with Serbia. But it was always clear to Serbia that the problems of the Croatian Serbs should be resolved in Zagreb, not in Belgrade (Serbia), as Marko Nikezić told the Croatian Serbs on several occasions. Of course, this arrangement was made on the understanding that both Croatia and Serbia were socialist republics, and that Croatian Communists would fight Croatian nationalists, protecting the equality of Serbs and Croats in Croatia. Some Serbian leaders, such as Draža Marković, however, felt that the Croatian Communists were not doing this, but they were also aware that raising this issue would be understood as 'intervention in Croatian affairs'. After talking to a Croatian Serb on 26 October 1974 Marković wrote in his diary: 'I am more and more convinced that there is something defective, something bad in this. On behalf of what principles should we promote such relations? Why should I be indifferent about the position of the Serbs in Croatia, Albanians in Macedonia, etc., if - as a Communist and a citizen - I am not indifferent about the Turks in Cyprus and the Irish in Great Britain?' (Marković, 1988:58). The principle of 'non-intervention' was violated for the first time when Slovenia supported the Kosovo Albanians in 1989, to be continued with Serbian support for the Croatian Serbs in 1990.



Constitution.<sup>62</sup> The republics neither followed ethnic lines in Yugoslavia, nor did democratic elections take place constituting a (liberal) democratic Yugoslavia.<sup>63</sup> The proposed concept was a further step away both from the East European, especially Soviet institutional setting and from West European political systems, based on representative democracy. But, the Serbian politicians in the late 1960s and early 1970s were neither ethnic nationalists nor democratic Yugoslavs in the West-European meaning of the word. Still less were they pro-Soviet in the sense of being dissatisfied with Kardelj's ideas on these grounds.<sup>64</sup> Like other Yugoslav Communists, they shared the 'self-managing' concept, adapting it to the Serbian situation. It was their interpretation of Kardelj's ideas that defined Serbian identity in the last twenty years of Yugoslavia. This interpretation is analysed further in this chapter.

### 3.3. Two Visions of Serbia and Yugoslavia Within Serbian Politics in May 1968

Even more explicitly than other Yugoslav republics, Serbia understood that the change of concept (after the fall of Ranković) urged her to re-construct her own discourse in Yugoslavia. I shall examine the creation of this new Serbian discourse in the light of the polemics between two defenders of the *Pre-Brioni* concept (Dobrica Ćosić and Jovan Marjanović) and the majority of the Serbian Central Committee, which took place at the 14<sup>th</sup> CC LCS session on 29-30 May 1968. This debate had important consequences for several reasons:

- 1) the Serbian Communists once again confirmed their commitment to Constitutional changes, offering new arguments in their support; by doing this they in fact defined Serbia's political discourse which remained valid until the late 1980s;
- 2) the debate indicated the existence of long-term divisions between factions of the Serbian party, which now entered a new phase; these divisions cannot be entirely described by terms such as 'conservatives' and 'reformists', or 'inter-nationalists'

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<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, one should acknowledge that some democratic Yugoslavs in emigration proposed the re-organisation of Yugoslavia in a very similar form to the one accepted by the 1974 Constitution (see Ivanović, 1996:84-93). Already in 1963 the *Democratic Alternative*, a group of Yugoslav like-minded emigres mainly from the UK, in their *Stansted Declaration* projected a Union of Yugoslav peoples, each of which would be entitled to form its own state. This was the result of the conclusion, which the Yugoslav politicians in emigration reached 'with a heavy heart' (as the leading person of the group, Vane Ivanović said), that 'the Yugoslavs are today a small minority in our country' (1970/1996:95). In this respect, one should take *cum grano salis* the criticisms of Kardelj's concept as being an invention of his personal 'Slovenian nationalism' (as stated by Koča Popović, in Nenadović: 1988).

<sup>63</sup> Marković openly admitted that 'regardless of all declarations, the real democratisation of society is not wanted. The main obstacle to this is those people who have been sitting at the forefront of the state and society and who have identified with them, who have merged together... positioning themselves at the centre of all that happens. This is also continued by some new people who do not want a really democratic discussion' (17 January 1971; 1987:253).

<sup>64</sup> It was, however, out of the political elite itself that these three opposition groups had been created. In Chapter Six we examine the transformation of some of the losers of the intra-party conflicts in the late 1960s into prominent leaders of the anti-Kardeljist opposition in the post-Titoist period (Dobrica Ćosić in Serbia and Franjo Tuđman in Croatia being the most obvious examples).

and 'nationalists', since they were rather complex ideological explanations and visions of the future;

- 3) the debated issues such as the position of Serbia in Yugoslavia; relations within Serbia and with the provinces; recognition of ethnic and political diversities, etc., entered the main agenda of Yugoslav and Serbian politics to stay there and only to be re-defined again with Milošević twenty years later;
- 4) one of the main participants, Dobrica Ćosić, became the leading figure of the opposition in Yugoslavia, and also the first President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1993; in this respect the debate was equally formative of the views of the Serbian opposition and the Serbian elite since 1968.

The debate between the two concepts (the *Pre-Brioni* and *Brioni*)<sup>65</sup> was the result of a different understanding of the internal party paper 'On the tasks of the League of Serbian Communists in the realisation of the policy on national equality in SR Serbia', proposed by the Serbian leadership to Central Committee of the LC Serbia at its 14<sup>th</sup> session (29 and 30 May 1968). The document clearly suggested that a 'new phase' in the policy on the national question had begun with the fall of Ranković two years ago. In the earlier phase, the document admits, the 'bureaucratic forces had in practice violated the main principles of the LCY's policy on national questions'. An especially grave form of this violation was 'permanent suspicion of the nationalities ('narodnosti')',<sup>66</sup> and the obstruction of the politics of national equality'. This was especially the case in Kosovo-Metohija, with regard to the Albanian nationality. The Document explicitly denounced the previous policy of 'bureaucratic forces' in Kosovo as 'a drastic form of anti-socialist chauvinist practice' (Minutes of the XIV LC CCS Session, 1968<sup>67</sup>:18).

The 'new phase' was intended to fully realise the equality of Yugoslav nations and 'nationalities', in line with Kardelj's abandonment of the Slavonic character of Yugoslavia. Since Yugoslavia was not any longer based on the ethnic similarities of its constitutive nations, but on their common interests, non-Slavonic Albanians should not be treated differently from others.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The *Pre-Brioni* corresponds to the third, and the *Brioni* to the fourth constitutive concept of Yugoslavism, as described in Chapter Two.

<sup>66</sup> The use of terms *nationality* ('narodnost'), *nations* ('narodi') and *national minorities* ('nacionalne manjine') is explained in the Introduction. An interesting debate developed on the usage of these two terms (narodnosti and nacionalne manjine) between Petar Stambolić and Dušan Dragosavac in July 1983 (letters in possession of the author).

<sup>67</sup> Reference (Minutes, 1968) is further in this Chapter used for quotes from the authorised Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> LC CCS session, as published by Komunist, Belgrade 1968.

<sup>68</sup> It soon proved, however, that the abandonment of the Slavonic basis for Yugoslavia necessarily led to the Kosovo Albanians' demands to be treated as equal to other Yugoslav nations, which meant as a 'constitutive nation' with the

Apart from this matter of principle, there were more pragmatic reasons for this change: Albanians had now become the fourth largest Yugoslav ethnic group (smaller than the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but larger than the Bosnian Muslims, Macedonians and Montenegrins), with a growing intelligentsia. They thus became a typical example of an 'emerging nation', fitting into Leninist theories of social development. Before the eyes of Yugoslav Communists an ethnic group now developed the characteristics of a fully developed nation, demanding what every nation demands for itself: its own state. The same, of course, applied to the Slavonic nations of Yugoslavia - they now became 'completed nations' (as Kardelj concluded), willing and ready to form their own states. Yugoslavia, as explained in Chapter Two of this dissertation, was there to acknowledge and support this historical process. In granting more autonomy to Yugoslav constitutional units (both republics and provinces), Yugoslav Communists believed they were acting in a truly Marxist way - recognising what was an inevitable result of the historical process.

The Serbian Central Committee, acknowledging the new development, invited the relevant institutions to pass additional measures to reduce differences in development between Kosovo and the rest of Serbia and to speed up the education of the Albanians, so that they themselves could take responsibility for the further development of Kosovo (Minutes, 1968:25). The political equality of nations and nationalities could not, the Serbian Communists argued, be achieved without economic equality, since it was the economy that formed the base of the political supra-structures. Equality, on the other hand, was the fundamental value of socialism. Without equality, no society could pretend to be socialist.

The 'new phase', the Serbian Communists admitted, carried with it the danger of nationalism. For this reason, the Document invited the Communists of Serbia (regardless of their nationality) to block any action by nationalist and chauvinist elements in their own nations. In opposition to the interpretation that some (i.e., Serbian) nationalism was 'defensive' and only a reaction to the 'aggressive' nationalism of other nations (i.e., Croats and Albanians), it was stressed that 'each nationalism had its own origins in a particular nation or nationality' and should, therefore, be fought within that nation by the Communists of the same nation. There was no such thing as more or less dangerous nationalism and no 'defensive' nationalism should be tolerated.

### 3.3.1. Discourse One: Ćosić and Marjanović

Dobrica Ćosić, however, did not accept the strong criticism of the 'old phase' of Yugoslav socialism. Ćosić, a partisan himself and a writer who helped Kardelj to word the Programme of

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right to form a republic, rather than as a nationality without the right to self-determination. Kardelj's refusal of these demands had been seen as an indication of the unwillingness of the Yugoslav leadership to secure political equality for Albanians in Yugoslavia. More about the sense of inequality among Kosovo Albanians in Chapter Five.

the League of Yugoslav Communists in 1958, came under suspicion after sending a letter to Tito in which he opposed the removal of Ranković in 1966. Now, two years later, he again voiced his disagreement with criticism of the 'Ranković period', saying that 'since the Republic of Serbia was established up until the present, the leading political forums of the Republic of Serbia have, in general and in historical perspective, conducted a democratic and internationalist policy' (Minutes, 1968:105). If there was a reason to be worried, then this was so because of the most recent events. 'The unity of the working class and of the nations of Yugoslavia is undermined at its roots by strong social and national differentiation and growing economic inequality.' This was all, Ćosić said, the result of 'bureaucratic nationalism which keeps replacing Marxist internationalism and universalism', as well as of 'the ideology which equates socialist self-management and national, i.e., state sovereignty' (Minutes, 1968:102). This trend made many people worried about the future of Yugoslavia, which might well result in various nationalist tendencies.

Ćosić was supported by Jovan Marjanović, another member of the Serbian Central Committee and one of the main historians of the Yugoslav Second World War period. Marjanović criticised what he saw as the abandonment of 'socialist Yugoslavism' and Yugoslavism in general and opposed innovations in the ethnic structure of Yugoslavia (recognition of a separate Muslim nation and of the existence of a separate Montenegrin culture, etc.). Both Ćosić and Marjanović said that a debate on the state of the Serb nation had been avoided, despite the 'serious anti-Serb atmosphere, which has been widely manifested in certain areas, especially in Croatia and Slovenia', where Serbs were perceived as those who 'want only to dominate, govern, and control' (Minutes, 1968:103). Accusing other Communists of being tolerant towards anti-Serb nationalism, Ćosić refused to follow the rule of 'non-intervening' in other republics' 'internal affairs'. He especially refused to leave Hungarian and Albanian nationalism to Communists in Vojvodina and Kosovo respectively, warning of 'Hungarian segregationism and the bureaucratic autonomism<sup>69</sup> of the Vojvodina bureaucracy'. Marjanović asked why the Slovene League of Communists defined itself as a 'national organisation' in its Statute (Minutes, 1968:91). He argued against the recognition of the Muslim nation, since this would - as he said - lead to new ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia. This decision, as well as the recognition of the cultural separateness of the Montenegrins (as opposed to their Serbian background) were two examples of 'bureaucratic nationalism' which was opposed to 'the free development of Yugoslav socialist awareness, and of a sense of belonging to the Yugoslav socialist community' (Minutes, 1968:98). The bureaucratic forces that made these decisions, 'used violence to halt any process of integration and unification of the Yugoslav nations and their segments'. Yugoslavia

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<sup>69</sup> This is how the term *autonomism* ('autonomaštvo') appeared in the Serbian political vocabulary. When it was repeated by Špiro Galović at the Serbian Central Committee session on 6 May 1981, the leaders of Vojvodina accused the Serbian leadership of 'borrowing' labels from Ćosić, by then the most prominent opponent of the regime. More in Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation.

thus found itself in 'the absurd and comic situation that despite the proclamation of the right to self-determination, one could not declare oneself a Yugoslav, while many honest fighters for socialism experience humiliation as people without nationality, being treated almost as displaced persons,' said Marjanović. It was not true, he emphasised, that people did not want to be Yugoslavs. They were discouraged from being so by the political elite which 'paid much more attention to elements that make us divided and different in national terms rather than to those that integrate and bind us together' (Minutes, 1968:97).

But, it was Kosovo that divided Marjanović and Ćosić most in the Serbian Central Committee from the advocates of the 'new phase' approach. Despite the dominant rhetoric according to which the rights of Albanians had been violated under the 'Ranković regime', Marjanović and Ćosić now claimed that the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo suffered in the 'new phase'. They had been pushed out of jobs and pressurised by the Kosovo Albanians. Therefore, they had begun to leave the province.<sup>70</sup> The Provincial Committee of the LC of Kosovo 'did not attach appropriate importance to the struggle against Albanian chauvinism and irredentism, coming out with mere political phrases' (Minutes, 1968:107). A policy which replaced class with national criteria and which understood the self-managing rights of *nationalities* as their right to statehood and sovereignty could be fatal. In opposition to Kardelj's rather loose understanding of 'sovereignty' and of 'statehood', Ćosić argued that in Kosovo, there could be either Albanian or Yugoslav sovereignty. 'A combination of both is impossible without negative results, at least in today's circumstances,' said Ćosić (Minutes, 1968:108). One of these outcomes could be the revival of the 'old historical aims and national ideals of the Serbian nation - to unite itself into its own state' (Minutes, 1968:111). This could have unimagined consequences.<sup>71</sup>

Ćosić saw the solution in the strengthening and not the abandoning of socialist internationalism, which would eventually lead to a Balkan Federation of socialist countries. National conflicts could only be prevented by a truly internationalist politics, which would result in the 'formation of an internationalist community of nations... bound together on the grounds of common class, economic, social aims and interests, regardless of national allegiances and borders'. In such an association 'class, societal and individual interests should

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<sup>70</sup> Many of Ćosić's conclusions were indeed based on facts. The situation in Kosovo after 1966 is analysed in detail in Chapter Five of this thesis.

<sup>71</sup> Ćosić's warnings on the danger of the emergence of Serbian nationalism, as well as the whole tone of his speech, show that at this time (1968) he was more a defender of the *Pre-Brioni* Yugoslavia than a promoter of 'Greater Serbia' or even the pre-war concept of 'national unity'. His criticism was for this reason even more dangerous for the political elite, which could not easily label him a nationalist. A Croat 'Praxis' Professor Predrag Vranicki came to the same conclusion in his review of Ćosić's 1982 book. However, what he saw as the lack of commitment of other Yugoslav nations to Yugoslavia, and his conviction that Kardelj's Yugoslavia abandoned the main principles of the Partisan Struggle, made Ćosić so disillusioned that he moved towards Serbian ethnic nationalism, whose 'patriarch' he gradually became in the late 1970s. Ćosić then became one of the very few Serbs to argue that Yugoslavia was not in Serbian interests. The evolution of Dobrica Ćosić from a Ranković supporter in the 1960s to the main patron of Serbian nationalist ideas in the 1980s is paradigmatic for a large number of Serbian intellectuals and indeed for a large section of the Serbian population. For this reason we discuss it again in Chapter Six. See also Pavković (1998).

always have priority over national and state allegiances'. A federation of Balkan nations, 'as an organic part and form of the processes of global integration', would 'not be a pure alliance of nations or states, but would tend to become an alliance of free people and working associations... not of 'supra-nations" (Minutes, 1968:115).

Ćosić was convinced that such an association was possible and feasible.

'If this is impossible and only a fiction, then socialism itself is a fiction and an unfeasible ideal. If our intentions to realise this goal should be postponed for better and more suitable times, then the revolution itself should have also been initiated in more appropriate and better times. But I think neither that this ... is impossible to achieve, nor that it (or the orientation towards this aim) should be postponed. Quite the contrary' (Minutes, 1968:115).<sup>72</sup>

In his speech, Ćosić stressed that the Albanian and Macedonian questions were the most complex parts of the Balkan problem, since these two nations were divided between several Balkan states. It was true, he said, that in certain circumstances, those who argued for the unification of all Albanians within a single state could become perceived as 'a historical vanguard and could also have a certain socialist programme and revolutionary slogans' (Minutes, 1968:13).<sup>73</sup>

'In principle, we have no right to ignore or to hide from ourselves the sentiments of the Albanian nation for its own unification.' Rather, this reality should be 'seen in correlation with the past and the future of relations between Serbs and Šiptari [Kosovo Albanians], and in the spirit of socialist internationalism'.

Ćosić, in fact, invited members of the Serbian Central Committee to openly debate the question of Kosovo:

'The Serbian nation is aware and has enough power and willingness to understand the democratic national feelings of the Shiptars of Kosovo-Metohija, and to support all their aspirations if they are democratic in form and content, if they do not endanger peace in the Balkans and the independence of the Yugoslav community, that is - if they do not realise their national sovereignty by nationalist methods, endangering the

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<sup>72</sup> If one wonders how it was possible to dream of Balkan associations in the circumstances as they were in 1968, one should be reminded that Kardelj himself was talking (though cautiously) of a 'future co-operation in this region' (see Chapter Two). Tito, who saw himself as the central figure of Balkan politics in the whole post-war period, could have been only supportive of this possibility. The idea of a Balkan Federation, however, was older than Tito (see the ideas of Svetozar Marković and Dimitrije Tucović, the leading Serbian socialists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and it continued after him (see, for example, Branko Horvat's proposals for a Balkan Federation as the only possible solution for the Balkan national questions, in April 1998 (*Feral Tribune*, 6 April 1998), or similar proposals by the Kosovo Albanian leader Adem Demaqi).

<sup>73</sup> The already difficult problem with Kosovo and the Albanians was only intensified because Albania was another socialist country, with a separate interpretation of Marxism and a domestically rooted and legitimated leadership. All these elements made it additionally dangerous in ideological terms, since - as Kardelj argued - the real danger for Yugoslav socialism lay only in an 'alternative form of socialism', not in liberal democracy. Albania, being different from Soviet 'state socialism', represented an example of such a danger.

existence, freedom and integrity of the Serbs in Kosovo-Metohija' (Minutes, 1968:113-4).<sup>74</sup>

But, at the same time, one should not forget that 300,000 Serbs and Montenegrins 'certainly cannot and will not accept becoming a part of a less developed socio-political community and one less civilised than that to which they belong by all criteria' (Minutes, 1968:114). For this reason, Čosić said, any abandonment of 'a really internationalist policy', which would lead to a socialist federation of the Balkan people as 'an organic element of the processes of the world's integration', would be a fatal mistake.

Both speeches were an open attack on the main ideas of the 'new phase' of Yugoslav socialism. But their criticism was composed of heterogeneous elements, which could hardly make up a consistent political alternative. Their approach, in fact, used some elements of the rhetoric of the *national unity* merging them with the *Pre-Brioni* discourse of socialist Yugoslavism.

Yet, Čosić and Marjanović openly pointed to facts which the political elite in Serbia and Yugoslavia wanted to ignore or to hide from the public debate. With the democratisation of public life after 1966, nationalist tendencies were indeed more represented in the public debate. This was especially the case in Croatia and Kosovo, regions to which, for historical reasons, Serbian nationalism often referred as anti-Serb. A year before Čosić's speech, the leading Croatian cultural institutions and the most distinguished intellectuals had demanded the recognition of a separate Croatian language in the 'Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language' (1967). Their Serbian counterparts replied with the 'Proposition for Consideration'. As Čosić himself experienced after his polemics with Slovenian author Dušan Pirjevec (in 1961), by the mid 1960s there was hardly any common sense of 'Yugoslavism' left between intellectuals from various parts of the country.<sup>75</sup>

Čosić's warning about the possibly dangerous consequences of the new policy in Kosovo could have also been supported by facts. The fall of Ranković in 1966 was followed by public criticism of his 'anti-Albanian' politics in the province. Massive purges in the security structures, especially in Kosovo, affected many Serb and Montenegrin civil servants in the province. The 'new phase' now promised even further 'positive discrimination' in favour of the new Kosovo (Albanian) intelligentsia, which was idealistic and to a large extent nationalist. In 1967, for

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<sup>74</sup> In the 1990s Čosić moved towards proposing a division of Kosovo into Serb and Albanian parts, with the possibility for the Albanian part to join Albania. Čosić has also championed the unification of (ethnic) Serbs in the Union of Serbian Lands - Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Srpska (Bosnian Serbs) and - until August 1995 - the Republic of Serbian Krajina (Croatian Serbs). For Čosić's views on both the Albanian and Serbian questions in 1990 see Borisav Jović's diary for 11 September 1990 (1995:191-4).

<sup>75</sup> A good example of the controversies between Serbian, Croatian and Slovene intellectuals may be found in a conversation between Antonije Isaković and Miroslav Krleža in the early 1970s. According to Isaković (interviewed by me), Krleža claimed that 'Yugoslavia did not exist any longer' and that co-operation between writers could not change this fact, since 'it was all too late already'. For debate between Pirjevec and Čosić see Milojković-Djurić (1996).

example, a historian Ali Hadri published an article on 'Kosovo in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia' in which he offered an 'Albanian point of view', which certainly provoked Serbian sentiments linked to Kosovo (Hadri, 1967; and Dogo, 1997).<sup>76</sup> In Kosovo, where the relation between the two ethnic groups had often been seen as one of master-servant rather than that of two equals, the Serbs now increasingly felt they were becoming 'servants' of new masters – the Albanians.<sup>77</sup> This launched a large wave of emigrations from Kosovo, already by far the least developed region of Yugoslavia. Between 1961 and 1981 about 100,000 Serbs and Montenegrins left Kosovo. Together with the much larger birth rate of the Kosovo Albanians, this in reality destabilised the ethnic structure of the Province, in which the share of the Serbs had fallen in these 20 years from 23.5% to 13.2%. Interviews conducted with the migrants, as well as research into their economic backgrounds, show that the sense of inequality and political pressure after 1966 was by and large the most important reason for migration (Petrović, 1992; Blagojević, 1997 and 1998).<sup>78</sup> Ćosić was indeed the first Serbian politician to warn about these trends, at a time when nationality issues were still somewhere between a taboo and an open issue.<sup>79</sup>

It is no surprise, therefore, that the debate that followed their speeches at the 14<sup>th</sup> CC LCS Session had a strategic importance not only for the Serbian position in the Constitutional debate, but for the course of events in the late 1980s. It was a clear choice between various concepts of Serbia and Yugoslavia. The majority of the Central Committee declared in favour of Kardelj's concept. Next in this chapter we follow the arguments that the majority used in polemics with Ćosić and Marjanović.

### 3.3.2. Discourse Two: The Majority of the Serbian Central Committee

The Vojvodina Party leader Mirko Tepavac argued that if Ćosić's approach were accepted, the Albanians would have no alternative but to feel 'like sub-tenants in a Serbian national state, to acknowledge that they are second-rate citizens, to accept that only if they accept Serbian domination they could remain where they are' (Minutes, 1968:141). For Draža Marković 'the idea that everything, including national feelings, should be subordinated to the notion of unity, is not a new argument' but an old Stalinist idea. 'However, even fifty years after the October Revolution the national question could not be put off the agenda by any talk of 'unity', as the

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<sup>76</sup> Muhamedin Kullashi (himself an advocate of the 'Albanian point of view' in Kosovo historiography) now admits that textbooks used to teach history in Kosovo were 'to some extent nationalistic'. But, he said quite accurately, this was a 'phenomenon common to all historiographies in Yugoslavia' (Kullashi, 1997:58).

<sup>77</sup> An interesting analysis of the 'master-servant' relationship in Kosovo is presented by Kofos (1998).

<sup>78</sup> Serbian migration from Kosovo became the central issue of Serbian politics in the mid 1980s and significantly influenced the rise of Milošević and the return of Ćosić to Serbian politics. We shall return to this question in chapter Six of this thesis. The Albanian discourse will be explained in Chapter Five.

<sup>79</sup> This is how one might explain his enormous influence on the Kosovo Serbs in the 1980s. Ćosić was the key figure in linking them with the Serbian elite (see Hudelist, 1989).



Czechoslovak case explicitly proved.<sup>80</sup> This case was used by Miloško Drulović, who asked what was the reason that the Czechs and Slovaks 'had only now come to the conclusion that the relationship between them should be organised in an entirely different way' (Minutes, 1968:195). The main reason was in their previous commitment to the Stalinist tradition of 'resolving' problems between nationalities, which neglected the complexity of this issue in a socialist and multi-ethnic state. The President of the Serbian Assembly Miloš Minić, speaking for more than two hours, went a step further than the main group of Serbian politicians,<sup>81</sup> when he proposed that even the most 'radical' proposals of the Kosovo leaders in the Constitutional debate should be accepted. Minić accepted the new name of Kosovo (without mentioning Metohija),<sup>82</sup> the change of the name to 'Socialist' (instead of previously only 'Autonomous' Province)<sup>83</sup> and the wide use of a new flag of Albanian *nationality*.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, Minić criticised Marjanović for his mentioning of the Ustasha crimes against the Serbs in the context of this debate.<sup>85</sup> The Serbs had no reason to be afraid of granting wide autonomy to its 'nationalities' and regions. On the contrary, it was precisely because of the large differences between regions in Serbia (and especially between Vojvodina and Kosovo) that 'autonomy should be created even if it has not previously existed - and very wide autonomy, because otherwise we will not be able to solve such different problem, without making bureaucratic centralism stronger,' concluded Minić.

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<sup>80</sup> This refers to the 'Prague Spring' of 1968, which reached its peak in the days of the 14<sup>th</sup> CC LCS session. Marković here talks about the federalisation of Czechoslovakia, for which Dubček (1993) is a good source.

<sup>81</sup> Minić did not make many friends among Serbian politicians with this speech. Draža Marković (2 June 1968; 1987:68) considered Minić to be ready to make too many concessions to Provinces. After Minić's speech at the 14<sup>th</sup> Session, the gap between him (on the one side) and Marković and Petar Stambolić (on the other) became ever wider. The conflict between them culminated in June 1982 (see chapter Five for 'the case of Draža Marković'). Marginalised after 1982, Minić became the first of Tito's confidants to sense the change in policy of the Serbian leadership after Tito's death. The conflict between Minić and Marković is only one of the many intra-elite conflicts in Serbia, which confirms that ethnic elements did not play a primary role in the politics of *Brioni Yugoslavia*.

<sup>82</sup> On the importance of this change see Simić (1998:201).

<sup>83</sup> Serbian politicians at that time opposed this change (for reasons, see Marković, 20 October 1968; 1987:92). A compromise solution was reached on 4 November 1968 (see Marković, 6 October 1968; 1987:98). However, already in May 1968 Minić concluded that the word 'socialist' should be accepted in order to distinguish socialist provinces from 'the classical political autonomies of bourgeois-parliamentarian and some other political systems, where autonomies exist... without being democratic in the socialist sense' (1968:272).

<sup>84</sup> The issue of national symbols in Kosovo was very controversial. Minić believed that the free use of the flags of the 'nationalities' (Albanians, Turks, etc.) in Kosovo was a civil right, and that the flags would not in themselves create problems (1968:272). The debate continued long after 1974, reaching its peak in the 1980s. (See correspondence between Dragosavac and Stambolić, July 1984).

<sup>85</sup> Emphasising that he was the former Military Prosecutor in the Trial of Draža Mihailović, Minić said: 'All slaughters were terrible, because they were (the result) of a bestial madness, but the most terrible one to me was when five thousand Bosnian Muslims were slaughtered on a bridge in Foca... Entire Muslim villages were exterminated by Serbian Chetniks. (Thus) I would prefer very much if Joca (Marjanović) had taken any of the many cases of the Serbian Chetniks' slaughter, leaving the Comrades in Croatia to talk about the slaughter committed by the Ustashes' (1968:275). This attitude of Minić's represents the main line of Communist policy on the national question - that it was the duty of Communists in all Yugoslav nations to attack nationalism in their own nation. The Yugoslav Communists did not accept the 'Brezhnev doctrine' of 'fraternal help' in internal Yugoslav relations.

However, the speeches of the three most influential members of the Central Committee – its former, present and incumbent presidents Dobrivoje Radosavljević,<sup>86</sup> Petar Stambolić<sup>87</sup> and Marko Nikezić<sup>88</sup> – defined the Serbian mainstream interpretation of Kardelj's concept on the national question. Formulated in opposition to Čosić and Marjanović, this platform remained almost unchanged in the next two decades – until the 8<sup>th</sup> CC LCS Session in September 1987, when Slobodan Milošević defined a new programme.

The main ideas of the Serbian mainstream discourse in the 1968-1987 period were:

First, the existence of nations is a reality that should be acknowledged. Regardless of the fact that they were products of 'the bourgeois epoch', nations had not withered away and would remain in existence for much longer than Stalinists believed. In itself, this is not necessarily an obstacle to the successful development of socialism. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Dobrivoje Radosavljević said, had long ago (and especially during WWII) abandoned dogmatic views on nations.

'Yugoslavia is a multi-ethnic community... and no political forces of the Old (Pre-War) Yugoslavia could have resolved the national question. No revolutionary movement, no socialism which did not at the same time deal with the national question, no Communists that disregarded the existence of the national question would be able to do anything' (1968:237).

On the contrary, it was the fact that they addressed the national question that made Communists popular and accepted by the Yugoslav nations. The Party became strong only when it proved itself as a force from within the nation, as a part of a nation, not something that was imposed on the nation from the outside. The aim of the Party, especially in a complex multi-ethnic community such as Yugoslavia, was to secure the free development of nations according to socialist principles, and not to deny or neglect the national question. In this context, Čosić's and Marjanović's argument that the Party over-emphasised differences and neglected similarities between Yugoslav nations was rejected.

Secondly; one could not *resolve* the national question, even if one wanted to, by unitarist formulas, or by pressure on existing nations. Past failures in building up a 'Yugoslav

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<sup>86</sup> Radosavljević was the CC LCS President between July 1966 and March 1968. Latinka Perović describes him in these words: 'I profoundly agreed with him on two issues – on his understanding of the development of socialist democracy, and on his genuinely internationalist policy on the national question... He was the only person I sincerely missed once circumstances detached me from the people I had worked with' (1991:51).

<sup>87</sup> Petar Stambolić, the wartime Party leader of Serbia, was a 'caretaker' in the post of the President of the CC LCS between March and November 1968.

<sup>88</sup> At the time of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the CC LCS Nikezić was the Yugoslav Foreign Secretary. Very popular as Tito's 'mouthpiece' in the period of the Czechoslovak crisis, Nikezić was elected President of the CC LCS in November 1968. This move was also an attempt to normalise relations with the Soviets after their intervention in the CSSR. He remained in this post until October 1972, when he was removed after Tito's attack on 'liberalism' in Serbia.

nation' (in the *First Yugoslavia*) and the Stalinist experience in the East European countries (especially in Czechoslovakia) were instructive enough. The national question re-appeared in its full force, regardless of the Yugoslav Communists' naïve wishful thinking that it would disappear after the revolution<sup>89</sup> (Stambolić, Minutes, 1968:303, Radosavljević, Minutes, 1968:242, etc.). The politics of Diktat and pressure on nations from above in a state, as Marko Nikezić said, were no longer acceptable to anyone, including, of course, Serbia. 'New relations have become needed by everybody,' he said, and this was the reason why all republics in Yugoslavia had accepted them. 'To dictate, at a time when it is no longer historically inevitable, which means - when it can no longer be justified - this is hardly acceptable,' especially to the more developed regions of Yugoslavia (Minutes, 1968:212). When it came to nations, the Serbian politicians concluded, it was much better to give more rather than fewer rights. It was 'better to be too generous, in terms of concessions and flexibility towards national minorities, than to fall below real needs' (Minutes, 1968:242).<sup>90</sup>

Thirdly; even if Serbia advocated the centralisation of Yugoslavia and a unitarist approach to the national question, she could find no political support for this policy in Yugoslavia.<sup>91</sup> The only potential allies of unitarists were outside the country - in the USSR and East European countries. Bearing in mind the context of the Czechoslovak crisis, to Serbian (and other) leaders it was clear that a defence of the unitarist concept of Yugoslavism would lead to the endangering of Yugoslav independence.<sup>92</sup> Petar Stambolić argued that the notion of

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<sup>89</sup> Milka Planinc offers a good illustration of this belief. In an interview conducted by me in April 1998, she said: 'We were all, including myself, Yugoslavs, and we did not have, even in our most private thoughts, the idea that Yugoslavia could disintegrate. I remember how shocked I was when it was reported that Vladimir Bakarić, a very experienced politician, said somewhere in Belgium in the mid-1960s that what we were doing was re-structuring Yugoslavia, but that only the future would show how long it would last as a common state. To me, this statement came as a big surprise. I asked myself: 'How could he say this? Does he really think that there could be something else but Yugoslavia?' We all believed that, in principle, the national question had been resolved, and that the misunderstandings we occasionally had would decrease as economic development progressed.' Other members of the leadership, regardless of their ethnic or republican origins, shared the same belief. For example, Dušan Dragosavac (the leading Serb politician in the Croatian Communist leadership) believed the same, as he told me in April 1998.

<sup>90</sup> Serbian and Yugoslav politicians often quoted from Lenin: 'There is nothing that halts the development and growth of proletarian class solidarity more than injustice on the national front, and there is nothing that members of a small nation feel more sensitive and hurt about, than a sense of inequality and the violation of equality, even if in negligence, even in the form of a joke, when it comes from their comrade proletarians. This is why, in this particular case, it is better to be too generous, rather than not flexible at all. This is why in this case, the basic interest of proletarian solidarity, and thus the interest of the proletarian class struggle, demands that we abandon a formal (bureaucratic) approach to the national question.' This paragraph is from the 14<sup>th</sup> Session, quoted by Dobrivoje Radosavljević (Minutes, 1968:242). It was also used by Dušan Dragosavac at the Presidency of the CC LCY Session in July 1984, when he argued in favour of the wide use of the flags of *nationalities* in Kosovo.

<sup>91</sup> Nikezić said that Čosić and Marjanović did not count on political alliances, as their speeches did not intend to open a dialogue with others, but to re-introduce a system of monologues. 'This speech is a monologue, sometimes even an insulting monologue. But the time of monologues is expiring everywhere, while in our country it has already ended. The monologue is always an expression of a political monopoly, which we have left behind us by now' (Minutes, 1968:220).

<sup>92</sup> The time of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session was characterised by extensive Yugoslav worries (of both leaders and population) that the USSR might intervene in Czechoslovakia, and - subsequently - in Yugoslavia, for Yugoslavia not only supported Dubček's reforms, but it promoted a much more liberalised version of socialism than was the Czech programme. The fear of Soviet intervention had permanently preoccupied Yugoslav public opinion, but it reached its peak in 1968

'socialist internationalism', when combined with demands for 'unity' could 'serve as a cover-up for a claim that we are all Communists, that we therefore have internationalist obligations and consequently, that we have to subordinate our actions, for example, to some conclusions reached at some global meeting of world Communists' (Minutes, 1968:303). The Yugoslav Communists defied such attempts when they split with Stalin in 1948, arguing that they were responsible to their own country, their own working class and the people they led in the revolution.

Marko Nikezić (then the Yugoslav Foreign Secretary) argued that the crisis of the Western Democracies was so intense, that in practice only socialist (Communist) ideas were left in the political arena. Demonstrations in Paris, the Vietnam War and anti-war action in the United States of America provided the confirmation of what all Marxists believed - that Capitalism was the epoch of the past, which was to be replaced by socialism, as a transitional phase to Communism.<sup>93</sup> 'Thus, it seems to me that the question is not: socialism or not, but - what type of socialism.'<sup>94</sup> Consequently, Čosić's and Marjanović's ideas, being socialist (but in a different sense from Kardelj's socialism) presented a greater danger than any Capitalist alternative.

'It seems to me that there is a realistic danger that the socialist future becomes in reality discredited by elements of the old models. For, we have already seen societies that expropriated the rich classes and that even organised industrial development, but which nevertheless failed to improve the liberation of man. I must say that we have already attempted to do this, we have already been there ... but, fortunately, we were moved from there,<sup>95</sup> and now we do not want anyone to push us back to these ideas' (Nikezić, Minutes, 1968:214-5).

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(Tripalo, 1990). This may be illustrated by the discussion at the emergency session of the Yugoslav political and military leadership on 2 September 1968, seven days after the intervention of the Warsaw Pact units in Czechoslovakia. According to Miko Tripalo (a Croat participant) the Army leadership admitted that Yugoslavia would be able to resist a USSR attack for not more than three days. An additional problem was that the core of the Yugoslav army was stationed on its Western, not its Eastern borders. Koča Popović (the Vice-President of Yugoslavia, Serbia) then attacked the Defence Secretary Ivan Gošnjak (Croat), and indeed (as Tepavac witnesses in 1998:127) - Tito himself, for the ideological dogmatism that created the grounds for such a decision. The situation was so tense that the Croat leader Bakarić said he would not sleep at home since the Army commanders in charge of Zagreb were pro-Soviet. He accused the Army (led by another Croat - General Gošnjak) of being responsible for the situation in which Soviet troops would reach Rijeka (the Adriatic port) in two days. Tepavac argues that at this moment, only 1,000 soldiers protected the territories between the Yugoslav border with Hungary and the Vojvodina capital Novi Sad (1998:127). On 5 September 1968, the Daily Telegraph reported on the preparations of the Yugoslavs for Partisan war against the Soviets. The concept of 'people's self-defence' was developed as the consequence of this debate. The situation was only worsened when the Romanian leader Ceausescu three days after the invasion (24 August 1968) sought formal permission for his Army to retreat to Yugoslavia if attacked. Tito agreed, on condition that they left all weapons on the borders (Tripalo, 1990:104).

<sup>93</sup> This belief would be only strengthened in the next six years, before the final acceptance of the Constitution. In the early 1970s economic crisis hit the West, in 1974 the Watergate affair underlined the 'moral corruption' of Western democracies, etc. Consequently, to many (left-wing) intellectuals in the West (and in the East) Yugoslavia looked like an 'oasis of stability and progress in Europe'.

<sup>94</sup> This conclusion is in agreement with Kardelj's views. As explained in Chapter Two, Kardelj was convinced that the only real and long-term danger came from an alternative type of socialism, i.e., from 'Stalinism' ('state socialism') and to some extent from the type of socialism advocated by the 'Praxis' philosophers. The basis for such thinking is a linear understanding of history, as explained in Chapter One of this thesis.

<sup>95</sup> This is a very carefully worded allusion to the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948. Interestingly, Nikezić had chosen the passive form ('we were moved from there') rather than repeating Tito's interpretation that Yugoslavia broke with Stalin.

In Nikezić's words, if Ćosić's and Marjanović's ideas were supported, Yugoslavia would move to 'statist concepts', while in its nationality policy it would return to positions which many other socialist countries (for example, Czechoslovakia) wanted to leave by any means. Furthermore, it made no sense for Yugoslavia to move towards centralism at precisely the same moment that everyone else realised that this system provided no grounds for the development of socialism.

Fourthly, the majority of the Serbian Central Committee argued that Ćosić and Marjanović misinterpreted the notion of Yugoslavism. Yugoslavism emerged as an expression of the demands of the South Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire for their national individuality.

'When they had no strength to achieve their national freedom individually, they relied on each other, and all South Slavs, creating a certain strength in order to achieve independence,' said Petar Stambolić (Minutes, 1968:303).

Accordingly, no one wanted to be a Yugoslav in order to deny or even less to suppress their own national existence, but, on the contrary, they invented Yugoslavism to make their own national existence possible. The same motive mobilised the Yugoslav nations during the war for national liberation, which they did not fight for the slogan of unity, but for their own freedom, impossible without them being united (Nikezić, Minutes, 1968:214). A unity which would endanger the freedom of the Yugoslav nations, therefore, was unacceptable.

'For the reason of our relationship with other Yugoslav nations, we in Serbia must be very clear about this, we have to deal very carefully with all these expressions of Yugoslavism, and this is what creates a political problem here,' said Stambolić.

Fifthly, the main enemy of Serbian national interests was Serbian nationalism, which the Serbian Communists must oppose with all their strength. 'No force in society is more reactionary than nationalism and chauvinism,' concluded Miloš Minić. If we wanted to test a Serbian Communist on nationalism, we needed to ask him what he thought of Kosovo-Metohija, Minić said.

But what was 'Serbian nationalism'? Serbian Communists (as well as other Communists) became extremely sensitive on nationalism and 'nationalism', leaving the threshold for labelling one as 'nationalist' rather low, especially in ethnically mixed areas and where Serb-Croat relations were at stake. On the other hand, once a person became labelled as 'nationalist', this immediately led (at least) to his complete exclusion from official political life. To Petar Stambolić, Ćosić's warning that the Serbs were leaving Kosovo as a result of political pressures seemed 'strange', since it basically originated in the doctrine of Serbian nationalism. 'It is

strange when Communists of Serbia, debating nationality issues in 1968, look at who inhabited an area before others', he said. Replying to Marjanović's criticism of the recognition of Muslim national and Montenegrin cultural specificities, Stambolić invoked the CPY practice of treating Muslims as a separate entity in all wartime declarations, recalling that the Muslims had 45 *national heroes*.<sup>96</sup> The statehood of Montenegro was older than that of Yugoslavia, while the separate (as distinct from the Serbian) culture of the Montenegrins had been developed over the last several decades in Yugoslavia. In general, the Serbian Communists believed that 'one does not need to do more to harm Serbia today, at this moment of our real differentiation on nationality issues, than to preach Serbian nationalism' (Tepavac, Minutes, 1968:141).<sup>97</sup>

Sixth; for historical reasons, Serbia needed to be careful when opening up national issues. Serbia did not want to be permanently suspected and blamed for dominating others in Yugoslavia. She was satisfied with the widespread perception among the others (especially Kardelj) that she had acted responsibly when accepting the removal of Ranković in 1966. Emphasising this positive perception of Serbia in Yugoslavia, Petar Stambolić also argued that any fears that Serbia might be endangered in Yugoslavia were senseless:

'First of all, could anyone today say that it would be in the interest of the Serbs if the *nationalities* did not enjoy the same rights as we do or if other nations did not have the same rights as us?... No one wants and no one can say this. Secondly, are we really endangered by the *nationalities*?<sup>98</sup> I do not know of any case when one could be endangered by a *nationality*.<sup>99</sup> It is only the majority that can put pressure (majorise) on

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<sup>96</sup> The argument based on participation of ethnic groups in socialist revolution was often used in relation to their status. One of the main arguments against the status of a republic of Kosovo in 1945 was the poor participation of Kosovo Albanians in the Partisans (Horvat, 1998; Vickers, 1998). On the other side, Stambolić used what he claimed to be a relatively high participation of Muslims (Bosniaks, as they prefer to be called now) in the Partisans as an argument in favour of changing their status in the new structure of Yugoslavia. However strange this argument seems today, it was logical for those who believed that the Communist revolution was the beginning of the 'real History' of the Yugoslav nations. It was also based on the notion that its socialist character bound Yugoslavia much more than the ethnic similarity of its 'constitutive nations' (see Chapter Two).

<sup>97</sup> The Serbian Communists took this line even during Milošević's first years in office, but now they violated the rule of 'non-intervention' that Minić insisted on when objecting to Marjanović's 'Ustasha example'. Milošević and his aides denied neither the existence of Serbian nationalism nor the necessity to oppose it, but they now claimed that only Serbian Communists were fighting their nationalism, while all other Communists (and especially Kosovo Albanians, Croats and Slovenes) made a *tacit* or even *open* coalition with the most prominent nationalists in their nations. They also argued that Serbian nationalism was only a reaction to other, at this particular moment more dangerous nationalisms (see my interview with Radoš Smiljković in 1989). Milošević's statement at the end of the Eighth CC LCS Session (September 1987) illustrates this: 'We have often failed to react in an appropriate manner to other forms of ideological and political pressure on socialist self-management, pressure created by bourgeois and statist ideas, which were put forward by their protagonists. But we have always considered our nationalists as first-class enemies. And it was not without reason. Serbian nationalism today is not only intolerance and hatred of another nation or other nations: it is a real snake in the bosom of Serbian nation' (Milošević, 1987/1989:171-2).

<sup>98</sup> It is obvious that Stambolić here deliberately avoided the word minority, although this word seems to be more appropriate for what he wanted to say. However, at the time of this speech, it was already politically correct to use 'nationality' instead of 'national minority'. Later Stambolić revised his position. In his letter to Dragosavac of 20 June 1983 he used the word minority, explaining that this word fitted into 'how the world talks about it'. (See Stambolić to Dragosavac, 20 June 1983, and Dragosavac to Stambolić, 27 June 1983, copies in my possession).

<sup>99</sup> Marko Nikezić concluded similarly to Stambolić: 'At no time and in no place was the mistake of granting more rights and wider possibilities for the development of smaller nations and nationalities (than necessary) committed. History does not ever record that such a 'mistake' has been committed towards the nationalities and national minorities' (1968:143). Dragoslav Marković was, however, of a different opinion when he spoke (13 years later) at the CC LC Serbia Session immediately after the Kosovo demonstrations (6 May 1981). Marković then said that the policy that

minorities, and therefore - the problem of the minority is not a problem for the minority, but for the majority. And this is why we take these decisions regarding Kosovo-Metohija - it is in our own interest, in the interest of political stability and the strength of Serbia.'

Finally, seventh, Serbia believed that the new Constitutional structure not only would not lead to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, but that it was the only way to prevent it. The unitary Yugoslavia of the pre-war period, the Serbian (and other) Communists argued, disintegrated not only because of the military attack by the Germans, Italians, Bulgarians and Hungarians in April 1941, but also because internal tensions had previously weakened its defensive strength. The AVNOJ Yugoslavia of 'brotherhood and unity', although a federation, also failed to eliminate and/or resolve the national question. Although successful in preventing further ethnic conflicts in the aftermath of the War and in granting more rights to smaller national groups in Yugoslavia than they ever had, this model 'could no longer secure progress and the consequence of this conclusion was that, after serious consideration, we have taken conscious action to move further on,' said Nikezić. It remained to be seen if integration could be secured on other grounds<sup>100</sup> - by the enlarged autonomy of nations and their republics-states. 'This is not a disintegration, this is an integration, because integration can be successful only if it is voluntary,' concluded Petar Stambolić (Minutes, 1968:309).

### 3.4. Conclusion

The Serbian political leadership accepted the 1974 Constitution because they saw Kardelj's concept as a step towards the realisation of the main Serbian national interests: to preserve a self-managing and socialist Yugoslavia, in which Serbia would have substantial autonomy without being suspected of suppressing the free development of other nations and 'nationalities'. Decentralisation of Yugoslavia, under these conditions, meant greater autonomy for Serbia, and thus was not against, but in favour of Serbian interests. The Serbian leadership wanted to use this autonomy to modernise Serbia, and - to some extent - to 'liberalise' its political system. By doing this, the Serbian leaders believed that they would increase the influence of Serbia on political decision-making in the country, especially after Tito's departure. They also hoped to advance a self-managing (de-centralised) socialism, which they saw as the only realistic alternative to both 'parliamentary democracy' and 'state socialism'. Serbian Communists did not seek and did not want to accept an alliance with 'Serbian nationalists' and

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Provinces should be given more rights than the Constitution instructed resulted in reducing the rights of Serbia. Therefore, he advised, 'everything is anti-constitutional which is not in accordance with the Constitution, whether more or less than (the rights secured) by the Constitution' (1981:103).

<sup>100</sup> This scepticism Nikezić obviously shared with Kardelj, as witnessed by Bilandžić and quoted in footnote 75 in Chapter Two. As Tepavac witnessed, Tito's views on the future of Yugoslavia were also pessimistic. In November 1971 he told his political aides in an informal conversation on the train between Bucharest and Belgrade: 'If you only knew how I see the future of Yugoslavia, you would be shocked!' (1998: 153).

'Yugoslav unitarists', since they believed that they represented the main threat to Serbian long-term interests. Yet, they did not like to see other republics' and the federal leadership's constant attacks on Serbian 'nationalists' and on other 'negative tendencies' within Serbia, considering this to be an 'intervention in their internal affairs'. They expected Communists in the other Yugoslav republics (and two provinces) to reject any coalition with nationalists in the ranks of their nations. In this context, it was entirely understandable that the issue of Albanian nationalism was left to the Albanian Communists (predominantly in Kosovo), while the Serb Communists were expected to condemn, prevent and reduce the strength of Serbian nationalism. In addition to the already explained communist beliefs that the state should decentralise in the 'transitional period' in order to enable direct democracy ('self-management') to replace its main functions, the decision of the Serbian Communists to accept Kardelj's Constitutional proposals seemed perfectly logical.

In analysing the intra-Serbian dispute over what were Serbian interests and how they should be defended, I re-emphasise that the greatest political conflicts in Yugoslavia were for a long time neither inter-ethnic nor inter-republican, but about the vision of society and, therefore, ideological. To the majority on the Serbian Central Committee the Slovene Kardelj was much closer than the Serb Ćosić. Even more so, they preferred Kardelj, the architect of a loose structure of Yugoslavia, to Ćosić, the defender of the strong socialist and united Yugoslavia which developed before the dismissal of another Serb and Yugoslav - Aleksandar Ranković. Finally, they abruptly rejected Ćosić's argument that the Serbs had become unprotected and that the 'anti-Serbian' nationalism of the Croats, Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims and especially the Albanians was entering a dangerous phase. Instead, the Serbian leaders argued in favour of greater autonomy for Kosovo and Vojvodina, fully supporting further de-centralisation not only of Yugoslavia, but equally of Serbia itself.

Reading this today, one can only ask: how was this possible? But as we argue throughout this thesis, ex-post attempts to explain past actions tend to go wrong if they fail to understand the reasoning of the relevant actors within the relevant context. Within the discourse of Serbian nationalism, it is impossible to say anything else about this 'impossible' coalition of Serbian leaders and the Slovene Kardelj but that it was a 'betrayal' of national interests.<sup>101</sup> But in the discourse of the Communists of Serbia in the 1970s, the nationality of the political actors played a secondary role compared with ideological agreement. As Kardelj argued, it was 'the common vision of society', not ethnic similarities, that bound Yugoslavia together.

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<sup>101</sup> Ćosić says that the Serbian leaders were nothing but 'Tito's obedient servants' (1982/1992:58). In an interview conducted by me in April 1996, Antonije Isaković (a long-standing political and personal friend of Ćosić's) described the Serbian leaderships before Milošević as 'opportunists of the worst kind' and 'traitors to their own country'. These statements are still representative of the dominant discourse among Serbian nationalist intellectuals.



Unable to situate events in their context, the Serbian nationalist discourse today offers no other explanation of the 'pact' between the Serbian population and the Croat-Slovene Tito, its 'greatest enemy [of Serbia] in this century',<sup>102</sup> (as Dobrica Ćosić called him on the day of his death) but the one advanced by Ćosić himself in 1989. Speaking in Budva (Montenegro) immediately after Milošević's successful overthrow of the last Titoist leadership of the smallest Yugoslav republic, Ćosić concluded:

'The reasons for this [i.e., for Serbs supporting Tito] were not primarily political or objective, but anthropological; they may be found in the anthropological nucleus of our national being... In our *ethos*, there is an existential incapability of being rational when it comes to ourselves and the world in general, there is an inclination to self-destruction, a permanent tragedism in our historical existence.'

It was because of this 'tragedism' that the Serbs simply 'had no power to recognise the enemy', or to recognise them only too late (Ćosić, 1989/1992:246).<sup>103</sup>

Of course, Ćosić's explanation of Serbia's support for the 1974 Constitution in terms of 'anthropological' or ethno-genetic reasons falls short of any understanding of what really happened. But it is not only Ćosić who proves incapable of understanding how it was possible that Serbia accepted the 1974 Constitution. Those who try to explain the failure of Yugoslavia by the 'permanent ethnic hatred' argument exhibit the same failure. It is because of them that we should once again emphasise the main argument of this chapter: despite the internal divisions within the Serbian political elite and the conflicts which crossed ethnic and even republican lines in Yugoslavia, the Serbian elite in 1968 understood the Constitutional compromise as a reasonable framework for the realisation of Serbian national interests.

Further in this dissertation (and especially in Chapters Five and Six) we analyse why this changed.

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<sup>102</sup> This is how Ćosić describes Tito on the day of his death, 4 May 1980. Excerpts from Ćosić's diary (published in 1992) witness Ćosić's obsession with Tito and his alleged 'anti-Serbianism'. Although he admits re-editing his scripts in order to eliminate the most radical expressions, he still authorised this one. Ćosić's anti-Titoism is the key to understanding why he (and many other Serbian nationalists) supported Milošević. They saw him as 'the most successful destroyer of Tito's order, the fittest person to achieve Serbia's abandonment of a half-century long subordination to the anti-Serb coalition, a Communist who re-established the Serbian state which was annulled by the Serbian Communists, a politician who aroused the historical consciousness of millions of Serbs and who re-established Serbia as a political factor' (Ćosić, 1991/1992: 168). Ironically, Milošević tended to promote himself as the new Tito who would unite Yugoslavia (more in Chapter Six).

<sup>103</sup> A similar explanation is offered by Croatian nationalist Franjo Tuđman, the president of Croatia, when he says that the Croats lived in the dark-ages of Communism, without being aware of their national interests, all the way through to the establishment of his party – the Croatian Democratic Community in 1989. Ćosić and Tuđman, as well as Kardelj, are all 'visionaries' - all three of them had a mission of bringing light to the dark age that preceded their existence. To all of them, the real history of their nation began with them; everything else should be 'burnt' and forgotten. 'The future revolution in this country, over which Communists, Stalinists and Titoists ruled, ought to begin with the burning of their papers! The burning of all books, all texts and newspapers written by Communists under their governance... Our literacy must go back to the evangelism of Miroslav,' says Dobrica Ćosić (1982/1992:70). More on Ćosić's position in the 1980s in Chapter Six.

## Chapter Four:

# The Economic Crisis

## The (Lack of) Response of the Yugoslav Political Elite to Economic Crisis in the Early 1980s

The Party Presidency was a big problem to me, but at the same time, I knew I would not be able to operate without their support... In order to secure their support, I had to convince them that the market was not against self-management. I argued that the market was a limitation of state, the same as self-management. And that, therefore, they could go together, since they are both opposed to statism. The debate on this was going on and on for all four years of my term in office.

Milka Planinc, Yugoslav Prime Minister (1982-1986)  
Interviewed for this thesis, April 1998.

### 4.0. Introduction

The acceptance of Kardelj's concept by the Serbian leaders in the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate, I argued in the previous chapter, was the result of their commitment to Marxist ideology and of their perception of Serbian interests. In this Chapter, I follow the response of the Yugoslav political elite to economic crisis in the late 1970s and in the 1980s, arguing that the same two reasons – commitment to ideology and the perception of the interests of the various segments of society – motivated their actions. Communist societies, as I argued in Chapters One and Two, favoured a vision of the future rather than the imperatives of reality. Yet, their vision of the future was based on their perception of the interests of those they 'represented'. As Kardelj argued, it was not for reasons of ethnic similarity, but because of common interests in developing a self-managing community of nations that the Yugoslav nations decided to remain in Yugoslavia. The interests of the Yugoslav nations were not opposed to Marxist ideology: on the contrary, they could be best served only by following it.

The economic crisis, which began in the late 1970s, represented a serious challenge to the link between ideology and interests. Two groups emerged within the leadership: one (primarily in the Federal Government) argued in favour of a more pragmatic and less ideological approach, while the other (mostly linked to the Party leadership) remained committed to the ideology, even when the economic and political situation was causing concern among experts and foreign

observers. In this conflict, the 'ideologues' in the Party prevailed over the 'pragmatists' in the Government. Although they made a significant effort to accommodate the ideology to the circumstances in which they operated, in any serious clash between ideology and reality, the Communist leaders, as I argued in Chapter One and Two, ultimately favoured the vision of the future rather than the imperatives of reality. The Party as the *representative of the future* was, therefore, predestined to win over the Government, an institution of the state that would *wither away*.

For an observer who fails to recognise the importance of the ideological context in which political action was taking place, such an order of priorities makes little or no sense. The economic theory of stability argues that a *rational* actor would be more likely to prefer *interests* over *ideology*, and thus would introduce changes to the political system (i.e., the party in power) if the economy were failing. Those who followed Kardelj's concept would argue that only by following self-management would the economic interests of the workers be realised. Their main criticism of political action was directed at the *inefficient implementation* of the concept, not at the concept itself. Although the elites were genuinely concerned with the economic crisis in Yugoslavia, their confidence in the ideological vision of the world which they were attempting to construct blinded them to the economic and political reality and to the consequences of their actions in reality.

#### **4.1. Boalisation: Associated or Disintegrated Labour?**

The Yugoslav economic system was reconstructed following the main ideas of Kardelj's concept. Among the aims of the reform, normatively prescribed in the 1976 Associated Labour Act (ALA), were: (1) to enable workers even in large enterprises to take direct part in decision-making; (2) to enable workers to control not only the factories but also the whole 'social reproduction' and (3) to further decentralise the state by reducing its control over the economy and transferring many of its functions to 'workers' councils' and other alternative institutions. The ALA (consisting of 671 articles) was to replace the 'state constitution' once circumstances allowed it. It was, therefore, to even greater extent than the Constitution itself an ideological document. Its main ideas were in line with the idea of transforming society into an 'association of free producers'. *Associated labour* was imagined to be an integrative factor in the complex Yugoslav multi-ethnic society. It was also an alternative to Soviet *state socialism*, characterised by a larger role of the state in the economic sphere.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Speaking of this system in 1995, Ivan Stambolić said that its main idea ('however ideological') was an expression of an 'orientation that was not wrong: that before any party, state and before politics in general there was a 'world of labour'. 'To us [political leaders] it meant above all – basing ourselves in the 'world of labour', rather than basing our power on force and the authority of one political party' (Stambolić, 1995:45).

To enable workers to control the factories, the complex system of Yugoslav economy was divided into small functional units, the *Basic Organisations of Associated Labour* (BOALs, or in Serbo-Croat, OOUR). Although the BOALs could remain autonomous units (self-organised enterprises) in most cases they were too small to remain independent. Therefore, at least in theory, several BOALs 'associated' in one *Work Organisation*. A typical Work Organisation (RO) had three to four BOALs and one *Work Community* (RZ, administrative unit). The final forms of *associating* were the Complex Organisations of Associated Labour (COAL, SOUR), which sometimes had even more than hundred BOALs.

However, in practice, the organisational reform meant that the existing large enterprises were divided into smaller units. Four years after the declaration of the ALA, 94,415 BOALs were created in Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> In large enterprises, like, for example, the [Yugoslav] Post and Telecommunications (PTT), there was no less than 291 BOALs, 2 Work Organisations without BOALs, 26 Work Organisations with BOALs, 4 Work Communities or BOALs and 22 other Work Communities.<sup>3</sup> Even Air Traffic was organised in not less than 52 different units, 21 of which were BOALs.

Outside observers did not take long to realise, however, that instead of the development of *associated labour*, the Yugoslav economy was disintegrating and fragmenting. True, many more workers now became members of governing bodies in their own BOALs and COALs. But, instead of ruling the factories and the whole process of 'social reproduction', they participated in decision making only in their small units, not at any higher level. And the BOALs themselves were powerless to change the 'conditions of production'. Even if the workers formed a majority in these bodies, they often felt powerless and not competent to face the large amount of legal and economic decisions they were asked to take. They therefore leaned heavily on the 'techno-managers' and administration. Instead of the 'de-bureaucratisation of society', a sea of new regulations were issued in order to support and explained new structure.<sup>4</sup>

The new system was based on the ideological notion that the working class was pluralist within itself, but that its historical role remained an integrative factor for the various separate interests that could emerge within it. 'Social agreements' (*društveno dogovaranje*) between BOALs were

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<sup>2</sup> In Bosnia-Herzegovina, 16,207; Montenegro 1,813; Croatia 20,038; Macedonia 6,002; Slovenia 10,836; Serbia 35,519 out of which 12,846 in Vojvodina and 3,356 in Kosovo. *Statistički Bilten* 1286, SZS, Belgrade, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> *Statistički Bilten* 1986:22.

<sup>4</sup> Between 1,25 and 1,5 million directives, orders, contracts and other obligatory acts were enacted throughout the system in the first few post-Constitutional years (Bilandžić, 1986:39). The Croatian sociologist Letica calculated the costs of the new legislation to be equal to creating 150,000 new jobs. The Belgrade political scientist Goati says that by 1988, the Yugoslav political and economic life was directed by 8 million directives, laws and legal acts. Number of employees in administration increased 44.3% between 1972 and 1978 (1989:43).

promoted as the main instrument of potential conflict resolution. But instead of uniting to promote 'working class interests', the BOALs started to fight with each other to protect the small interests of their workers against those working in another BOAL of the same firm. In some factories the situation became so paradoxical that physical barriers were raised to separate workers in two BOALs.<sup>5</sup> A complex system of 'consensus' (unanimity decision-making requirement) made possible a situation where half of the workers in one BOAL practically vetoed thousands of other workers in their BOALs if they voted against the majority decision.<sup>6</sup> Since BOALs were the 'basic units' of decision-making in industry, the invention of Kardelj and Tito and also a symbol of working class power in socialist Yugoslavia, it was extremely difficult to over-rule their decisions. This was especially difficult at the state level, since in the ideological concept promoted by Kardelj, the state must follow, not obstruct the interests of the working class. In the end, the state would *wither away* at the end of the process. Workers' self-management was, therefore, institutionally protected to a level that the state was not. *Statism* was seen as the main obstacle to its further development (Kraigher, 1985:76).<sup>7</sup>

The whole idea, however, showed itself to be inefficient, expensive and disintegrative very soon after the first steps to implement it were taken. The Yugoslav system resulted in the creation of an autarkic and divided working class. It was not so much that the *Yugoslav* working class was now divided into *working classes of republics*<sup>8</sup> (this was already explained by Kardelj's notion of *completed nations* and Bakarić's of *national working classes*) but that not even within the Republics could the process of disintegration be terminated.

Still, the Republics were in a position to do much more about the re-integration of their economic systems than the Federation. In the end, they controlled their own Plans and therefore had the final say on issues of investment: all of them except Serbia. They had an additional motive to do so: fearing the *social pact* between Tito and the *working class* they were interested in satisfying the needs of 'their' workers in order to legitimise their own power.

Paradoxically, in order to prevent a total disintegration of the system and to preserve political power that was formally increasing but practically decreasing in the last years of Tito's life, the

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<sup>5</sup> Stambolić, 1995:46 and Čkrebić in *Politika*, 31 December 1985.

<sup>6</sup> Stambolić offers an example: 'Seven thousand workers voted for a decision on referendum, but the BOAL of the Catering Services voted 31 against and 29 for: because of these two votes, seven thousand workers could not realise their self-managing will' (Stambolić, 1995:44).

<sup>7</sup> This was, however, one among many controversies in the Kardeljist project. The states were to be replaced with self-management, but the statehood of republics was recognised in 1974. The way out of this paradox was found in the self-managing concept of the states, and in the 'new role of the party' which was theoretically directed at managing self-management. Even the politicians themselves, however, admitted this was an illusion.

<sup>8</sup> For example: the Assemblies of Republics and Provinces had their *Chamber of Associated Labour*, but the Yugoslav Assembly did not have such a chamber. Several proposals, mainly by the Serbian leaders, to form one were rejected always on the basis that there was no such thing as a *Yugoslav* (supra-national) working class.

republics aimed at centralisation within themselves while decentralising Yugoslavia as a federal state. This trend again found its support in the new understanding of the nationality question in Yugoslavia, which was expressed in the 1974 Constitution by which the republics became *sovereign states of their completed nations*.

The Yugoslav republics, being recognised as sovereign states, significantly reduced their mutual trade. While in 1970 - 59.6% of goods and services were traded within the republics in which they were produced, in 1980 this percentage rose to 69%. Only 21.7% of goods and services were exchanged between Yugoslav republics, while 9.3% went to foreign export. Not infrequently one republic imported goods which the other republic exported, paying, therefore, more for goods which already existed on the domestic market (Korošić, 1988:72). This, for example, happened with electricity: four regions with electric power production resources (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia proper and Kosovo) exported it, while another four (Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia and Vojvodina) imported it from neighbouring countries. Consequently, the price of electricity varied in 1983 from 89% of the Yugoslav average in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to 121.4% in Kosovo.<sup>9</sup> The same happened with other prices, which varied by 20% to 30% across the regions. Living standards, already several times lower in the under-developed regions of Yugoslavia, now additionally differed from region to region. Average salaries in Slovenia were in 1986 about 40% higher than the Yugoslav average, while in Macedonia they were 30.6% lower. The ratio was 1:2.02. The rent of state owned flats, for example, was in 1985 in Bosnia-Herzegovina 39.5% lower, and in Slovenia 76.8% higher than in Croatia.<sup>10</sup> Little was left of the Communist promise to reduce the differences between the 'poor' and 'rich' regions of socialist Yugoslavia. On the contrary, the differences were growing, which is evident from the following chart.

**Table 1: GDP in Republics and Provinces 1952-1989 (Index 100 = Yugoslavia's average)**

	1952	1962	1972	1982	1989	1989:1952
Slovenia	182	189	194	193	196	+ 14
Croatia	121	121	126	125	126	+ 5
Serbia (total)	93	92	90	91	92	- 1
Vojvodina	90	107	112	119	119	+ 29
Montenegro	88	70	74	76	74	- 14
Bosnia-Herzegovina	86	71	67	68	68	- 18
Macedonia	71	61	69	67	65	- 6
Kosovo	47	34	32	28	26	- 19
YUGOSLAVIA	100	100	100	100	100	

(Source: Vojnić, 1994:263)

<sup>9</sup> *Ekonomska politika*, 1691, 27 August 1984.

<sup>10</sup> *Danas*, 30 July 1985.

As demonstrated in this table, both the biggest winners and the biggest 'losers' of Yugoslav economic development were situated in Serbia, in its provinces. While Vojvodina was the only region of Yugoslavia that successfully transformed itself from an 'underdeveloped' (below the Yugoslav average) to a 'developed' area, the other Serbian province - Kosovo - even further decreased its economic level when compared with the other republics and Vojvodina. While in 1952 the ratio in GDP level between Kosovo and Slovenia was 1: 3.9, 30 years later, despite large investments in Kosovo, the ratio had doubled to 1:7.9. While Croatia and Slovenia (and especially Vojvodina) raised their level of development, all the others (and especially Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo) saw no relative improvement for themselves in Yugoslavia.

The growing gap between the developed and under-developed regions in Yugoslavia created a problem for an ideology that claimed there was no real equality between nations without economic equality. Not only did this process re-open the issue of economic exploitation but in fact presented the case described in Kardelj's warnings about the potential problems for national equality in Yugoslavia. Events were, however, following a different path from what Kardelj defined as necessary in the *transitional period*. The inability of the Yugoslav communists to reverse these trends produced a growing sense of inequality and economic exploitation in Yugoslavia. It further promoted a policy of 'protectionism' within the more developed republics, particularly Slovenia. Although there were no laws banning employees from other regions of Yugoslavia from moving and finding a job in Slovenia or Croatia they somehow increasingly felt unwanted in the more developed regions. 'Bosnians' ('Bosanci', a term used in the Slovenian colloquial vocabulary for 'Southerners', Serbo-Croat speaking manual workers in Slovenia) felt this in Slovenia, while the Kosovo Albanians had the same experience anywhere in Yugoslavia.<sup>11</sup> In a situation of economic crisis, and with increasing tendencies to 'autarky', the 'Southerners' became 'foreigners'. Gradually, the general public begun to recognise them as culturally, religiously, politically and ethnically *different*. The economic differences thus increasingly became social and political. The sense of exploitation and of undesirability was growing. Sticking with one's own republic, and in some cases (when, as in Kosovo and the underdeveloped regions of Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia, they were inhabited by a minority ethnic group) with one's own people, was a viable alternative. It was now more and more true that the anti-nationalist rhetoric of the regime was in sharp contrast with the results of the system built upon the same ideology. As in other areas of life, ideological rhetoric and reality were growing apart from one another.

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<sup>11</sup> For 'Bosnians' see Mežnarič (1986), for the social distance between Slovenes and Albanians see Kuzmanić (1989).

In the last years of Tito's life, the already low social mobility across the borders of republics decreased still more. In 1976 only 2.1 percent of Work Organisations had one or more BOALs in some other republic. But even such a small number fell to 1.5 percent in 1981 (Korošić, 1988:76). However, each republic had its own aluminium factory, dozens of tobacco factories, an electro-industry and car-factories, even when they had no basic conditions to make them productive. Many of these were actually 'political factories' - a pure expression of the political fears of being 'dependent' on others in Yugoslavia. Yugoslav industry, paradoxically, found it sometimes easier to co-operate with non-Yugoslavs than with partners in other republics. It seemed that fears of being dependent on others in Yugoslavia led Yugoslav republics to increase their dependency on international banks. This trend was also supported by the government's encouragement of exporters: they were now additionally looking for partners abroad, rather than within the country. But, the protectionist measures in Western Europe, as well as the low quality and high prices of the Yugoslav products, made this attempt fail. Many young unemployed people also found it easier and more promising to move to West European countries than to try to find jobs elsewhere in Yugoslavia.<sup>12</sup> This was also due to the fact that a student, for example, in Zagreb had more chances to learn English or German than Slovenian, Albanian or Macedonian, and to obtain a British scholarship than to be supported by the Yugoslav Federal Government for studying in Skopje (perhaps also because there was no federal ministry of education: education was a matter for the republics and provinces).<sup>13</sup> Not even federal officials (Army officers, custom officers, federal politicians and bureaucrats) spoke more than their own native language, unless this was not Serbo-Croat.<sup>14</sup> Both these under-developed, and these most developed now asked: what was then left of the equality of nations in practical terms? Was it all just a fiction, an unfulfilled promise? The economic crisis now provided a context in which the wider issues of the political system re-emerged in the 1980s.

## 4.2. Debating the Causes of the Crisis

The main question, however, is - what prevented the Yugoslav leaders from reacting to the growing problems of the economy in time? The main reason, I argue, is to be found in their commitment to Kardelj's concept. Not only that the ideological commitment provided a pre-

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<sup>12</sup> In October 1979, as many as 1,185,000 Yugoslavs lived in West European countries. Of these 695,000 were employed and 490,000 were dependants (including 250,000 school age children). In non-European countries, mostly in the USA, Australia and Canada, as well as in some Latin American countries there were about 300,000 people with Yugoslav passports. 62% of the Yugoslavs living in Europe were between 18 and 35 years of age. The largest part of them (about 240,000) were from Croatia. The large majority (70%) had no professional training. Among European countries, Germany had the largest number of Yugoslavs - in 1977 405,000 (RFE/RL, 18 October 1979). During the 1980s the Yugoslav workers held about 21 billion US dollars in Western banks, while only 1.2 billion went to Yugoslav banks.

<sup>13</sup> *Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije za 90/91*, 1991:599. It was not surprising, therefore, that in all the Yugoslav republics the number of students studying in their own republic was about 90%: in Bosnia-Herzegovina 88.4%, in Montenegro 91%, in Serbia 91.4%, in Croatia 91.5% in Macedonia 96.3% and in Slovenia 96.8%.

<sup>14</sup> This fact was used by ethnic nationalists (especially in Slovenia) to illustrate ethnic inequality in the late 1980s.



text from which reality was *read* in a specific way, but the elite also believed that economic problems were only the result of 'incomplete' or 'inadequate' implementation of Kardelj's concept in reality, not of the concept itself. They criticised *autarky* and *disintegration*, but it never occurred to them that both the *autarky* and *disintegration* were outcomes of the *self-managing* and *anti-statist* ideas and practices of the Kardelj constitutive concept itself.

Analysing reality from an ideological platform, it was difficult even to recognise that the Yugoslav economy was facing 'great difficulties'. The first to identify the problem were economists, not politicians. In the mid-1970s, they warned the Yugoslav politicians that three problems had appeared in full strength: 1) the low efficiency of Yugoslav industry; 2) a high rate of inflation and 3) high foreign debts (Korošić, 1988:55). When analysing how to respond to these three problems, Yugoslav economists found that this was rather difficult in the circumstances of economic fragmentation which had emerged since 1974.

Yugoslav economic experts offered two explanations for the causes of the crisis: one insisted on 'objective' causes, while the other criticised 'subjective' reasons for its occurrence.

Among the 'objective' causes of the crisis, the global economic problems of the 1970s were the most frequently mentioned. Between 1973 (with the global oil crises)<sup>15</sup> and 1981 Yugoslavia borrowed in foreign banks and institutions about 16,5 billion dollars. Its foreign debt thus increased from 4,663 to 21,096 billion US dollars. When its loans to other countries were deducted from this sum, there were still 19,511 billion US dollars of netto debt in 1981. Another unfortunate circumstance was that many short-term loans (amounting to more than 11 billion dollars) were taken up in the 1977-1980 period, when interest rates (for the loans taken out in the United States) rose from 5.5% to 16.8%. These short-term (five-years) loans were due to be repaid in the 1982-1985 period. The international oil crises and the increasing interest rates in the United States, as well as the prices of technology coming from the West European countries proved to have disastrous effects for a country which was rich neither in oil nor in technology. These 'objective' causes of the crises left Yugoslavia almost without any choice but to take ever more new loans in order to 'preserve some level of production and of income in order to satisfy basic needs and to return loans', as the Yugoslav Prime Minister Veselin Djuranović concluded in his 1985 analysis of the causes of economic crises (1985:207).

Among the 'subjective causes' of the problem, however, the de-centralisation of power and disintegration of the Yugoslav market were listed as two of the most important. Yugoslav

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<sup>15</sup> The damaging effect of the oil crisis for the Yugoslav economy may be illustrated by the fact that in three years between 1979 and 1981 Yugoslavia spent on oil imports annually 2,335 million US dollars (or more than 7 billion dollars in total) while in the three years before (between 1976 and 1978) the annual bill was on average 934 million dollars, thus 1,422 million dollars a year less (Djuranović, 1985: 208).

economists argued that these processes were the result of the 'subjective' decision of the Yugoslav political elite, which was based on ideological and not *economic* reasons. Until 1961 only the federal government had been authorised to decide on foreign loans. After 1961, however, the 'right to receive loans' was given first to specialised banks and after 1967 to work organisations as well. By 1975 the federal institutions had lost control over the amount and structure of foreign loans taken out by various economic subjects. After 1971, republics had full control over their economic plans, and they planned unrealistically. The notion of 'national economies', promoted firmly by the Croatian leader Vladimir Bakarić, was frequently quoted as an ideological justification for this. In practical terms, the decentralisation of the country, following the 1974 Constitution, was the real cause of the Yugoslav economic disintegration. The Yugoslav economists pointed out that the federal government warned the republics in 1975 to be cautious about foreign debts, but in vain (Kraigher, 1985:201). Kardelj even mentioned 'the Chilean scenario' as a possible dangerous outcome of the situation in which 'no other solution would be possible as result of the high inflation, low living standards and anarchic situation in the country' but the reintroduction of 'firm hand' governance.<sup>16</sup> But, the interests of the republics and provinces in continuing their 'autarkic' roads were so strong, that in the Social Plan for 1976-1980 they only sanctioned each others' megalomaniac investments. Tito was still there, but he was rather hesitant to stop what looked like a great prospect for a new boom of the Yugoslav economy. While evidently worried about the political situation in the country and especially in the Party by the end of his life, the ageing leader proudly announced great economic successes of the Yugoslav economy in his last address to the LCY Congress in 1978.<sup>17</sup> The biggest problem, however, was again in the irreconcilable controversy between the ideological background and demands for re-centralisation. How could the fragmentation of the Yugoslav economic system be stopped without re-centralisation? Kardelj and his successors found it simply impossible to answer this question. Nobody wanted re-centralisation, which would reverse the achieved level of autonomy both of *constitutive nations* in their *republics*, and of the *self-managers* in their BOALs. Yet, without such a re-centralisation, how could one stop the negative trends of *autarky* and *anarchy*?

In all these years, the economic situation in the country was becoming worse. In 1965, 73.8% of Yugoslav imports were covered by exports, while in 1979 this share decreased to only 55.9% (Djuranović, 1985:214). The country's dependency on the import of electrical power increased from 30% in 1970 to 42% in 1979 (Djuranović, 1985:215). At the same time, people spent eight

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<sup>16</sup> Several years later, Slobodan Milošević used the same argument in his fight against 'anarchy'. He proclaimed he was in fact fighting against the 'strong hand' (re-centralisation with elements of Soviet socialism) which would be the logical result of 'anarchism' and fragmentation of the Yugoslav economic and political system. More on this in Chapter Six.

<sup>17</sup> As described by Tepavac (1997) and Perović (1991) and explained in Chapter Three, Tito tried to avoid conflicts with other politicians. Since 1972, he tried to please local leaders by accepting almost all proposals which did not endanger his personal position. The economy, for which he did not have much interest, was the area in which he could accept many compromises without many problems.

percent more in money terms than they produced. Public investments were growing fast. Between 1974 and 1978 the annual investment rate grew by 12.7% each year. The share of investments in the total social product rose from 29% in 1974 to 40% in 1978. The wave of investments spread all over the country. Since decisions were taken by the political leadership, or 'in close links between the inner circles of the political elite and commercial banks' (Djuranović, 1985:220), even insolvent enterprises started investing. The 'investomania' characterised the Yugoslav economy throughout the last years of Tito's life. The reason for this could also be found in ideology. Yugoslav society, after finally finding the *golden key* of social development, had to prove its successes in economic terms as well. Additionally, the new leaders of the republics now wanted to demonstrate that the 'federal centralism' they were finally being freed from, really was the main obstacle to the rapid development of their own republics and provinces, and that the ousted pre-1972 leaders were not only politically but also in economic terms inferior to them.<sup>18</sup> For various reasons (such as the wish to modernise the economy, to show the advantages of de-centralisation, and to reach the level of the more developed regions; to demonstrate that Yugoslav socialism was economically successful, etc.) a new wave of investments was launched in the late 1970s. The 'autarkic tendencies', boosted by the 1974 constitutional arrangements, now significantly contributed to an intensive and (from an economic point of view) irrational increase of foreign debts in the second half of the 1970s as well as to high inflation in Yugoslavia during the 1980s (Kraigher, 1983/1985:201-3). In 1978 there were 40,000 new projects in which investments were made.<sup>19</sup> Decisions on them were in many cases informal, taken by the political leadership at various levels and not by the self-managing organs in BOALs or COALs. But everyone was happy to see libraries, factories, television centres, hotels and roads built, not asking where the money came from. The Party Congress in 1978, therefore, concluded in a very optimistic tone, rejecting any notion of crisis. This was Tito's last Congress, and even if they were aware of the problems,<sup>20</sup> the leaders would have hesitated to make them public in such a situation.

### 4.3. Government and Economists vs. Party Leadership and Republican Leaders

The first segment of the political elite that recognised the problem was the one that was directly involved in economic policy – the Yugoslav Government (Federal Executive Council, FEC). In a

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<sup>18</sup> This was particularly important in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia where the replaced leaders had placed great stress on economic issues. Especially in Croatia, where the ousted leader of the CC LC Croatia – Savka Dabčević Kučar – was a professor of economics.

<sup>19</sup> *XI Congress of the LCY: Documents*. It was not before 1984 that the Federal Assembly managed to suspend the investments projected by the 1981-1986 Social Plan.

<sup>20</sup> That they were aware of them was shown, for example, at the joint session of the Party and State Presidency with the presidents of republics and provinces in November 1979. The top leadership debated the 'threats of further deterioration' (RFE/RL, 30 November 1979).

communist society, the Government was no more than an *economic council* and thus had a secondary role to the ideological headquarters – the Party leadership. Being in everyday contact with the economic data and facts of economic life, the Yugoslav Prime Minister (FEC President) Veselin Djuranović (1977-1982, Montenegro) warned in the late 1970s that the ‘objective’ causes of the world oil crises left Yugoslavia almost without any choice but to take loans in order to ‘preserve some level of production and of income in order to satisfy basic needs and to return loans’ (Djuranović, 1985:207). In a later account of the causes of the economic crisis, Djuranović admitted that many ‘subjective’ causes, originating from domestic policy, had contributed to it. The Yugoslav economy was ‘autarkic, inefficient and inflexible, with a long-standing orientation towards the domestic market and not exports, with an ever growing level of dependency on imports and with a permanent and significant trade deficit’. For all these reasons, Djuranović argued, the Yugoslav economy was simply incapable of resolving the problems which had occurred as a result of the international oil crisis (1985:207).

In an attempt to reverse these negative trends, the FEC (advised by its economic experts) proposed a much more realistic approach to investment in the 1980-1985 plan. But, although speaking with Tito’s full support (in 1979), the Federal Prime Minister Djuranović was not able to persuade the members of the Yugoslav Assembly to accept his government’s measures for strict austerity.<sup>21</sup> The Federal Government had no choice but to withdraw in front of the ‘sovereign’ republican elite and their unrealistic ideas.

The Prime Minister then proposed the devaluation of the *dinar* in order to support exports. But Tito, who was particularly sensitive on the issue of the national currency for symbolical reasons, rejected this demand.<sup>22</sup> Djuranović then simply had no alternative but to raise inflation by printing money which was lacking both for investments and for returning the foreign loans which were already due to be repaid. In the four years between 1977 and 1981 capital was ‘artificially’ created by printing 350 million dinars, said Ivo Perišin, the Chairman of the Federal Advisory Board for Economic Development, in June 1981.<sup>23</sup>

The economic crisis, however, could not be hidden from the general public. In the late 1970s the Government introduced reductions in the electrical supply to households. The import of tropical fruits, coffee, washing powder and chocolate was reduced, which caused the first queues on the streets of Yugoslavia. In May 1979 Djuranović introduced restrictions on car use

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<sup>21</sup> RFE/RL 28 December 1979.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Dušan Bilandžić in December 1995.

<sup>23</sup> RFE/RL, 30 June 1981. Perišin was against the ‘revival of any unitarism’ and centralism while favouring a ‘unified Yugoslav market’.

and increased petrol prices in the country.<sup>24</sup> The 'ordinary man in the street' in Yugoslavia now for the first time after the short post-war period experienced restrictions on his consumerism. This was a serious political challenge to the regime, which was very much based on the consumerist culture. The Yugoslavs, who tended to believe that their living standards, much higher than those of other people living in Communist countries, were the product of their better work and of their unique self-managing system, which managed people's needs better than Soviet 'administrative socialism', wondered what had happened. As a reaction, shopping abroad, in the neighbouring countries of Austria and Italy, increased. In 1979 every second Yugoslav citizen travelled abroad at least once, while in all they crossed the border 24 million times. About 2 billion dollars were spent in these 'shopping tours' in that year.<sup>25</sup> This became an additional problem for the reputation of the country. While more than one million of its workers already worked in the West, an additional 12 million people buying soap-powder and coffee in Austria and Italy did not promote a good image of Yugoslav socialism.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, both measures helped the regime to dissipate potential revolt in the country.

When Tito died in May 1980, Djuranović took a new initiative to alert the leaders. On 6 June 1980, only 32 days after Tito's death, he devalued the Yugoslav dinar by 30 percent.<sup>27</sup> On 2 July 1980 he presented a report to the National Assembly meeting admitting a number of serious 'economic difficulties' threatening to weaken the stability of Yugoslavia. With an openness which - as the Western reporters noticed - went 'beyond anything taking place in the other communist countries',<sup>28</sup> Djuranović detected the basic causes of these difficulties in 'insufficient economic motivation and a highly buoyant domestic market, which has discouraged exports while stimulating imports; [in] unrealistic development ambitions, which could not be satisfied by raising indebtedness abroad; and [in] inconsistent and inadequate application of some systematic solutions in this sphere'. He announced 'radical measures' to accompany the devaluation of the dinar.

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<sup>24</sup> RFE/RL, 30 April 1979.

<sup>25</sup> The regime significantly liberalised regulations for travelling abroad: out of 2.4 million applicants for passports in 1979, 'only' 26 thousand applications were rejected, while 1,644 people were compelled to return their passports (RFE/RL, 26 September 1980).

<sup>26</sup> This was stopped by the 'Deposit Law' introduced in October 1982, after which Yugoslavs travelling abroad had to have a deposit of 5,000 dinars in their bank account. Total travel abroad decreased in the month after introducing this measure by 69%. Travel to Italy decreased by 93%, to Greece by 94%, and to Austria by 42% (RFE/RL, 11 March 1983).

<sup>27</sup> This was the fourth devaluation of the Yugoslav dinar: in 1961 it lost 20 percent of its value, in 1965 15%, in 1971 - 26.5% and in 1980 - 30%. Its positive effects could be seen in a 32% increase in exports and only 7% in imports in 1980. As a result, the trade balance deficit decreased by 15% compared with 1979. But the devaluation of the currency alone could not bring any further effects without being supported by other measures, on which no agreement could be reached. (RFE/RL, 29 January 1981).

<sup>28</sup> RFE/RL, 7 July 1980.

Djuranović did not, of course, touch upon Tito's personal responsibility for the 'economic difficulties'. But in his next public speech in November 1980 he made it clear that 'there were dilemmas and hesitations earlier, and this was precisely one of the basic causes of the problems which have finally led us into such an unfavourable economic situation.'<sup>29</sup> Djuranović's statements and actions were indeed the first sign of a 'new policy', which thus appeared surprisingly soon after Tito's death.

The 'silent rehabilitation' of Kiro Gligorov,<sup>30</sup> the creator of the 1965 economic reforms, who disappeared from the public scene when his term in office as Federal Assembly President ended in 1978, was another indication of the 'new economic policy'. In June 1980, Gligorov reappeared as the foremost critic of the 'subjective causes' of the Yugoslav 'economic difficulties'. The existing problems, Gligorov argued, were only partially influenced by the international economic crisis. On the contrary, the crisis originated 'from our domestic difficulties and contradictions'. In his interview with Nin in June 1980, Gligorov said that 'in the past, some people claimed we would solve our difficulties in a relatively easy manner, that no great sacrifices were needed, sacrifices which would inflict only harm and demoralize our workers.' He argued in favour of 'radical measures', which would carry out 'a revision of all currents of our economic life and do so at all significant points'.<sup>31</sup>

Gligorov's criticism was even sharper in November 1980. The present 'difficulties' stem, he said, directly 'from suppressing market laws and operating in a subjectivist way in which social and economic goals and plans were formulated not on the basis of our realistic possibilities, but rather from what our socialist society would like to achieve'. The economic problems were, in other words, a consequence of 'forgetting realities in Yugoslavia'.<sup>32</sup> The main Yugoslav economic experts, such as the Croatian Professor Marijan Korošić supported Gligorov and Djuranović. Already in June 1980, Korošić demanded the introduction of 'energetic measures and even shock therapy'. These measures should aim to 'change economic policy radically'.<sup>33</sup>

However, the warnings of Djuranović, Gligorov and Korošić did not disturb regional leaders. In November 1980 they simply carried on with the 1981-1985 Social Plan, as if almost nothing had happened. In July 1981 they basically ignored a letter of the State Presidency to the Federal Assembly, in which the state leadership insisted that foreign credits could be taken out only to

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<sup>29</sup> RFE/RL, 2 December 1980.

<sup>30</sup> Gligorov was the main creator of the 1965 economic reforms, one of the main economic advisers to Sergej Kraigher and later to Ante Marković. Between 1990 and 1999 the president of Macedonia.

<sup>31</sup> RFE/RL, 7 July 1980.

<sup>32</sup> RFE/RL, 20 November 1980.

<sup>33</sup> RFE/RL, 7 July 1980.

boost exports and improve the country's balance of payments'.<sup>34</sup> In September 1981 they turned a blind eye to the warning of Dobroslav Ćulafić (Montenegro), a member of the Yugoslav Party Presidency, that 'the greatest part of the leadership, of the organisations, and the members of the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia up to the present day were not able to understand or to accept the fact that our country is undergoing great economic difficulties.'<sup>35</sup> They acted as they publicly 'swore' when Tito died: as if nothing at all would change after his death.

It is in fact striking and not entirely clear how it was possible that the federal leaders used such strong rhetoric of 'radical changes' while the republics they represented in the federal leadership acted in a different manner. Even more striking was the fact that the republican leaders (with some exceptions) did not publicly disagree with this rhetoric. What was then the 'invisible' obstacle to the implementation of the changes? The federal leaders kept talking about 'unnamed' obstacles, addressing 'everybody' and nobody. They argued against the 'bureaucracy', as if they were not in charge of it. They were critical of 'autarkic tendencies' as if they had no control over the republics they represented in the federation. They complained of 'investomania' without doing much to stop it. Who were they in fact directing their complaints against?

In an interview I conducted with Milka Planinc, who in June 1982 succeeded Veselin Djuranović as the Yugoslav Prime Minister, she said:

'The Party was the main obstacle. They indulged themselves in laments about the ideological and political situation, about the enemies of socialism, etc. They always tried to find reasons against fundamental economic reforms because they were sceptical about the market. On the other hand, I was responsible for the economic situation and I tried to find quick and efficient ways to improve it. The Party Presidency was a big problem to me, but at the same time, I knew I would not be able to operate without their support. They controlled the votes in the Federal Assembly, and in all the republics and provinces. In order to secure their support, I had to convince them that the market was not against self-management. I argued that the market was a limitation on the state, the same as self-management. And that, therefore, the market and self-management could go together, since they were both opposed to statism. The debate on this was going on and on for all the four years of my term in office.'

Planinc's assessment of the main conflicts within the leadership confirms that the main lines of division were not ethnic, and not even strictly between republics, although – as Planinc admits – the divisions were often between *the developed* and the *under-developed*. The main conflict was between the *ideological* and *pragmatic* approach within the Yugoslav political elite. It was because they lost the battle for a more pragmatic approach to politics, that the four successive

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<sup>34</sup> RFE/RL, 6 July 1981.

<sup>35</sup> RFE/RL, 15 October 1981.

Yugoslav Prime Ministers in the analysed period (Djuranović 1977-1982, Planinc 1982-1986, Mikulić 1986-1988 and Marković 1988-1991) left politics disappointed and disillusioned about the prospects of Yugoslavia.

'The Party was supposed to be a cohesive force, but by then (1982) it had become, on the contrary, the main source of conflicts and conservatism in Yugoslav society. In Tito's time, changes were still possible, if Tito was convinced they were necessary. But, after him, it was much more difficult. There was no money any more to satisfy everyone's needs. And the Federal Government had no instruments on its own to run affairs. It had to rely upon the republics, upon the Federal Presidency, and the Party Presidency. When members of the Party leaderships became the main defenders of their own republics, Yugoslav cohesion became impossible', says Planinc.

Paradoxically, it was the main promoter of 'national economies', the Croatian leader Vladimir Bakarić, who proposed Milka Planinc for the post of Prime Minister in 1982, in order to stop Djuranović's attempts to 'centralise' the Yugoslav economy. Milka Planinc, who between 1972 and 1982 held the post of the Croatian Party President, was a Party appointee. But, once in the office of Federal Prime Minister, it did not take long before she changed into a promoter of the market economy and Yugoslav economic unity.

'When a person holds this office, she/he changes a lot. This happened to me, but also to my successor Branko Mikulić [Bosnia-Herzegovina]. All the way through, as a member of the Federal Presidency, he was my hardest critic. During the 1984-1986 period, there was no session of the Federal Presidency at which he would not criticise my policy, demanding administrative regulation, state intervention and the suspension of the market. But, when he became the Prime Minister in 1986, he needed only one year to change his position and to become even more radical than I was. Only when one faces the pressure from the republics, from abroad, from your colleagues in the Party, only then can one appreciate the real difficulty of the situation'.<sup>36</sup>

However, while all four Yugoslav Prime Ministers in the post-Tito period (Djuranović, Planinc, Mikulić, Marković) changed their ideological position for a more pragmatic one, the Party leadership remained committed to Kardelj's concept. Although they tried to 'reform' the system from within, the Federal Government had no courage to face the real problems: political provisions, ideological barriers and the habits produced by them. Although dependent on the republics and provinces, as well as on the Party leadership, the Government showed substantial independence from them. But it did not make the last step: to challenge the political system which made 'radical changes' impossible. A programme of economic stabilisation conceived under the slogan 'economic reforms yes, political reforms no', said Josip Županov, 'simply could not yield any serious results, because it was attempting to deal with the consequences

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<sup>36</sup> In an interview for this thesis, Jure Bilić, the Croatian representative in the LCY Presidency (1982-1986) said Milka Planinc was promoted by Bakarić, but soon she started playing her own game, mostly because Bakarić died in February 1983. 'She ended up on the opposite side from what Bakarić expected.' Bakarić's widow, Marija, whom I interviewed in Summer 1983, praised Milka Planinc for her role in Croatian and Yugoslav politics.



rather than the causes of the crisis.’<sup>37</sup> And the cause of the problem was in the political system. The confederalised system of ‘consensus policy’ was described by Korošić (1988:68):

‘Only those changes which satisfied [all] political interests were generated. The result was that there were no fundamental changes. Every group of interests was capable of blocking a reform. This was because the economic results were not, in fact, what mattered: they were taken into account only incidentally, as an excuse for changes if and when [politicians] had already accepted them. In other words, the political system dominated over economic rationale; its aims were decisive, while the economy remained subordinated and unimportant. Since the resistance to political changes was even growing, the economic system was waiting in line. At the same time, the rest of the world was marching at a fast pace out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’ (Korošić, 1988:68).

Not only did ideological obstacles prevent any ‘radical change’, but institutions were set up to stop it. Djuranović’s position was so weak by July 1981 that the international commentators wrote: ‘Had it been possible for the members of the two chambers of the Yugoslav National Assembly... to have held a vote of confidence, Djuranović would have been defeated immediately.’<sup>38</sup> He ended his mandate in June 1982 marginalised and unpopular. However, soon it was proved that his successors in the office of Federal Prime Minister had every reason to envy him: they were publicly criticised (Milka Planinc in 1985), forced to resign (Branko Mikulić in 1988) and rendered non-existent in a political (and almost a physical) way (Ante Marković in 1991). They all faced the same opponents.

#### 4.4. The International Factors

In her book *Balkan Tragedy*, Susan Woodward argues that the foreign influence on what happened in Yugoslavia was enormous and started with the IMF intervention in 1982-1983. In her analysis, Woodward identifies the Western financial pressure on Yugoslavia as damaging for the stability of the country. Indeed, the IMF intervention in the Yugoslav economy was of great significance. But, taking into account the context of internal conflicts within the elite, one can conclude that the IMF intervention may have had ambivalent, rather than exclusively negative consequences.

Had there been no obligation to repay foreign loans, the *status quo* would have certainly prevailed over any attempt to reform the economic system. The resolution of the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY

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<sup>37</sup> In his 1985 interview, Županov said that ‘every prolongation of the crisis would lead to the disintegration of the country’s economic and political systems’ and that ‘no one in the world is prepared to give up a monopoly of power if he is not forced to’ (RFE/RL, 22 April 1985).

<sup>38</sup> Slobodan Stanković: ‘Yugoslav Government Under Domestic Fire’, RFE/RL, 16 July 1981. Djuranović simply did not want to discuss issues with the members of Parliament, claiming that his report on economic failures had been directed at ‘some other people’ who ‘were well known – they were the people who really made decisions, who could be found at all levels, and who of late have made the federal government the chief target of their attacks’. Djuranović meant republican leaders and ideologues within the Federal Party leadership.

Congress in 1982 still talked about 'acute problems and contradictions'<sup>39</sup> although even members of the State Presidency agreed that the situation was 'dramatic' and needed an urgent and systematic response. But, in 1982 the loans came up for repayment, and the republics suddenly realised that they were simply not capable of doing this.

Croatia, whose level of investments was (largely due to political reasons) the highest in the country, was now the first republic to face the wall of bankruptcy. 'If Croatia is not helped by the other republics, it will not get out of its present economic crisis', declared Croatian top politician Jure Bilić at the CC LCY session in October 1982.<sup>40</sup> He said that without such help, 'Croatia would be compelled to take new foreign credits, or would be threatened by a the complete halt of its whole economy.'<sup>41</sup>

At the same time, the International Monetary Fund demanded federal guarantees for the repayment of the loans. The Planinc government reacted to this not only by introducing new measures of austerity, but also by proposing a tight control over foreign currency. Planinc saw this as her chance to win the support of the republics and provinces, at a time when it had become unavoidable to introduce some economic reforms. A year earlier, in May 1982 a new law was proposed with the effect of centralising foreign currency earnings in the country. The law was meant to reduce the almost unlimited rights of BOALs and Work Organisations to dispose of foreign currency earnings as they pleased. But, the Slovenian leadership reacted most sharply to this idea. Andrej Marinc, the newly elected President of the Slovenian Party Central Committee, said that this proposal 'contradicted some of the very foundations of the system of socialist self-management, and was against the position of workers in associated labour and against the constitutional system'.<sup>42</sup> Vojvodina also objected to this 'ideologically and politically unacceptable centralisation'. These regions in the end forced the federal government into a compromise: the law was withdrawn, and only a partial centralisation was imposed by Government decree for a period of one year only.

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<sup>39</sup> 'LCY Tasks in the Realization of the Economic Stabilization Policy', Resolution of the Twelfth Congress of the LCY (1983:165).

<sup>40</sup> Croatian post-1971 leaders (including Milka Planinc, the President of the Croatian League of Communists) were the most outspoken advocates of the policy of high investment, by which they wanted to demonstrate their care for Croatian real (economic and political) interests. In 1983, Croatia faced debt to foreign creditors of 3 billion US\$. As a consequence of the restrictions introduced by the new federal government, the GDP in Croatia decreased 3,7% in 1983 when compared with 1981, while imports fell by 30.4% and export by 5.6%. The investment rate fell by 27%. As a consequence, the foreign currency income decreased by 28.1%, while unemployment increased by 24.9% (from 96,000 in 1981 to 124,000 in 1985 - or from 4.5% to 5.8%). At the same time, in these two years prices increased 82.9% (IP CKSKH, 1/1986:13-15).

<sup>41</sup> RFE/RL, 12 October 1982.

<sup>42</sup> RFE/RL, 26 May 1982.

But the situation was different after IMF pressure. In July 1983 the federal government finally succeeded in breaking through the barrier of separate republican interests. It looked as if the marathon session of the Federal Assembly on 2 and 3 July 1983 should have in this respect been considered as 'a turning point in the country's modern history' and 'a beginning of the real post-Tito era' (as the RFE/RL commentator said immediately after it).<sup>43</sup> Milka Planinc demanded from the Federal Parliament the approval of several laws written in co-operation with the IMF, which aimed at making the Yugoslav state, its federal bank and its government guarantee all the credits received by the various Yugoslav institutions. To the shocked delegates of the Federal Assembly, the Federal Prime Minister openly declared that Yugoslavia 'would not be able, even with the greatest effort, to repay the debts falling due in 1983', and that 'unless we find other possible means, we are without any doubt in a situation in which we will have to proclaim a moratorium and embark on a general rescheduling of our debts to foreign countries'. The 'other possible means' were presented through legislation proposed by the Federal Government and backed by the IMF. 'We had to accept these conditions,' Planinc said, precisely because 'owing to our earlier conduct and even our conduct this year, owing to a lack of discipline in repaying our foreign debts ... our negotiating position was very weak. For this reason, we had to accept the provision that the National Bank of Yugoslavia should be not merely a guarantor but also a direct debtor and that the SFRY should guarantee all the credits it received.'<sup>44</sup>

Pushed into a corner by the threat of the resignation of the federal government and faced with a 'moratorium' which would include immediate confiscation of all Yugoslav property abroad, the delegates accepted the laws. But the opposition to 'radical reform' was stronger than ever. Not only some republican leaders, but also many Veterans' organisations throughout the country opposed it for different reasons. The Veterans, as well as a large part of the Yugoslav Army, saw in the IMF a representative of Western Capitalism that had seriously undermined Yugoslav independence. Sergej Kraigher, a member of the Yugoslav Presidency (representing Slovenia), who was in charge of economic reforms, had to justify the IMF-backed legislation to members of the Army General Staff on 29 July 1983. His message was simple: there was no alternative.

'Analysis has shown that if the International Monetary Fund denied us [financial] resources, and without loans from foreign banks, production would fall by 15 to 20 percent. This means that we would no longer be capable of sustaining the level of employment as it is, and especially - we could not create new jobs' (Kraigher, 1983/1985:192).

And all this happened less than three years after Tito's death, at a time of high ethnic tension in Kosovo, following the 1981 unrest. Watching the TV news from Poland, the Yugoslavs could

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<sup>43</sup> RFE/RL, 21 July 1983.

<sup>44</sup> RFE/RL, 13 July 1983.

not avoid comparison with another deeply indebted country, in which political unrest had led to martial law in December 1981.<sup>45</sup> The Yugoslav leaders were urged to act quickly and resolutely in order to reach a solution. But they were 'willing hostages' of their own constitutional provisions and ideological beliefs, indecisiveness and megalomaniac ambitions, especially at the regional and local levels. They also feared losing control over their own republic/province's 'inner affairs' and thus opposed any significant re-centralisation of Yugoslavia.

After decades in which GDP growth was among the highest in Europe, Yugoslavia entered a period of stagnation which resulted in 0.6 percent GDP growth between 1981 and 1989, compared with 5.6 percent in 1976-1980 and 5.9 percent in 1971-1975.<sup>46</sup> But, even in this situation a large number of political leaders were not willing to change their positions. They did not publicly oppose, but actively obstructed any implementation of measures aimed at the re-integration of the Yugoslav economy. Ideological commitment to Kardelj's doctrine, as well as more pragmatic reasons linked to their own republics and provinces – their own 'electoral units' – were much more important than economic results.

Despite the declarative support they offered to Djuranović's and Planinc's 'radical measures', when the 1984 budget came to be discussed in the same Assembly four months later, the republics and provinces opposed every single measure aimed at further reform of the economic system. A 'radical reform' was simply impossible. The Yugoslav Finance Minister Joze Florijančič (Slovenia) resigned in protest against this stalemate. Florijančič's resignation was motivated by the still chaotic situation in the foreign currency market, because of which 700 million dollars were lost in 1983 alone.<sup>47</sup> Although a Slovene himself, Florijančič did not want to compromise on these issues. For this he felt under strong pressure from his own republic, as a result of which he left politics and withdrew to business.

For the same reasons Milka Planinc offered her resignation to the Federal Party Presidency.

'They all looked at me suspiciously, many convinced I was an IMF *spy* in their ranks. I publicly said that the IMF initiative was welcome, because many people at home were against reforms. I had in mind the LCY leadership, although – of course – I did not say

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<sup>45</sup> The Party Central Committee discussed the Polish events at its session in July 1983. The main lesson drawn by the President of the LCY Presidency Dušan Dragosavac was 'that our political system of direct socialist democracy should be consistently developed', since the Polish crisis was a result of 'the bureaucratic-technocratic system, which had squeezed the Polish working class onto the periphery'. However, 'we can only support a socialist Poland' and not a 'bourgeois-clerical and Catholic-nationalist' one, claimed Yugoslav Communists. On Dragosavac's position on the Polish crisis see the interview with him, quoted in Chapter Five.

<sup>46</sup> The highest GDP growth was realised in 1957-1960: 11.3%.

<sup>47</sup> The RFE/RL report described the chaos in the following words: 'Many enterprises, in order to acquire foreign currency, sold their products abroad at reduced prices while later other enterprises imported these same products at much higher prices' (29 December 1983).

this explicitly. But they knew whom I was criticising. Another incident occurred when I told the IMF representatives that I appreciated their efforts because this was exactly the same direction as the one proposed by my government. The Party Presidency was so angry that they almost formed a separate commission to discuss my words. When I offered my resignation in 1983, the President of the Party Presidency Ali Shukrija said there was no need to discuss it, since I was only a member of the Central Committee, and only the CC should discuss it, not the Presidency. Only because of the scandal this would produce did they decide not to accept it. But when I resigned again in 1985, they agreed, asking me to remain a care-taker until the end of the normal term in office, the following year.'

The inadequate reaction of the Yugoslav Party leadership to Planinc's initiatives urged Marijan Korošić to conclude:

'The bureaucrats have taken the programme of stabilisation into their own hands, interpreting it in their own way... I was optimistic in July, when the government announced radical changes, but am not any longer. Everything seems to be reduced to only 'cosmetic corrections'... Because of ideological disunity in preparing changes in the economic system... everything has resulted in no changes at all.'<sup>48</sup>

Contrary to Woodward's conclusion, therefore, the IMF initiative was in fact welcomed by the reformers within the Yugoslav political elite. Furthermore, at some point it looked as if they could use it in the internal struggle against the conservatives. However, it is perhaps fair to say that Milka Planinc did not realise how far reaching political changes would be, had they been really launched at that time. In her 1998 interview for this thesis, she complained about the deadlines imposed by the IMF on her government:

'Our main problem with the IMF was the tight deadlines they wanted us to follow. What they asked us to do in three years, we could have done in ten years without a problem. But they insisted on short deadlines.'

The IMF intervention, therefore, can only partially be blamed as a factor in Yugoslav disintegration. Although the pressure on the Yugoslav economy narrowed its ability to satisfy all groups competing for political power and therefore provoked further conflicts, it did not in fact much move the Yugoslav political elite, which was still committed to Kardelj's concept.

#### **4.5. The Response of the Elite: Kraigher's Programme of Stabilisation**

The unwillingness of the elite to accept significant changes was obvious in the 1,500 pages long Programme of Economic Stabilisation (not reforms!), which was, after two years of debate, formulated by the federal leadership.<sup>49</sup> Kraigher's proposal, as the Programme was named after

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<sup>48</sup> *Nin*, 27 November 1983.

<sup>49</sup> In 1981 the Federal Social Council established a Commission for Questions of Economic Stabilisation, which was chaired by Kraigher. Over the next two years, the Kraigher Commission involved or consulted about 350 leading

its main author, the Slovenian representative in the Federal State Presidency, was just another 'feasible' compromise subject to various possibilities of interpretation. Here are the main points of Kraigher's views, as expressed in his speeches between 1980 and 1985, and in two interviews I had with him in January 1986 and February 1988 respectively.<sup>50</sup> Since Kraigher's programme was accepted as an official document of the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress in 1982 and on several later occasions by the LCY Central Committee, the Yugoslav Presidency and Assembly, one can safely assume that his views represented the dominant discourse of the Yugoslav political elite in response to the economic crisis in the early 1980s.

Firstly, Yugoslavia remained committed to self-management, to which there was 'no real alternative' either in 'liberalism' or in 'state socialism' (Kraigher: 1982/1985:104 and 1983/1985:209).<sup>51</sup> Kraigher opposed 'Keynesianism and monetarism' (1983/1985:180,211), the two economic doctrines that had proved 'incapable of solving the economic problems of modern Capitalism' (1981/1985:66, 1983/1985:260-1). In a surprisingly ideological rhetoric for the 1980s, Kraigher argued that 'the general crisis of Capitalism was deeper than ever, and with no viable prospect of being resolved' (1981/1985:66). Although it was widely perceived that, historically, the self-management project was a reaction to Stalinism after 1948, its renaissance after 1971 Kraigher saw as a response to growing 'liberal tendencies' in Yugoslav society. The re-emergence of self-management in its present form Kraigher saw as the alternative to the 'techno-managerial' and 'liberal' tendencies of the purged republican leaders (in the 1971-72 period), especially in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia (1983/1985:194). But, these forces (*liberals* and *techno-managers*) had not yet been fully defeated (1983/1985:204, 245) and this was where Kraigher saw the main focus for further action. The main problem was neither in the Yugoslav new Constitution nor in the Associated Labour Act, but in their insufficient or incomplete implementation. If BOALS were organised in accordance with the Constitution (not only in the letter but also in spirit), they would not be elements of economic and political atomisation in the country (1983/1985:180). But, the 'techno-managers' and 'liberals', who still kept the key posts in the economy and politics (1982/1985:87-9), were the main promoters of autarkic tendencies. Even 30 years after self-management had been introduced, decision-making was still limited to 'narrow circles' (1983/1985:196) in which economic and political powers were linked (1982/1985:111, 1983/1985:160).<sup>52</sup> Although his analysis criticised the political elite for

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politicians, economists and other experts in the field. They produced a long document (more than 1,500 pages) with policy recommendations in 15 fields (such as an Anti-Inflation Programme, followed by separate sections on unemployment, housing policy, foreign economic relations, agriculture, etc...)

<sup>50</sup> The interviews were published in *Polet*, 31 January and 14 February 1986 and in *Mladost*, February 1988. Here I quote from the minutes of my conversation with Kraigher.

<sup>51</sup> 'To us there are no other forms, possibilities or ways to resolve current developmental problems', Kraigher concluded in October 1982 (1985:105). Any possibility of returning 'back to some form of old bourgeois parliamentarism' was ruled out (1983/1985:209).

<sup>52</sup> Like Kardelj, Kraigher believed that 'state socialism' was more likely to be accepted by the general population and political leaders as an alternative to self-management than liberalism (1983/1985:260). Kraigher opposed all types of

promoting 'autarkic principles', Kraigher opposed 'witch-hunting', calling for unity in implementing his Stabilisation Programme rather than for 'differentiation' among the political leaders (1983/1985: 240-1).

Secondly, Kraigher acknowledged that the Yugoslav market was seriously fragmented, but he warned that 'one should not exaggerate' this (1983/1985:211; 1984/1985:326 and 363). The centralised federation, as it had been before the constitutional changes, had produced even worse conflicts over the redistribution of economic goods via federal institutions (1983/1985:211). It was true that 'autarkic' tendencies must be prevented, but not by any re-centralisation of Yugoslavia. By repeating Kardelj's notion of self-management as both a solution for the national question and a socialist vision, Kraigher argued that re-centralisation would in fact destroy both equality of nations and self-management (1981/1985:37). It was true, Kraigher argued, that the process of inter-republican negotiations in Yugoslavia was difficult and slow, but this was also a result of the unavoidable 'pluralism of self-managerial interests', as promoted by Kardelj (1977). Responding to increasingly critical public opinion which was calling for the government to meet its responsibilities, Kraigher opposed the idea that the state leadership (such as the Federal government) should take the whole responsibility for the economy, since this would again reinforce statist structures (1983/1985:166). On the contrary, power should be devolved from any 'statist' power-centre, whether federal, republican or municipal, to self-managing employees (1983/1985:177).

Thirdly, the workers, Kraigher argued, were not 'naturally' prone to a self-management orientation (1983/1985:253). In a rhetoric which again repeated Kardelj's attack on theories of spontaneity (1983/1985:167; 1984/1985:324), Kraigher warned that the key to the workers' action still lay in 'subjective forces' (i.e., in the Party). He shared and extended Kardelj's view on the new role of the Party. The Party (which he criticised at several places for being too closely linked to the state and too distant from the workers) should act as the main promoter of self-management in the BOALs (1983/1985:230). This was where he saw the new place of the LCY in political system.

Fourthly, Kraigher concluded that some 'minor modifications' were necessary in the political system. These 'modifications' should be 'corrections of our practice, and probably of some elements in the system itself in terms of its further clarification, but not of the system as such' (1983/1985:209). Kraigher emphasised that no fundamental change of the political system could be expected. But, for example, political objections to 'small private enterprises' (coming from the conservative Partisan Veterans) were in his opinion undesirable. 'Small-scale industry' (crafts,

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statism, regardless of whether they originated at the federal, republican or even municipal level. To statism, in his view, there was only one real alternative: further development of self-management (1981/1985:62; 1983/1985:176).

and small private businesses) could not endanger socialism (1983/1985: 224, 270) and should, therefore, be allowed and further developed. Kraigher's criticism of the regime did not go much further than to acknowledge that socialism was much more endangered by privileged members of the economic and political elite than by potential investors in small enterprises. His criticism was directed at various 'hesitations', and at the lack of will to implement good ideas suggested in previous attempts to reform the Yugoslav economy. In the interview I conducted with Kraigher in January 1986, he said:

'We hesitated [in the 1965 reform] to develop a suitable economic system and to implement a suitable economic policy. It all went too slowly. Now, we still lack consistent and synchronised measures which would lead to implementation of the programme. The main problem has always been that we were too slow and too late. All other things are just the result of this indecisiveness. We spent huge amounts of energy and many hours in reaching a compromise, instead of spending this time creatively, in the implementation of our programme.'

Kraigher warned political leaders that the key to the solution of the economic crisis still resided with them, but he was not even in favour of changing the political elites that were 'slow' and 'inconsistent' in implementing the good political programme. Without changing the system, and with the old elites still in power, how could one expect to change anything? Welcomed by the elite, Kraigher's programme of stabilisation was still far from being successful in its proclaimed aim: to bring economic recovery to Yugoslavia.<sup>53</sup>

It was not surprising, therefore, to see that already in 1984 the Kraigher Programme was collapsing. Instead of the planned 10%, inflation increased to 75% per annum in 1985. The living standards of the population fell by 34% between 1979 and 1984. About 40-45% of households earned less than the 'poverty line'. The 850,000 new employees (employed between 1979 and 1984) did not manage to increase total production by any more than 0.8% for the whole period of five years. This meant that labour productivity was in fact decreasing as personal income was rapidly falling. While in 1979 the price of a kilogram of bread was equal to payment for 14 minutes of work for an average worker, in 1984 more than twice that time (29 minutes) was needed (Bilandžić, 1986:116-9). The foreign trade deficit was indeed reduced and even eliminated in 1984, but mostly because imports were reduced and not because exports were increased. Exports, however, did increase significantly, but to COMECON and not to the West European market.<sup>54</sup> As a consequence, Yugoslavia was cutting itself off from the world market, instead of increasing its participation in it. Ideological barriers made even the minor

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<sup>53</sup> In an interview I conducted with her in April 1998, Milka Planinc said the Kraigher programme was 'the best possible' for the time in which it appeared. That means - it was not openly hostile to the market, but it was so full of compromises, that anyone could interpret it in his/her own way.

<sup>54</sup> An increase of trade with COMECON, followed by the rhetoric of 'radical egalitarianism', was noticed as a 'bad sign' by those who still remembered Kardelj's warning that 'state socialism' represented the greatest danger for post-Titoist Yugoslavia in the long term.



recommendations of the Kraigher Programme neglected or even rejected in practice: to many low-ranked conservative apparatchiks small enterprises, as well as foreign investments (including those of the Yugoslav Gastarbeiter) were just potentially dangerous promoters of capitalism. Even an attempt to loose restrictions on land ownership by farmers met with resistance by 'ideologically correct' opponents. Additionally, no serious investors would take the risk of running enterprises according to the Associated Labour Act and the tons of regulations that followed it.

#### 4.6. The Source of Regime Stability: the 'Syndrome of Radical Egalitarianism'

From the traditional *economic approach* to analysing the stability of regimes, it is certainly a paradox that the economic crises met with no revolt among those whose position was obviously worsened: workers. Why was this the case? I argue that the answer is again to be found in ideology. As explained in Chapter Three (and argued by Kardelj) the rare workers' protests against the regime in Yugoslavia were motivated by egalitarian demands. The *syndrome of radical egalitarianism* (as explained by the Croatian Sociologist Josip Županov) seems to be the most plausible explanation of mass political behaviour.<sup>55</sup>

'For our workers, it is not disastrous that they live badly; it is a tragedy if someone else lives better. This is quite a different system of values [than in the West]: in our society it is a catastrophe if someone is rich and not if somebody is poor. With such views you cannot expect workers to go on strike... Since conflicts do exist, however, they are expressed in another way, for instance, in the form of vast amount of sick leave, which, economically speaking, is worse than strikes.'<sup>56</sup>

'Justice' was a word used for equality in restrictions. In an interview I conducted with Županov in December 1995, he told me:

'When the 'even and odd' system of bans on car driving was introduced, people saw that the measures applied equally to everyone, regardless of how wealthy one was. Let me use my personal experience: I could stand sitting in complete darkness in my flat every Tuesday and Thursday, as long as I saw my neighbours across the street in the dark on Mondays and Wednesdays. But if I saw some of my neighbours' bulbs switched on when I was in darkness, I was ready to rebel against the state.'

Only the corruption of elites could have resulted in riots. But, the elite in fact 'corrupted' the masses, by what Županov calls 'a pact between manual workers and political elite'. The pact was based on self-management rhetoric, which favoured the 'working class' in its 'fight against state bureaucracy and techno-managerial forces'. In a pragmatic compromise between the elites

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<sup>55</sup> For fuctions of egalitarianism in Yugoslav society see also Bernik (1989).

<sup>56</sup> Josip Županov, *Danas*, 2 August 1983.

and workers the latter agreed not to protest against the regime, which tolerated various *alternative means of survival*.<sup>57</sup> Although the level of efficiency at work was lower than ever, no person lost a job for not working. 'They could not pay me as little as I can work', was the favourite proverb of Yugoslav workers in the 1980s. It was Kardelj's concept of self-management that guaranteed that workers had a 'right' to work and to participate in decision-making. They were not 'employed' by a boss or a manager: they 'associated their labour with other workers'. Workers could 'fire' a manager if they were not satisfied with him/her, not the other way round. It was this concept that created the crisis. But, at the same time, it prevented any social protests from emerging.

At the same time, the state turned a blind eye to the massive violation of regulations, while the citizens tolerated elites incapable of managing the country's deep crisis. If Yugoslavia ever was a firmly run state in which citizens feared state repression, it was now on its way to slipping into anarchy.<sup>58</sup> In people's minds, no obligations to the state needed to be met since the state would simply not react to any infringement.<sup>59</sup> Weakened by the anti-statist rhetoric, the state was now in reality 'withering away' under pressure of both the ideology and the practice of 'self-management'. By tolerating 'personal networks of survival', the state was, however, blind to the breaking of laws, which became the rule rather than exception. But, the elite also benefited from the whole situation. It hoped that the people would avoid any collective action which would endanger their 'private projects for survivals'. Losing any confidence in the institutional way of changing things, people became indifferent. Even those dissatisfied directed their efforts at building up their personal networks rather than opposing the whole system. However, Županov was right in saying that the social deal between the elite which was 'closing its eyes' and ordinary citizens 'who tried to find their own ways of surviving the crisis' could not last *ad infinitum*. 'The conflict will emerge in an entirely different area,' he concluded wisely in January 1985.<sup>60</sup>

This 'other area' was in politics, more precisely – on ethnic issues. The sense of injustice, triggered by the different levels of economic development of various Yugoslav regions, resulted in violent collective action in Kosovo, the Serbian southern province, in March 1981. The causes

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<sup>57</sup> The 'grey economy' was tolerated, while *absenteeism* took on massive proportions. According to Yugoslav statistics, about 700,000 people were absent from work every day because of illness; 600,000 a day were on vacation, while 400,000 a day were attending various conferences which kept them away from work. 'As a consequence, instead of eight hours work a day, after deducting all absences during the year a Yugoslav worker effectively worked only three hours and six minutes a day.' The system itself tolerated this *absenteeism* which dissipated the energy of the potential conflict between the workers and the elite (RFE/RL, 16 August 1983).

<sup>58</sup> In return, discontent was growing against this *anarchism*. Only a couple of years later, Slobodan Milošević secured large support against 'anarchism', which he did not fail to criticise in his public addresses in the 1984-1989 period. More on this in Chapter Six.

<sup>59</sup> Plenty of examples to support this conclusion may be found in Duško Doder's book 'The Yugoslavs' (Doder, 1978).

<sup>60</sup> Intervju, 4 January 1985.

of Kosovo's problems were many and will be explained in detail in the next Chapter. But the sense of inequality in economic, political and ethnic terms was the most important one. Županov's conclusion that it was not so much the sense of being poor, but of others being wealthy that triggered the discontent with the system, will be then used again.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4.7. Conclusion

The debate on the economic crisis in the early 1980s had following five characteristics:

First, the conflict crossed republican lines both among politicians (Džuranović was Montenegrin, Kraigher Slovene and Planinc Croat) and among economists (Korošić, a Croat, was the most stubborn supporter of economic unity). In general, it did not follow the divide between the more and less developed republics, since both Slovenia and Kosovo, the most developed and least developed regions in Yugoslavia, were opposing re-centralisation of the system, even when it became obvious that it had entered a deep crisis.

Secondly, the conflict was more vertical than horizontal: between 'central government' and the regions, rather than between republics on the horizontal level. The economic conflicts in the early 1980s were not ethnic conflicts. Although some republics (Slovenia and sometimes Croatia, and the province of Vojvodina) more often than others obstructed federal policy, the others also used or threatened to use their *veto* rights to make sure their interests were properly taken care of (Bilandžić, 1986).

Thirdly, there was a relatively high level of unity within the Federal Government, whose members managed to put themselves above their respective republics, or at least to be more than just their mouthpieces. This was also the case with the Federal Presidency, whose members were re-elected in 1979, still under Tito's supervision. To some extent, the same could be said of other federal institutions (the Party and State Presidencies) which saw their prime task in replacing Tito, not in representing the republics and provinces.<sup>62</sup>

Fourthly, for the same reasons, it did not come as a surprise that the Yugoslav leaders showed a remarkable loyalty to Tito's legacy even when facing serious economic and political crisis. They

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<sup>61</sup> *Radical egalitarianism* in Kosovo was the main reason for support for Enver Hoxha's criticism of Yugoslav *revisionism* and *Capitalism*. The national movement in Kosovo was led by *Hoxhists*, whose rhetoric was that of *radical egalitarianism* (see Maliqi, 1998).

<sup>62</sup> As Planinc argues, this changed in 1984, when the new Yugoslav Presidency was elected. Its members were now for the first time not Tito's appointees but representatives of their republics/provinces. Although most of them had been federal politicians under Tito, they now acted more as representatives of their republics than of Yugoslavia.

remained committed to the basic values of Tito's policy, three of which were emphasised: self-management, federalism and non-alignment.

Fifthly, the changes they introduced were made out of necessity, not by way of the introduction of a new ideological or political concept. They were not met with enthusiasm, and were even opposed as much as was possible.

Finally, among the pressures they faced, those coming from the international environment were feared more than those originating from within the country.<sup>63</sup> Loss of independence, the advances of liberal democracy or *state socialism*, worried Yugoslav politicians more than economic crisis in itself.

It was because of the ideological concept they shared that the Yugoslav politicians created the institutional framework that made any radical changes impossible. The basic discrepancy between dramatic conclusions about reality which 'did not change in accordance with proclamations' and inadequate actions taken to change it, continued throughout the 1980s, despite several attempts to introduce 'radical measures'. All three Yugoslav Prime Ministers in this period (Planinc, Mikulić, Marković) attempted the same, only to face the same insurmountable opposition from autarkic *republicanism* and ideological dogmatism. In 1985 the new Federal Presidency practically dismissed Planinc's policy. In December 1988 Branko Mikulić was forced to resign as Prime Minister under the same pressure. Finally, the last years of Yugoslavia were characterised by the same conflict between the attempts of the last Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković (backed even more strongly by international financial institutions than Planinc in 1983) to reform the system and the various ideological and separate national interests which opposed any re-centralisation. The great difference, however, was that the lines of the conflict in the late 1980s matched first the borders of republics, and then more and more 'borders' between ethnic groups in the country.

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<sup>63</sup> The only exception to this was the possibility of the *Polish scenario* in Yugoslavia, which was energetically denied by the leading Yugoslav politicians.

## Chapter Five:

# The Political System Re-examined

## The 'Serbian Question' and the Rise of the 'Defenders' and 'Reformers' of the Constitution (1974-1984)

'The disintegration of Serbia would be only the first step towards the disintegration of Yugoslavia... The unresolved issue of the Constitutional structuring of Serbia is today the only real... root of Serbian nationalism which has not yet been cut'.

**Dragoslav Marković, May 1981**

'I have always felt that whenever there was talk of unitarism, people always looked at me in this circle. Because, to judge by old habits, Serbia means unitarism and centralism.'

**Petar Stambolić, 1992**

'Serbian nationalism penetrated the highest ranks of Serbian politics with Ranković, and remained there under Draža Marković's and Ivan Stambolić's protection. The 1974 Constitution to us who came from other republics, and especially from Serbia's provinces, was the most powerful tool to defeat it. And we did not want to lose it.'

**Josip Vrhovec, interviewed 1998**

### 5.0. Introduction

This chapter examines three attempts to reform the Yugoslav political system between 1974 and 1986 and the reasons for their failure. All three initiatives came from Serbia, the only Yugoslav republic with autonomous provinces on its territory. The disintegrative processes in Serbia followed the de-centralisation in Yugoslavia after the 1974 Constitution. But, while Yugoslavia was a federation with elements of confederalism, Serbia was formally a unitary state whose relations with its provinces were based on political compromises following the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate. Although Kosovo and Vojvodina did not become republics on their own, in reality their status was in all important elements equal to those of the republics. The Constitutional compromise left a space for both sides to interpret the 'real meaning' of the Constitution in their own, mutually opposed, ways. The interpretation of what the writers of

the Constitution really meant when regulating the 'relations in Serbia' dominated Yugoslav politics ever after 1974. Already in 1976 the first demand to condemn the 'unconstitutional' practice of 'autonomism' was presented to Tito and Kardelj by the Serbian leaders. Between 1976 and 1984 the Serbian leaders unsuccessfully tried twice more (following the 1981 Kosovo protests, and by initiating debate on the political system in 1983) to resolve the problem, without rejecting the main ideas of the 1974 Constitution. The Serbian demands met with indifference or with open opposition among the most Kardeljist forces in the party, which had a firm control over the federal institutions and over all other republics and both provinces. They argued that any significant change of the constitutional provisions would mean deviation from 'Tito's path', which was to be prevented in the first post-Tito years.

This chapter argues that the commitment to the Kardeljist concept among the Yugoslav leaders in the 1970s and 1980s was so strong that it prevented any change in the political system even when it became obvious that the system itself was not functioning. Instead of re-examining the main elements of the concept, the Kardeljists argued that the system had not been implemented in line with Kardelj's recommendations, and that another, 'non-constitutional' practice had been introduced in Yugoslavia. They refused to accept any change of the system, and even in the system, accepting only the possibility of 'building the system up' on the same principles that had been written in the 1974 Constitution. On all three occasions analysed in this chapter, the Kardeljists successfully blocked demands for reforms, also because a consensus between the republics and provinces was needed for any significant change.

Paradoxically, the much greater commitment of the Yugoslav elite to the story they had invented than was the case with the political elites in other Communist countries of Eastern Europe contributed to the much more tragic end of Yugoslavia, compared with the events in the countries whose leaders and people found it easier to abandon the ideology on which the system had been founded.

This chapter, together with the previous one (on the economic crisis) brings us closer to understanding the circumstances which engendered the different concepts of post-Kardeljist Yugoslavia and the founding concepts of the nation-states that emerged after Yugoslavia.

### **5.1. The 'Blue Book' of 1977**

The 'Serbian question' was the core of the political conflicts in Yugoslavia following the 1974 Constitution. The main reason for its revival was the disintegrative process in Yugoslavia which affected Serbia more than the other republics. While Bosnia-Herzegovina was a 'small Yugoslavia' in an ethnic sense, it was Serbia which, in its political structure (having two

provinces on its territory<sup>1</sup> but without being a federation itself) deserved much more to be called a 'small Yugoslavia'. Since ethnic issues, as I argue throughout this thesis, did not dominate Yugoslav politics in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was the Serbian (political), rather than the Bosnian (ethnic) question, that emerged at the focus of Yugoslav politics.<sup>2</sup>

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, Serbia accepted the confederalised model of Yugoslavia and supported the decentralisation of power which occurred in 1967-1972. As with the others, Serbia wanted more autonomy from the federal leadership in deciding on its own 'internal affairs'. She also supported the idea that republics should be treated as states. But, while 1974 signified the end of any possibility of Yugoslavia being run by one nation, by its leadership or any too ambitious individual from the Yugoslav elite' (Stambolić, 1995), it was clearly unjust that all other republics were really moving towards autonomy in their 'internal affairs', while Serbia alone was moving in a different direction. Because the provinces understood their role as being equal to the republics, they prevented Serbia from having full control over their territories. Serbia, her leaders felt, remained the only Yugoslav republic which did not gain its statehood by the Constitutional changes of 1974. On the contrary, it lost even the small effective control over the provinces which it had before 1966.

Whatever has been said about the disintegrative processes in Yugoslavia applies to Serbia as well. The 'autarkism' of republics in Yugoslavia was paralleled by the 'closure' of the Serbian provinces both towards Serbia and others in Yugoslavia. The megalomaniac wave of investment without any control by the federation was duplicated in the Serbian case. The conflict over competencies between the federation and the republics was the same as the intra-Serbian misunderstanding over what the provisions of the Constitution really intended. This was only emphasised by compromising formulations in the Yugoslav and Serbian Constitutions, by which the provinces were clearly parts of Serbia, but were also 'constitutive elements of the federation'.<sup>3</sup>

Serbia did not object to the Constitution itself (at least not until 1984) but to its selective implementation and 'incorrect' interpretation by the provinces. The first official complaint about the disintegration of Serbia was sent to Tito and Kardelj in the form of the 'Blue Book', as the official document 'On the constitutional position of Serbia and its relations to its two

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<sup>1</sup> Vojvodina in the north of the Republic, where Serbs formed 50% of the local population with 22 ethnic minorities and the Hungarian 'nationality' of 500,000; and Kosovo in its south, where the Albanians in 1981 made up 77.5% (1,226,736) of the local population (of 1,584,441), together with 209,498 (13.2%) of Serbs, 58,562 (3.7%) Muslims and 27,028 (1.7%) Montenegrins. Serbia was the only 'complex' Yugoslav republic, with provinces within its borders.

<sup>2</sup> Only when the discourse shifted from political to ethnic issues, did Bosnia come to the forefront of the Yugoslav crisis.

<sup>3</sup> This change was introduced by 1968 amendment 7, which replaced Article 2 of the 1963 Yugoslav Constitution (see Petranović and Štrbac, 1977: III: 95).

autonomous provinces' is now known. The document was issued after several incidents of symbolic and practical-political character between Serbia and the provinces.<sup>4</sup> The *Blue Book* concluded that the provinces considered themselves as equal to the republics, which consequently led them to disrespect any authority of Serbia even in those fields in which only the republic (as the sovereign state) had rights. Serbia listed dozens of examples of such 'autarkism': in foreign relations, defence, economic and education policy.<sup>5</sup>

'It was *natural*, and even compulsory, that the provinces participated when the aims and programmes of the Serbian Prime Minister's visits to a foreign country were formulated, and they had always been informed about the results afterwards. But, to them it seemed perfectly *natural* that the Serbian Prime Minister learnt from the press about the Prime Minister of a province's visit to a foreign country - in which he asked for a million dollar loan,' recalls Ivan Stambolić from his personal experience while in the office of Serbian Prime Minister (1995:78).

When Serbia approached the provinces on this issue, Vojvodina rejected the proposal to coordinate international visits (Stambolić, 1981/1988:57). The provinces also argued that there could be no Social Plan for the whole republic but that three plans should be introduced instead. While Kosovo and Vojvodina had their own Social Plans, the 'Serbian' plan was implemented only on the territory outside the provinces. 'In the volumes and volumes of Social Plans of the provinces, the words *Republic* and *Serbia* were not mentioned even once. Kosovo also denied Serbia any competence to regulate citizenship policy autonomously,' said Stambolić (1995:78). The common defence law could not be enacted, since the provinces rejected any cooperation. The ministries of education argued over whether the Serbian writers from Vojvodina should be classified as 'Serb' or as 'Vojvodinian' literature (Galović, 1981/1989:133). In the Party, 'democratic centralism' was acknowledged on the federal level, but Vojvodina denied any right of the Serbian Party organisation to implement the same principle from the level of the republic downwards (Galović, 1981/1989:133). A few years later, Vojvodina even opposed Serbia collecting statistical data on the population in the province (Stambolić, 1981/1988:25). The term 'narrow Serbia', and 'Serbia without Provinces' entered the political vocabulary and statistical books, which Serbia found insulting. For all these reasons, the 'Blue Book' concluded that the relationship between Serbia and its two provinces 'had reached a

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<sup>4</sup> The incidents began already in 1975 during Tito's visit to Kosovo, when the Kosovo leaders used this opportunity to emphasize Kosovo's direct links with the Federation. 'Their obsession with statehood is absolute. By emphasising 'Yugoslavism' even too much, by linking themselves with Yugoslavia, Tito and the LCY, they aim to blur the fact that the autonomous provinces are within Serbia,' wrote the Serbian leader Draža Marković in his diary on 13 April 1975 (1988:104).

<sup>5</sup> For example, the Vojvodina leaders did not invite any member of the Serbian leadership to attend Tito's visit to Novi Sad in 1975. Furthermore, in his toast to Tito, Radovan Vlajković, then the president of Vojvodina, failed even to mention Serbia or its League of Communists. The Commander of Vojvodina Territorial Defence on another occasion addressed his colleague - a general from Serbia proper - as a guest from the 'neighbouring republic', making no difference between him and a Croatian general. Even in foreign policy, the provinces took initiatives without even informing Serbia.



virtual cul-de-sac'. Making states out of provinces was, they argued, against the spirit and the letter of the Constitution.

In January 1977, Kardelj agreed with most of the Serbian demands, repeating his firm stand that the provinces - as opposed to the republics - should not be treated as states. Kardelj's position was 'creative' and 'supportive', as the three top Serbian politicians of that time confirmed.<sup>6</sup> Kardelj also rejected any notion of the federalisation of Serbia, for it would 'result in a (negative) reaction of the Serb nation'. As Ivan Stambolić recalls, Kardelj was 'clearly against the disintegration of Serbia... He thought that Serbia ought to be a unitary state with a certain autonomy for its provinces' (Stambolić, 1995:72).<sup>7</sup>

However, Kardelj was realistic enough to warn Marković not to expect too much from others in Yugoslavia and from Tito himself. While the others would not be interested in anything but their own 'internal affairs', Tito 'would be reserved in the beginning' (Marković, 28 February 1976; 1987:333). He therefore suggested the Serbians resolve these problems within Serbia, avoiding the Yugoslav level. He also recommended them to be patient, since 'this would all be settled through the economic integration of the country anyhow'. Kardelj believed that 'associated labour' was the formula to integrate the Yugoslavs without denying any rights to their 'fully completed' nations.<sup>8</sup> But, as explained in Chapter Four, 'associated labour' already in 1975 looked like a distant and by no means certain future. On the contrary, the signs of disintegration - which brought the country to the verge of dissolution already in 1971 - now re-emerged with full strength in both the economic and the political areas.

The Serbs accepted the first of Kardelj's recommendations, but failed to hear the second. At the end of June 1977 a long session of all the relevant leaders in Serbia (including those of Kosovo and Vojvodina) was held, but no compromise between the two positions was possible. The Kosovo leaders even declared that the 'Blue Book' was a 'Bible of Serbian nationalism', accusing Marković and two Stambolićs of attempting to undermine the autonomy of the provinces, which was - in their views - unconstitutional. The Kosovans only repeated their arguments that Kosovo was not only part of Serbia, but a constitutive element of Yugoslav federalism itself. Therefore, any change in its status was a change to the Yugoslav Constitution, and could not be made by Serbia alone. In fact, it could not be even made by a majority, or even by all the

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<sup>6</sup> Petar Stambolić in Djukić, 1992:241; Draža Marković on 12 February 1976 in Marković, 1988:328; and Ivan Stambolić, 1995:72. As Marković said, the Serbian leaders were 'extremely satisfied' with Kardelj's conclusion that 'since the republics were sovereign states, therefore it was up to them to decide which part of this sovereignty would be transposed to the Federation, and which to lower socio-political communities, such as provinces' (1988:328).

<sup>7</sup> Kardelj's reaction to the 'Blue Book' in 1977 secured him a positive place even in the most recent recollections of events leading to the disintegration of Yugoslavia by his Serbian colleagues.

<sup>8</sup> For Kardelj's views, see Chapter Two.

Yugoslav republics acting together, unless the Assembly of Kosovo consented.<sup>9</sup> Siding with Kosovo, the Vojvodina leaders proposed a 'gentleman's agreement' which would put the whole affair *ad acta*, with the continuation of the *status quo*. What surprised and discouraged Marković and the Stambolićs most was the opposition to the 'Blue Book' which came from their main rival in Serbia Proper, the Federal Foreign Secretary (1972-1978), Miloš Minić.<sup>10</sup> Since Minić was Tito's protegé in Serbia, Marković understood that he could not count on Tito's support in any serious clash with the provinces.<sup>11</sup> 'Terrible', wrote Marković in his diary on 30 June 1977, concluding that the Serbs again (like the Yugoslavs in general) remained ineffective because they were disunited. But there was only one possible alternative to an open conflict with Tito, which neither of the two wanted: to accept the *ad acta* compromise. Tito, who was much more interested in preventing a new crisis in Serbia and Yugoslavia than in resolving serious economic and political problems in his late eighties, moved in to force the leaders of the provinces to drop their charges against Marković. The debate on the relationship within Serbia was thus pushed under the carpet, but by no means was it resolved. On the contrary, it only increased the distrust between Serbia and its provinces, between Serbia and the other republics, and between the various factions in the Serbian leadership. It also left the Serbs with the bad feeling that Tito himself had prevented them from being a republic equal to all the others in Yugoslavia. Although the whole affair was conducted almost entirely behind closed doors (the news about the 'Blue Book' was broken to the general public only in the mid-1980s), it made the Serbian leadership feel somehow discriminated against in Yugoslavia, chained by the 'unchangeable' provisions of the Constitution and their *ad voluntatem* interpretations by the provinces. As a result, Serbian politicians became much more critical of the position of Serbia in their public speeches, which were now more direct than before. They argued, as Ivan Stambolić formulated it in July 1979, that 'Serbia is lagging behind the others economically and politically' (Stambolić, 1979/1988:9).

At the same time, the provinces were once again grateful to Tito for his support, but now more than ever before worried that things would change after him. In the *consensus* principle, the Constitutional principle that gave them the right to veto any change in the constitution by not 'ratifying' it in their assembly, the provinces discovered the best institutional protection against any Serbian attempt at re-centralisation. When Kardelj died in February 1979 and Tito in May

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<sup>9</sup> Amendment 18 (December 1968) - to replace Articles 111 and 112 of the 1963 Constitution.

<sup>10</sup> Minić was the Military Prosecutor in the trial of Gen Mihailović, the leader of the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland (Chetniks) in 1946. This fact made it even more difficult for Marković to attack him, while being already suspected of Serbian nationalism. The conflict between Marković and Minić was a long-standing one: it originated in the 1968 student demonstrations, on which more in Chapter Three on 'Constitutional debate 1967-1974' (Marković, 5 June 1968, and 15 June 1968).

<sup>11</sup> This also confirms Ivan Stambolić, when he says that Tito took no sides in the conflict, but when they met, 'it was clear (from an almost invisible reaction) that he was slightly more supportive of the provinces than Serbia' (Stambolić, 1995:67).

1980, the Yugoslav leaders mirrored the grief of the population for the deceased leaders. But this sorrow was mingled with fears and expectations of changes in the post-Titoist period. Below the surface, there was a tense atmosphere of expectation and uncertainty. The rhetoric of 'no changes after Tito', which dominated the public discourse, substantially helped the cause of the provinces. But, as Ivan Stambolić described, while they all agreed that there would be 'Tito - after Tito', there was still an open question: 'Whose *'Tito'* would this be?'

## 5.2. The Kosovo Crisis

### 5.2.1. The Background of the Kosovo crisis (1981)

The death of Tito and Kardelj shifted the focus of the Serbian initiative from 'interpretation of the Constitution' to 'small changes in the Constitution'. 'Interpretation' had some sense when the 'supreme arbiters of meaning', Tito and Kardelj were alive. But the Serbian leaders assumed that the appropriate interpretation of the Constitution had become a much less realistic task for Tito's collective successors.

Six months after Tito's death, the president of the Serbian Constitutional Court Najdan Pašić sent a public letter to the Yugoslav Party leadership in which he demanded a debate on the political system. Pašić's action was the first post-Titoist attempt of Serbian leaders to initiate 'small changes' in the Constitution, but it was simply ignored by the others.

Things had, however, changed significantly when the Albanian students in Kosovo demanded changes to the Constitution in April 1981. From today's perspective, the discontent of the Kosovo Albanians with the 1974 Constitution looks a paradox, since this Constitution granted them extensive autonomy in Serbia and Yugoslavia. Even more paradoxical is the fact that the Albanian students in Kosovo were motivated by the same feeling as the Serbian leaders in Belgrade: they both felt unequal to the relevant others. Just as Serbian leaders felt that Serbia was unequal to other Yugoslav republics and that it was lagging behind them in economic and political terms, many Albanians in Kosovo felt the same about their status and the status of Kosovo.<sup>12</sup> While Serbia felt that it could not realise its status of republic without the strict implementation of the 1974 Constitution, many Albanians felt that only if Kosovo became a Republic, could the inequality they faced vanish. The sense of inequality and demand for equality were the main motives of both the Kosovo events in 1981 and of the Serbian reaction to them. Županov's theory of radical egalitarianism, thus, could equally help us to explain the political as well as the economic crisis of Yugoslavia.

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<sup>12</sup> The notion of equality occupies the central place in almost all articles discussing Kosovo, whether they present the Serb or Albanian 'point of view'. See Zajmi, 1997:98.

The inequality felt by the Kosovo Albanians had three dimensions: 1) economic, 2) political and 3) ethnic.

Economically, Kosovo was the least developed area of Yugoslavia. Although it was developing faster than other regions in Yugoslavia, for reasons of its extremely high birth rate (among the highest in Europe) the GDP per capita did not show such a development. In fact, the gap between Kosovo and the most developed Yugoslav Republic, Slovenia, was widening: while in 1952 Slovenia had a 4.1 times larger GDP per capita, in 1981 the ratio was 5.4:1 with a tendency to increase still further.<sup>13</sup> Other economic data showed an even greater difference, approaching even a 8:1 ratio. These differences were comparable with those between England and Northern Africa (Horvat, 1988:136). Kosovo was lagging behind not only Slovenia, but all other Yugoslav regions as well. While in 1955 its GDP per capita was 43% of the Yugoslav average, in 1984 this fell to 26% (SGJ, 1986:417). 'In the situation of economic crisis in the country, Kosovo's prospects of reaching the others were even less likely. With a ratio of 6.1:1 and projected annual growth rate of 2%, Kosovo would need 91 years to reach the Slovenian level of 1981,' a leading Yugoslav (Croatian) economist Branko Horvat concluded. The unemployment rate in Kosovo was the highest in the country: in 1985 it was 3.33 times higher than the Yugoslav average (SGJ, 1986:421). For one available job, there were 43 unemployed persons waiting to get it. In such a situation, it became important that the ethnic structure of employees was not always the same as the ethnic composition of population, although the differences were not drastic. In Kosovo, Albanians made 74% of the active population, but among employees they were 65%. The Serbs were 17% of the active population, but 26% of the employed. When a job became a privilege, this could become a problem (Horvat, 1988:137).

In 1948 62.2% of the Kosovo population was illiterate. But in 1981 Kosovo had the third largest University in Yugoslavia, with almost 50,000 students. With almost 30 students per 1,000 inhabitants, Kosovo had the highest concentration of students in Yugoslavia. Having 61% of population under the age of 25 (Stambolić, 1988:32), in 1978 every third inhabitant of Kosovo was receiving education (Report, 1981<sup>14</sup>:158). Not only did this heavily burden the already weak Kosovo economy, but it created new social and political problems. Kosovo faced the prospect of having a highly educated mass of unemployed, at a time when its economy was collapsing. This would not have been such a problem had not the other Yugoslav republics been undergoing economic crisis themselves. Both for the reasons of 'autarky' and for objective economic reasons, they became less and less open for young educated Kosovans (mostly

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<sup>13</sup> This actually happened, and already in 1984 the GDP per capita difference between Slovenia and Kosovo was 6.1:1.

<sup>14</sup> Here and on several further places I refer to report 'Šta se događalo na Kosovu' (*What happened in Kosovo*), published by Politika, Belgrade immediately after the 1981 demonstrations. I refer to this publication as Report, 1981.

Albanian). An additional problem was that they felt that Priština University (opened in 1975) was significantly below the quality level of other Yugoslav universities and were dubious about their degrees.

At the same time, the Albanians themselves did not want to move out of the province to other Yugoslav republics in order to find jobs, but preferred low paid jobs in Western Europe instead. They were not alone in this respect in Yugoslavia. An analysis of internal migrations in post-war Yugoslavia shows that economic reasons played a secondary role to ethnic ones when it came to changing one republic for another. The 1981 census revealed that (only?) 1,760,333 out of about 23 million Yugoslavs changed their permanent settlements from one to another Republic during their lives. Although one would expect that people migrated from heavily under-developed Kosovo more than from any other part of the country, the Albanians, whose share in the Yugoslav population was 7.7%, made up only 3.4% of migrants (59,754 people). But, the other Yugoslav nations also did not follow economic, but rather national logic<sup>15</sup>: all except the Serbs and Montenegrins. While Serbs formed 36.3% of the population in 1981, they were 48.8% of the migrants. The Montenegrins twice exceeded their 'quota': a nation of 2.6% made up 5.6% of migrants. While the language barrier can explain the hesitations of Macedonians and Albanians to move out of Macedonia and Kosovo, this argument does not explain why Croats and Bosnian Muslims remained committed to their territories. The directions of migrations show the same trend: Croats moved predominantly to Croatia, Serbs to Serbia. Albanians stayed in Kosovo, despite the economic hardship and political inequality they felt (Bilandžić, 1986:134-6).<sup>16</sup> All these data actually show that there was occurring a strong process of ethno-linguistic closure within republics/provinces which mirrored the autarkism induced by economic and political reform. Nations, formally declared 'completed' by Kardelj, were now consolidating.

In some cases, as with the Albanian students, the Albanians even moved from other areas to Kosovo. The University of Priština was the only Yugoslav institution of higher education where one could study in Albanian. This meant that many Albanians from other republics went to study in Priština. The high level of unemployment only encouraged many young (below 24 years of age) Albanians (who made up 61% of the Kosovo population of 1,7 million) to study at

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<sup>15</sup> As Šuvar argues (1995), in ten years between 1971 and 1981, about 415,000 people moved from one republic to another, and almost half of them left Bosnia-Herzegovina and went to Serbia and Croatia. Šuvar concludes that migratory directions were to a great extent determined by both ethnic and religious affiliations. After 35 years of 'brotherhood and unity' and 63 years of existence of Yugoslavia, only every seventh marriage in 1981 was inter-ethnic: in Vojvodina every third, in Kosovo only every sixteenth. A third of all inter-ethnic marriages were between Serb and Croat partners. 95% of Macedonians lived in Macedonia, 81.5% of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 75.9% of Serbs in Serbia; 75% of Croats in Croatia, 70.9% of Albanians in Kosovo and 69% of Montenegrins in Montenegro (Šuvar, 1995: 148).

<sup>16</sup> The issue of migration of the Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo will be discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter.

the University nearby. The megalomania of political elites and 'personal networks of survival' helped many to realise this dream and the University, equipped for 15,000, now had 50,000 students. There were only 4,000 beds in the students' dormitories and it was not uncommon for two students to share a bed. This all made a good background for various 'extreme-left' and nationalist ideologies among the students, whose expectations rose high.<sup>17</sup>

Yugoslavia was, however, aware of Kosovo's economic problems and it recognised its development as a priority. Kosovo (together with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia) was treated as an 'under-developed region of Yugoslavia', to which money from other republics (including Serbia proper, with a level of development about or just slightly below the Yugoslav average) and Vojvodina was redistributed via federal agencies. The Kosovo share in the total amount of money distributed in this way had been continuously increasing ever since 1966. In the 1966-1970 period it amounted to 30%, in the 1971-1975 period 33.3%, in 1976-1980 37%, while for 1981-1985 it reached 42.8% (1981:156).<sup>18</sup> In the 1981-1986 plan it was projected that Kosovo would develop 60% faster than the Yugoslav average (Stambolić, 1988:31). The economic strength of Kosovo had enlarged 12-fold since the end of the war, twice as much as the Yugoslav average (Stambolić, 1988:32). At the same time, this was not felt in the everyday life of the population. The rhetoric of the Kosovo leaders, who argued that Kosovo was lagging behind the others, and urged the others to spend more and more on Kosovo, sounded much more convincing to the population at large. When Kosovo leaders started arguing that Kosovo was in a disadvantaged position compared with all other Yugoslav regions, they spoke from the hearts of the Kosovans.

Kosovo almost entirely depended on economic help from other Yugoslav regions. It was planned that in the 1981-1986 period almost 136 billion Yugoslav dinars would be spent on various investments in Kosovo, of which only 8.7 billions would come from the Kosovo economy itself (Stambolić, 1988:31). The share of federal funds in the Kosovo budget was permanently increasing - from 53% in 1966-1970 to more than 80% in 1976-1980. Between 1952 and 1978 total investment in Kosovo increased 19.1 times, while in Serbia without provinces it was 6.6 times, in Vojvodina 2.6 times and the Yugoslav average 7.7 times. But, like everywhere else, investments in Kosovo were rarely successful and did not bring much benefit to ordinary people. The Kosovo political elite, using their autonomy in deciding how to spend money from federal sources, directed a large share to 'political investments'. A huge University Library was built in the centre of Priština, and the most modern Radio-Television building in the country

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<sup>17</sup> As Branko Horvat noticed in an interview conducted by me in April 1998, in this sense, the situation could be compared with the presence of similar ideologies at Belgrade or Zagreb Universities in the 1930s.

<sup>18</sup> Until 1970 'federal' help was distributed as 'non-returnable loans'. After this 14-year loans, with favourable conditions of repayment, were introduced. Kosovo had additionally 25% better conditions: loans were for 17 years, interest rate 4.16 instead of 4.5%, etc (Report, 1981:159).

was constructed there. These were all symbols of Kosovo's new status in Yugoslavia following the fall of Ranković in 1966 and the 1974 Constitution. But, the 'efficiency of investment' rate was much lower than anywhere else in Yugoslavia: in 1978 it was 33% lower than the already low Yugoslav average (Stambolić, 1988:33). When the economic crisis began, criticism of 'wasted investments' was understood as criticism of Kosovo's political elite. To many in Kosovo, criticism of the low efficiency rate was seen as criticism of Kosovo's population as such.

A separate problem was Kosovo's high birth rate, the highest in Europe. While in Yugoslavia the annual population growth was 0.7%, in Kosovo it was 2.5%, three times higher (Horvat, 1988:181). In Kosovo a woman of child-bearing age on average bore 6.6 children, according to the 1971 census, while in 'Serbia without provinces' the number was only 2.7. In this sense, the Kosovo Albanians differed significantly from Kosovo's Serbs and Montenegrins. The number of Albanians in Kosovo doubled in the 20 years between 1961 and 1981 - from 646 to 1,227 thousands. If all of Yugoslavia's nationalities had multiplied the way the Albanians had, Yugoslavia would in 1981 have had about 50 million, rather than 23 million inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the number of Serbs in Kosovo decreased from 227,000 to 209,000 in the same period. This meant that the share of the Serbs in the Kosovan population almost halved in this period: from 23.6 to 13.2%, while the share of the Albanians rose from 67.1 to 77.5%.<sup>20</sup>

Not only had this trend changed the ethnic structure in Kosovo, but it affected the demographic structure of Serbia and Yugoslavia. If the high birth rate had continued, the Kosovo population would have increased from 1.76 million in 1985 to 2.53 million in 2000 (SGJ, 1986; Horvat, 1988:181).<sup>21</sup> Not only would the share of Albanians in Serbia then have increased to almost 25%, but the Kosovo population would have become larger than that of three Yugoslav Republics (Macedonia, Slovenia and Montenegro) and the Province of Vojvodina. Between 1961 and 1981, the share of Albanians in the Yugoslav population rose from 4.9% to 7.7%. This happened when all the other Yugoslav nations - except the Bosnian Muslims (who increased their share from 5.3 to 8.9%) and the Macedonians (from 5.6 to 6.0%) decreased their percentage. Ethnic nationalists among the Serbs, whose share of the Yugoslav population fell from 42.1% to 36.3% over the past 20 years, and the Croats (from 23.2% to 19.7%) felt particularly 'endangered' by this trend.

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<sup>19</sup> These figures were presented by Stipe Šuvar in his article in *Nin*, 30 August 1981 (RFE/RL, 17 September 1981).

<sup>20</sup> *RFE/RL*, 18 May 1981. Significantly, the structure of the population in Kosovo did not change much between 1948 and 1961. In 1948 the Albanians made up 68.5 and Serbs 23.6% of the Kosovo population, while in 1961 Albanians were 67.2% and Serbs still 23.6%. This is why many Serbs saw the political changes in the 1960s (especially after 1966) as the main cause of the exodus.

<sup>21</sup> In 1981 Kosovo was already the most populous area of Yugoslavia, with 146 inhabitants per square kilometre of territory, almost twice as many as the Yugoslav average of 88 per square kilometre.

This is partly due to a significant increase in the *Yugoslavs*,<sup>22</sup> whose share increased from 1.7% to 5.4% of the population in the 1961-1981 period. *Yugoslavism* and the high birth rate of Albanians in Kosovo and amongst Bosnian Muslims (mostly in Bosnia-Herzegovina) were now placed high on the agenda of the Serb and Croat nationalists, to stay there during the whole war in Bosnia and in Kosovo in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

These facts played an immense role in further political manipulation, with both the Albanian sense of pessimism about their own future, and Serbian fears of being 'swallowed' by the Albanian birth rate, which many of them saw as politically motivated. (More on this manipulation in Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis). When the economic crisis began in 1981, Yugoslav politicians and economists suggested various measures to be introduced in Kosovo, such as: a) birth-control; b) reducing investments in non-profitable areas; c) strict control over the distribution of money donated or borrowed from other republics; d) adjusting the number of students to real economic needs; e) increase in efficiency, etc. All of these measures were, however, seen as pressure on Kosovo's autonomy and as an attempt to re-establish (Serbian) control over the province. Since Kosovo was becoming increasingly identified with its overwhelmingly Albanian population, the measures were seen as an attack on ethnic Albanians. As soon as this happened, an economic and political debate cleared the ground for an inter-ethnic conflict between 'the Slavs' and Albanians in Kosovo and throughout the country.

In this context, and bearing in mind the 'republicanisation' of Yugoslavia after 1974, one can easily understand why the Albanians believed that having their own republic in Yugoslavia was the key to their protection from the others. As long as they did not have a republic, they would feel politically unequal.<sup>23</sup> The demand for a republic of Kosovo, in fact, originated from the intellectual and some parts of the political elite of Kosovo itself, and emerged for the first time during the Constitutional debate in 1968. The whole debate was kept behind closed doors,

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<sup>22</sup> By Yugoslavs here I mean those Yugoslav citizens who declared themselves Yugoslav in an ethnic sense in the census of population.

<sup>23</sup> The demand for a republic at first did not seem to be an outrage. Kosovo had changed its status within socialist Yugoslavia twice: in the 'AVNOJ Resolution' of 1943 it was not even mentioned. During the war and immediately after it, Kosovo was seen as a potential link between Yugoslavia and Albania in a future socialist 'Balkan Federation', just as Macedonia was seen as the link between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Tito's Partisans announced that Albanian (as well as Macedonian) unification would be the logical consequence of victory of socialist over nationalist principles. In 1946, however, Kosovo became an 'autonomous region' of Serbia, a level below that of Vojvodina, whose status of province was not changed after 1945. But in the 1963 Constitution it was put on a par with Vojvodina, becoming an 'autonomous province'. In the 1963 Constitution, the Albanians were also given the status of 'nationality', which was generally considered to be an improvement compared with the status of 'national minority'. With the fall of Ranković in 1966 and Čosić in 1968 (both criticised for their views on Kosovo) there were two more changes in a symbolic sense: instead of being called *Šiptari* [the Albanian word for an Albanian is *Shqiptar*] which many of them found offensive, the term *Albanac* (Albanian) was introduced.



and only in the late 1980s were the first documents about it published.<sup>24</sup> They revealed a heated debate within the Kosovo political and intellectual elite on the issue of a republic. In general, the intellectual elite (concentrated at the University) demanded the status of a republic for Kosovo, with full rights to self-determination. Their demand was based on historical and ethnic arguments. Historically, the Yugoslav communists argued that Kosovo decided to join Serbia after the War 'of its own free will and on the basis of the right to self-determination'. Only because of Ranković's policy of oppression against the Kosovo Albanians did this right 'disappear' from the constitutive acts in the first two post-war decades. The removal of Ranković in 1966 and the introduction of the new - Kardelj's - policy on the national question put the Kosovo question again on the agenda. The Albanian intellectuals from Kosovo fully supported Kardelj's concept of the national question, but they argued that the Albanians were a nation like any other in Yugoslavia, and that their non-Slavic origins were not sufficient reason for treating them differently.<sup>25</sup> The argument of the federal leadership, that a Republic of Kosovo would mean the creation of a 'second Albanian state' was rejected: 'There are two Korean states and two German states. Why is it impossible to have two Albanian states?', they argued.<sup>26</sup>

The Albanian Communist leaders from Kosovo (some of whom also came from the University, like Mahmut Bakalli, the young leader of the Priština Party Committee) took a 'middle road' policy. They knew that the demand for a Republic could not be accepted by Serbia or Tito himself, but they in fact used the radical demands of the intellectual elite in order to extend the autonomy of the Province as far as they could. As Dragoslav Marković put it:

'I do not think that all of them are in favour of the weakening of the Republic as whole, but it is clear that all are united when it comes to new concessions in the economic, financial and other fields' (13 January 1968, 1988:48).

The Kosovo leaders demanded a status which would be practically equal to the republics and only nominally different from them. They demanded a Constitution (and not a Statute) for Kosovo, a separate state holiday, a flag the same as that of the Albanian state flag with the small exception of a five-pointed star; a change of name from Kosovo-Metohija to Kosovo, and equal representation in the federal institutions. But, most importantly, they demanded the re-definition of Yugoslavia in such a way as to incorporate the 'nationalities' on the same terms as

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<sup>24</sup> Among them is again Marković's diary (1987) and Miloš Mišović's book 'Ko je trazio Republiku Kosovo 1945-1985' (Mišović, 1987). Additional testimonies on the demands for a Kosovo Republic by the main Kosovo leaders in 1968-1981 period were published at this time.

<sup>25</sup> The Serbian leaders, however, had problems in accepting this idea of Kardelj's. Marković, for example, writes: 'The thesis that South Slav origins have no importance for the character of the Yugoslav community is very suspicious, basically incorrect and unacceptable' (1 February 1970, 1987:237).

<sup>26</sup> This argument was heard at the session of the enlarged political leadership (the so-called 'Political Activ') of Djakovica and Peć (Mišović, 1987:133).

'nations'. While the Albanian intellectual elite demanded the abolition of the term 'nationality' and the use of the word 'nation' for the Albanians, the political elite found a compromise: Yugoslavia was to be a state 'of equal nations and nationalities'.

These issues, however, split the Albanian and Serb leaders at each level. The Albanian intellectual elite was dissatisfied with the proposals of its political elite, demanding a referendum on them. When they failed to secure one through the institutions, they urged and organised student demonstrations in 1968. The demands of the students were the same as those of their professors: a Kosovo republic. The Communist leadership of Kosovo, however, also split on how to react to such demands. The majority (led by young Mahmut Bakalli and Fadil Hoxha, the doyen of Kosovo politicians and representative of Kosovo in the Belgrade federal leadership) was opposed to harsh measures against them, since this would destroy the Kosovo intelligentsia and recall the worst days of Aleksandar Ranković only two years after his removal.

The Serbs in the Kosovo leadership also split into two groups. While one argued that the demand for a Kosovo Republic was nationalistic and counter-revolutionary, the most prominent political representative of the Kosovo Serbs (Katarina Patrnogić Išma) was of a different opinion. She argued that the issue of republic or province was only secondary to the class dimension of the problem. Although a Serb herself, Patrnogić was seen by Serbian leaders as a promoter of the demand for a Kosovo Republic (Marković, 20 July 1968, 1987:79).

Finally, the Serbian leaders also differed on how to approach Kosovo's demands. Miloš Minić showed much more willingness to compromise than others. Minić argued that 'in the system of self-management every socio-political community has some elements of sovereignty, and thus the provinces have it as well, for which reason we could think of Kosovo becoming a republic' (Marković, 2 June 1968, 1988:68). Dobrivoje Radosavljević, a leading Serbian Communist, was also 'soft' on the Kosovo issue. He was 'obsessed', Marković said, by the 'Serbian historical opportunity' to prove that the Serbs did not want to suppress the Albanians, and was, therefore, willing to compromise perhaps even on the issue of a Republic of Kosovo (Marković, 11 May 1968, 1988:66). But the majority of Serbian leaders rejected any possibility of such a prospect. In this, they had Tito's support,<sup>27</sup> and the tacit agreement of the other Yugoslav

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<sup>27</sup> Dragoslav Marković summarised Tito's position on this issue expressed in their talk on 27 January 1971: 'A Republic is out of the question, as well as any solution which might suggest a republic, when it comes to the provinces, and especially to Kosovo. It is also out of the question to have a President of the Presidency from the provinces (except if he was elected as a Serbian representative); maybe the Vice-President' (Marković, 1987:256). However, Tito later agreed on having Presidents from the provinces. Tito told the Kosovo leaders directly that they could not count on his support if they asked for a republic (30 January 1977; Marković, 1988:259). But, he also 'made too many concessions to them', as Petar Stambolić recalls (Djukić, 1992:242).

Republics, whose interest was only to keep the issue of provinces strictly within Serbia.<sup>28</sup> After a heated debate the Serbian leaders accepted some compromises and came closer to the Kosovo Communist leaders, but on the clear understanding that 'statehood' for Kosovo was out of the question.<sup>29</sup> Kosovo and Vojvodina were declared to be 'constitutive elements of the Federation' and were represented in all federal institutions directly, independently of Serbia, but the demand for a republic was swiftly rejected. As with other parts of Yugoslavia, the 1974 compromise left both sides equally dissatisfied (in as much as they were equally satisfied) and convinced that they could have got much more but for their 'soft' Communist leaders. But for Kosovo intellectuals there was one more lesson they learnt: that their status in Yugoslavia was not given once and for ever, and that it could well be changed if there was the political will for this. As one of the participants in the 1968 Constitutional debate in the Kosovo town of Dragaš said: 'There will be no Republic as long as Tito is alive' (Mišović, 1987:162). But, everyone knew that this would not be forever. And, just like the Serbs, whose 'Blue Book' initiative was rejected by Tito, the nationalist Albanians waited for this moment to come. In the meantime, both sides were 'mobilising public opinion' to support their views (Mišović, 1987:187).

### 5.2.2. The 1981 Protests in Kosovo: the Beginning of the State-Crisis of Yugoslavia

It is today widely argued that the Yugoslav crisis began with the Albanian demonstrations in Kosovo 1981. In analysing the Albanian public protests, many authors saw these as the first public sign of discontent with the solution of the national question, which was meant to be finally off the agenda following the semi-confederalisation of the 1974 Constitution. The Albanian demonstrations are treated as the first if not secessionist, then certainly nationalist demand in a long chain of those that followed it in the last decade of Yugoslavia.

However, a detailed analysis of the 1981 demonstrations of Albanian students in Kosovo shows that the wider social and ideological dimension of their protests is today often neglected. Although there should be no doubt that *national question* inspired many participants in them, I argue that the protests of the Kosovo Albanians in 1981 were not only – and to certain extent even not primarily – motivated by nationalism, but also by egalitarianism, i.e., by a different concept of socialism from the Yugoslav self-managing and semi-confederalist one. The Albanian students, I argue, saw in Enver Hoxha's Albania and in Soviet-type state-socialism a suitable alternative to what they recognised as injustice in the economic, political and ethnic sense. To Yugoslav political leaders, therefore, their protests looked exactly the type of danger that Kardelj predicted as possible after his and Tito's death. The egalitarian demands of the

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<sup>28</sup> The other republics opposed any generalisation of the issue of provinces, fearing that this might encourage ethnic groups in their republics to demand the status of provinces.

<sup>29</sup> Marković, 1 November 1968 (1987:96).

Albanian students in Kosovo posed therefore the greatest possible danger for the Yugoslav self-managing project, not only because they could destabilise the fragile balance between ethnic groups in the country, but also because they threatened to produce state socialism as its ultimate result.

It is in this light, I argue, that one should understand the reasons why the Yugoslav leaders labelled the organisers of the public protests 'counter-revolutionaries', and not only 'ethnic separatists' or 'secessionists'. It is also, I argue, for this reason that the regime decided (unlike in the 1968 Belgrade demonstrations, and even after the 1971 'Croatian Spring' protests) not to compromise on the students' demands but to suppress them by all available means.

The social and ideological dimension of the problem may be traced down in the chronology of the actual events. It all began with discontent over bad food and low quality of services in the Student Refectory in Priština on 11 March 1981 and continued in street demonstrations that night.<sup>30</sup> Few others joined the protest which seemed to be purely socially motivated. However, when a rumour spread that police had arrested a few demonstrators, the students went on the streets of Priština. Together with the people who joined them, there were from three to four thousand demonstrators. Their main slogans were almost exclusively ideological and directed against what the demonstrators felt to be injustice in a regime that promised justice: 'We want deeds, not words', 'Some sleep in arm-chairs, others are without bread', 'We want our friends back from prison', etc. (Report, 1981:5). With only rare exceptions, no nationalist slogans were shouted, and ethnic issues seemed not to be on the agenda. The demonstrations ended with police intervention at 2.30 a.m. next morning. About a hundred demonstrators were arrested. The political leadership of Priština, which was summoned next day, concluded that the demonstrations had surprised them, since there 'had been no indication of them before they happened' (Report, 1981:7). Although they recognised that the main demands were about student welfare, they assessed the demonstrations as 'politically damaging' (Report, 1981:7) since they could be used by 'enemies'.

It seemed that this was only an episode, since in the next two weeks there were no similar protests. But, on 26 March, when it was obvious that some of the detained demonstrators had not been released as expected, the demonstrations were renewed throughout the Province. In Priština, several thousand demonstrators clashed with police who prevented them from approaching the central city square where the 'Relay of Youth' (*Štafeta Mladosti*) was expected on its way through the country. Unlike on the occasion of the previous protests, their demands

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<sup>30</sup> The events are here described using newspaper reports collected in *Šta se dogodjalo na Kosovu*, 1981; as well as books by the leading Kosovo politician Sinan Hasani (1986), Horvat (1988) and Mertus (1999). The RFE/RL Reports and Analyses are also a helpful source (esp. see 7 April 1981 and 28 April 1981). I used my talks with several Kosovo Albanians to reconstruct the events and interpretation among the participants and Kosovo population.

were now political as well as economic: 'We are Albanians, not Yugoslavs', 'Kosova<sup>31</sup> Republic', 'Unity', 'Unity with Albania', 'Trepça [the main Kosovo mine-industry - a symbol of the Kosovo working class] is working for others', 'Trepça works, Belgrade builds', 'Long live Marxism - Leninism, Down with Revisionism', etc. In contrast to the previous one, this demonstration intended to use the ethnic dimension of the problem, claiming the ethnic inequality of Kosovo Albanians. By adding ethnic and ideological dimensions to the already existent social and economic ones, the protests became a potential source of destabilisation of the whole system.

This is why the political elite reacted brutally, sparing no force to crush the Kosovo demonstrations. In clashes between demonstrators and police on the first day of demonstrations, 32 demonstrators were injured (Report, 1981:11). On 28 March 1981 Aslan Fazlia, president of the party organisation in Priština (Albanian himself) said that the character of the demonstrations was nationalistic and counter-revolutionary. Fazlia announced tough police measures against the demonstrators. Full-scale arrests were launched in Kosovo. This, however, only fuelled students' protests. Many students saw the wave of coercion as a 'return of Ranković's methods' once Tito had gone. Two days later, on 30 March 1981, students of the three largest faculties at Priština University (Law, Economics and Science-Maths) declared a boycott of teaching. On 1 April 1981 the demonstrations swept all over Kosovo, with new and more radical political demands. When 17 policemen were injured in clashes with demonstrators, the Army moved in to secure state institutions. The police did not manage to break up the demonstrations that day. When the reports came that some workers had joined the demonstrations, the Committee for People's Self-Defence of Kosovo (the crisis headquarters of the Kosovo leadership, presided over by Party President Mahmut Bakalli) decided to ask the Army to move tanks onto the streets. At the same time, police reinforcements from Central Serbia were stopped by a road block near Podujevo. In order to force the police to withdraw back to 'Serbia' (i.e., territory of the republic outside provinces), the demonstrators took hostages from 34 houses of local Serbs and Montenegrins. Only when additional police came from Priština, were the hostages released. Throughout Kosovo windows were smashed in many cars, shops and state institutions. Demonstrators demanded a republic, 'unification of all Albanian territories', and 'brotherhood among Albanians' (Horvat, 1988:140). In Belgrade, an urgent joint meeting of the Presidency of Yugoslavia and the Presidency of the LCY was convened. The Yugoslav leaders declared a 'crisis situation in Kosovo' and a 'state of emergency in Priština'. They ordered the level of combat readiness to be increased in all Army units in Yugoslavia, and the reserve force of the Army and Police to be mobilised. All republics were asked to send their police troops to Kosovo. The Kosovo Minister of the Interior banned public meetings in the province, while the Government of Kosovo (Executive Council of the Province)

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<sup>31</sup> Kosova is the Albanian name for Kosovo. In this dissertation I use this term when the source is translated from Albanian.

ordered all schools, the University and other student institutions (halls of residences, refectories, etc.) to be closed.

However, on 3 April 1981 the demonstrations re-emerged in Vučitrn, Uroševac, Vitina and Kosovska Mitrovica. New slogans were added: 'We don't want our children to be beaten up by the police from outside Kosovo', 'Republic, Constitution, by agreement or by force', etc. But, the additional police force with full authority (from federal, republican and provincial institutions) to react immediately and resolutely, prevented these and further demonstrations in Kosovo. The situation was finally under police control. But it was only the beginning of the deep state-crisis in Yugoslavia, one that would lead to its dissolution.

### 5.2.3. The Reaction of the Elite

We are here, however, interested not in the demonstrations as such, but in the reaction of the political elites, and the consequences of their interpretation of events for further political events in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav leaders, as they publicly admitted, were surprised by what happened.<sup>32</sup> The federal institutions relied on the reports by the leadership of the Province, which simply painted the situation in the Province in bright colours.<sup>33</sup> When the demonstrations occurred in 1981, both the Federal leadership and that of Serbia claimed that they had no independent access to the real situation in the Province. What surprised them most was the extent of the violence used by the demonstrators and the relatively large participation. The panic reaction of the Yugoslav leadership (which declared 'a state emergency' in the Province and sent the armed forces to crush the demonstrations, as well as launching an overwhelming campaign to condemn and prosecute demonstrators) was a consequence of this.<sup>34</sup>

Tito visited Kosovo in 1979 in his last major visit to any republic/province before his death. This is how Dušan Dragosavac, then the Secretary of the LCY Central Committee, describes Tito's impressions, in the interview I conducted with him in April 1998:

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<sup>32</sup> Dušan Dragosavac in the interview in April 1998.

<sup>33</sup> In the interview I conducted for *Polet* in January 1986, Sergej Kraigher (Slovenia) who was Vice-President of the Yugoslav State Presidency at the time of the Kosovo demonstrations, said that the leaders were surprised because the previous reports did not indicate any problems, apart from economic ones, in Kosovo. This part of my interview is quoted in Mišović (1987:445).

<sup>34</sup> In the interview I conducted in February 1998, one of the leading Belgrade dissidents at that time, Lazar Stojanović recalled that the regime had tolerated many petitions they had organised, but not the one on Kosovo. The petition protested against the police repression in Kosovo and was signed by 113 students from Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade. Solidarity between students threatened to undermine the rhetoric of the regime that the demonstrations were nationalistic.

'I travelled in the same car with Tito, which enabled me to observe his reaction. He was most fascinated by what we saw. There were thousands and thousands of flags of all types: Albanian, Serbian, Yugoslav, Party, even Turkish, etc. He was also impressed with the folk customs, the well built villages and the young girls in jeans. At one moment, he told me: 'You see, here - it was absolutely impossible to see young girls without a (Muslim) veil immediately after the war, and now - they wear jeans!' Then we met a young couple, just married: they brought flowers to the monument of Boro and Ramiz.<sup>35</sup> All this impressed him very much... He was also pleased to hear an Albanian, the party secretary in Priština address him in very good, entirely fluent Serbian.'<sup>36</sup>

Despite this idyllic reception in Kosovo, Tito was informed about the findings of the Party special Commission on the nationality question, chaired by Dušan Dragosavac. The Commission was created in 1978, and presented its report in 1979.

'The main conclusion was that there were no major inter-ethnic problems in Yugoslavia, except as regards two ethnic groups: the Romanies and the Albanians... We had concluded that the Albanians had developed to a level at which their aspirations rose higher than the opportunities we could offer. This had created economic and potentially political problems, which we did not know how to deal with.'<sup>37</sup>

Tito 'was surprised' at this finding, but used his visit to warn once again about the necessity to preserve a good relationship between Serbs and Albanians, and invited other Republics to help speed up the development of Kosovo.<sup>38</sup>

The Kosovo events were the first sign of public discontent with the Constitution of Yugoslavia after 1974. It was particularly unpleasant since it happened less than a year after Tito's death, had a relatively mass character and may have had an international dimension.<sup>39</sup> In many respects, it reminded the Yugoslav leadership of the 1968 demonstrations in Belgrade and those of 1971 in Zagreb. Having still fresh in their minds the memory of Tito's swift reaction on both occasions, they did not want to fall short of the Titoist formula.

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<sup>35</sup> Boro (Vukmirović) and Ramiz (Sadiku), Serb and Albanian partisans, were war heroes shot together by the Italians in 1942. In post-war Yugoslavia they symbolised 'brotherhood and unity' among Serbs and Albanians.

<sup>36</sup> One should here remember what Draža Marković wrote about Tito's visit to Kosovo in 1975 - that the Kosovo leadership deliberately wanted to demonstrate the direct link between them and Tito (which was like, not only symbolically, that between Kosovo and Yugoslavia), and that for this reason they exaggerated the formality and warmth of his reception. Also, this all happened after Tito's 1977 visit to Beijing and Pnom Pen, after which the Yugoslavs wanted to repeat the grandeur of the Chinese and Korean receptions. Finally, Tito was 87 and everyone knew how much he enjoyed such events.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Dragosavac, April 1998.

<sup>38</sup> Which they, actually, did. Due to increased federal assistance, Kosovo reached 38.9% of the Yugoslav average GDP in 1981 (from 33.8% in 1963), only to fall to 28.2% in the year following the demonstrations (1982). See table 1 in Chapter Four.

<sup>39</sup> A very good overview of the Kosovo events, together with the necessary background information may be found in RFE/RL Reports and Analyses of 7 April 1981 and 28 April 1981.

But, in as much as the demonstrations were a serious threat to the stability of the regime, they proved to be a perfect opportunity to launch a new campaign for structural changes in the Yugoslav political system. In this context one should understand why the various groups within the elite did not attempt to remove the event from the agenda as soon as possible, but - on the contrary - even blew it up out of all proportion, taking into account that it was successfully crushed by the police, and that neither in its real size (it was localised and with a limited number of victims) nor in its results did it deserve to be given such attention. In the debate that followed, the Kosovo crisis proved to be the perfect case to be exploited by: 1) the Serbian leadership - which argued that this was a necessary and unavoidable consequence of the overall disintegration of the country and of the rejection of the 1977 'Blue Book' initiative; 2) the Yugoslav leaders - who argued that Yugoslavia was endangered and that the real threat came - as Kardelj wrote - from 'dogmatist' and 'state socialist' forces; 3) the new leaders in Kosovo<sup>40</sup> - who manipulated them in order to show that their predecessors were incompetent; 4) the 'Belgrade critical intelligentsia', who used it to revive Čosić's and Ranković's position on Kosovo; 5) the Albanian nationalists themselves, who argued that they had much stronger support among the Albanians than was really the case. Later in this Chapter, I will map out the official discourses of the first three groups - the Yugoslav, Serbian and Kosovo political elite, while in the next two Chapters I will analyse the reaction of various groups in opposition to the regime, following the protests in Kosovo. I argue that the same ideological commitment, which prevented the Yugoslav leaders from changing the obviously inefficient economic system, now caused the stalemate in their action on the Kosovo issue. It was their commitment to Kardelj's 'constitutive concept' that motivated their actions.

### 5.2.3.1. Discourse One: The Federal Political Elite's Reaction to the Kosovo Protests of 1981

Among the Yugoslav leaders some differences occurred over the relative importance of the various causes of the crisis.<sup>41</sup> But, the majority of them agreed on four points, which then became the mainstream interpretation of the Kosovo events by the Yugoslav political leaders in the first half of the 1980s, only to be changed with Milošević's rise to power in 1987.

Firstly, the demonstrations were an expression of class struggle (Bakalli, 1981:45) and they constituted a counter-revolution (Vlaškalčić, 1981:90, Krunić: 1981:130). As a counter-revolution, they were 'directed against all nations and nationalities in Kosovo' (Vlaškalčić, 1981:90), which,

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<sup>40</sup> Immediately after the demonstrations, the Party President of Kosovo Mahmut Bakalli, and the Kosovo President Xhavid Nimani resigned. In the 1990s, Bakalli re-appeared in politics, as one of the chief leaders of the 'Titoists', the 'moderate' faction of the Albanian movement in Kosovo.

<sup>41</sup> The conflict was over the extent to which external factors played a role in this crisis. Also, the Slovenian and Croatian leaders emphasised 'the crisis of self-management' and economic crisis while the Serbian leaders saw the main problem in the 'unregulated relations between Serbia and its provinces'.



therefore, should act together in order to defeat it. They did not constitute a conflict between the nations in Kosovo, but between the minority of discontented nationalists and the large majority of Albanians and Serbs who remained supportive of the Yugoslav system. As a hostile act, the demonstrations did not and could not succeed in involving the masses of any nation or nationality, including the Albanians in Kosovo. On the contrary, 'they have nothing in common with the real attitudes of the large majority of working people and citizens of Kosovo, with the interests of Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins and members of other nations in SAP Kosovo' (Presidency SFRY and CC LCY, 1981:20). What is more, the 'enemies and their demonstrations have failed to weaken the unity, brotherhood, togetherness and mutual respect between all nations and nationalities of Kosovo, for which one should thank the maturity and consciousness of the Albanian nationality... and its activity against Albanian nationalism within its own nation' (Nimani, 1981:22).<sup>42</sup> This is only confirmed by the fact that the Albanian leaders from Kosovo unanimously condemned the demonstrations, arguing in favour of Yugoslav unity. They really did not differ in this respect from their Serbian colleagues - on the contrary, following the Communist logic that Communists should fight against nationalism in their own nation, the Albanian Communists led this campaign.

Secondly, the main cause of unrest was alleged to be 'bureaucratic statism', which was much stronger in Kosovo than anywhere else in the country. Speaking about this, the President of the Serbian Central Committee, Tihomir Vlaškalić, said that 'socio-economic development in Kosovo was to a very large extent linked to the 'political factor'... which created conditions in which statism and bureaucratic consciousness were growing, while self-managerial practice was under-developed' (Vlaškalić, 1981:91, 94-5). Offering a highly ideological interpretation of the causes of the discontent, Vlaškalić, said that workers (and people in general) felt powerless to decide upon the results of their work. The development of self-management was, therefore, seen as the main condition for resolving the problem (Vlaškalić, 1981:94).

Thirdly, the discontent was also inspired by economic factors. This point was emphasised by non-Serbian members of the Yugoslav political elite. In the words of the Macedonian representative on the Federal Presidency, Lazar Koliševski, the unrealistic ambitions of the Kosovo leaders had contributed to this problem (Koliševski, 1981:67). This was especially the case regarding the University, which had been developed against the real needs of Kosovo industry (Shukrija, 1981:72; Koliševski, 1981:68). Such economic unrealism became a heavy

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<sup>42</sup> This attitude was later criticised by Serbian nationalists as the main illustration of the blindness of the Yugoslav political leaders and their failure to see and admit the reality in Kosovo. But, apart from its heavy ideological bias, it was correct: the demonstrations were not massive enough to be treated as an all-Albanian riot in Kosovo, nor did they have (at least originally) predominantly nationalistic demands. Also, the political leadership in Kosovo did not split on national lines when opposing the demands for a Republic. The Albanian leaders, with very few exceptions, stood firmly against the demonstrations. In fact, up until the very end of Yugoslavia (until Spring 1990) the main Albanian leaders (such as Vllasi, Kolgeci, Jashari, Shiroka, etc.) distanced themselves from the 1981 protests, treating them as 'nationalistic' and 'counter-revolutionary'.

burden on the economy and the main source of discontent among the young, educated but unemployed people in the province.<sup>43</sup> The President of the Slovene Central Committee, France Popit, concluded that 'economic nationalism' was the main cause of the Kosovo demonstrations (1981:126). Boško Šiljegović (Serbia) went a step further, arguing that 'economic nationalism' would be much harder to beat than 'ideological' nationalism (1981:133). 'We alone have created the economic basis for our own nationalisms,' Šiljegović said. Lazar Koliševski came to the same conclusion: the economic closure of the Yugoslav republics and provinces not only led to economic nationalism, but it prevented the development of a united Yugoslav working class (Koliševski, 1981:66). This all went against Kardelj's idea of the integration of Yugoslavia through the association of free producers. Economic disintegration was, therefore, seen as the major cause of Albanian nationalism in Kosovo.

Fourthly, the influence from abroad (mostly from the neighbouring and Communist Albania of Enver Hoxha) was declared to be another important element. At first, the Yugoslav leaders hesitated to accuse Albania of encouraging demonstrations in Kosovo (Dolanc, 1981:35). But, on 8 April 1981, Zëri i Popullit, the main Albanian daily from Tirana, published a commentary on the Kosovo events, in which Yugoslavia was criticised for using police force against the demonstrators. The Albanian daily saw in the police intervention a 're-appearance of the old spirit of the Karadjordjevićs and the shadow of Ranković', and warned Belgrade that it 'should not have happened that Serbian militia, armed to the teeth, surrounded Kosovo cities...' (1981:40-1). Zëri i Popullit called Kosovo students 'brave' and reminded Yugoslavia that 'the Albanian population - living as a compact unit on a compact territory - was divided between three republics of the Yugoslav federation', and that 'in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Kosovo and wherever Albanians live, a Muslim nationality has been created. It has been said that the Muslim nationality was a specificity of Yugoslavia,' Zëri i Popullit said, arguing that the 'Muslim nationality' was invented only to reduce the number of Albanians living in these three republics. The article invited Belgrade to respect 'democratic freedoms and political rights', which met with a strong response in a commentary published by Politika the next day: 'A regime known as a bunker of ultra-Stalinist dogmatism and despotism, known for its police terror against its own citizens, in which the regime has not succeeded in attaining even a similar level of development to that of Kosovo, has tried to present itself as a 'defender of human rights', 'democracy and freedom', wrote Politika, presenting figures and facts about Kosovo's rapid development. Priština's daily in the Albanian language Rilindja also criticised Tirana for the commentary in a Zëri i Popullit (1981:42-4). The polemics continued on 17 May 1981, when

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<sup>43</sup> The President of the Yugoslav Party Presidency, the Macedonian Lazar Mojsov, mentioned a tendency to dramatise about the real level of under-development in Kosovo. Kosovo, said Mojsov, really was the least developed Yugoslav region, but its leaders endlessly repeated this fact in order to secure more investments for the province. At the same time, however, positive economic results in the province were neglected (Mojsov, 1981:118). Another Macedonian member of the Central Committee of the LCY - Vaska Duganova - said that there could be no 'European development with an Asiatic birth rate' (1981:137), alluding to the Kosovo Albanians, whose birth rate was the highest in Europe.

an unsigned long article was published in Zëri i Popullit, entitled 'The status of a republic for Kosova is a just demand'.<sup>44</sup> 'Kosova seeks the status of a Republic within the Yugoslav Federation. This status represents the aspiration of a great people, who rightly demand the 'status of sovereignty' and not that of a 'national minority', which it was unjustly allocated at Jajce<sup>45</sup>... The Albanian official daily then reminded the Serbian leaders (especially Petar Stambolić, whom they called an 'incorrigible Great-Serb') that the Albanians are 'one ethnic entity, one people'. Repeating the arguments of the Albanian intellectuals of 1968, Zëri i Popullit said:

'There are two Germanies, one in the East and one in the West, just as there are two Koreas, one North and one South. However, nobody doubts that there is a single German people and nation, just as there is a single Korean people and nation' (ZP: 1981:52).

Naturally, this stand by the Tirana daily encouraged the conclusion that the demonstrations in Kosovo were organised and supported by the most rigid Stalinist regime of the time. At the Session of the Central Committee of the LCY on 6 May 1981 the President of the Serbian Presidency Dobrivoje Vidić accused Enver Hoxha of inspiring the riot in his speech of 8 November 1978, in which he said that 'Albanians in Yugoslavia were more numerous than two Yugoslav republics together, that they were one nation, which was deliberately divided between two republics and one province and that the Albanians in Yugoslavia had no Constitutional rights'(1981:125). Macedonian Lazar Mojsov mentioned the clandestine activities of 'Albanian spies' as the main cause of the events (1981:121). Some Yugoslav party leaders admitted their surprise over the fact that an ideology and system such as the Albanian Stalinism of Enver Hoxha could have attracted any support among Kosovo Albanians, whose level of freedom and of economic wealth was significantly higher than those of the Albanians in Albania. But, to Miloš Minić (one of the leading 'Kardeljists' in the Serbian and Yugoslav political elite) this was just a confirmation of how right Kardelj was when he claimed that Stalinism was a much more realistic (and, therefore, more dangerous) alternative than liberalism in Yugoslavia (Minić, 1981:140; Koliševski, 1981:66). The Yugoslav leaders used this opportunity to re-affirm another postulate of their rhetoric: that both 'ultra-left' and 'ultra-right' forces were hostile to self-management. The Albanian Party of Labour (and - naturally - the Albanian demonstrators in Kosovo) was a force which united two such concepts: Stalinism as ultra-left and nationalism as ultra-right (Hasani, 1981:75). An additional illustration of this left-right co-operation against Yugoslav self-management was found in the political composition of the Kosovo émigrés who supported the demonstrations: 'the Balists' (Albanian wartime

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<sup>44</sup> The article was then published as a book with the same title. It is widely believed that the Albanian Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu was the author of this article.

<sup>45</sup> Jajce is a town in central Bosnia where the Second Convention of AVNOJ was held on 29 November 1943 - the symbol of Communist Yugoslavia.

Quislings) and the Cominformists (post-war pro-Stalinists) were acting together (Dolanc, 1981:31). Paradoxically, Yugoslav leaders succeeded in presenting the Kosovo events as perfect evidence of how far-sighted the LCY analysis was.<sup>46</sup>

### 5.2.3.2. Discourse Two: The Serbian Political Elite's Reaction to the Kosovo Protests of 1981

While most Yugoslav politicians agreed with these three main points, the differences became unbridgeable on the fifth potential cause of the Kosovo event, which Serbian leaders suggested as the most important - relations within Serbia. Serbian leaders argued that the '1978 compromise' on the Blue Book was the major reason for the emergence of the 1981 Kosovo crisis. The Serbian position was formulated at the Session of the Central Committee of the LC Serbia on 6 May 1981 to be elaborated at the November 1981 and December 1984 sessions held on the Kosovo situation.

Serbian leaders used the 1981 demonstrations to re-launch a campaign for changes in the relations between the Republic and provinces, which had been abruptly stopped by Tito in 1978. Dragoslav Marković, the leading author of the 'Blue Book' of 1977, now appeared as the sharpest critic of the Yugoslav refusal to confront the policy of the political closure in both provinces. The events in Kosovo, Marković argued, were the result of a policy which was not to be attributed only to Kosovo, but to Vojvodina and to the Yugoslav republics in general (1981:99). He reminded members of the CC that equality of status between Serbia and its provinces was 'clearly anti-constitutional'. The illusion that this could change, and that provinces could become equal to republics, was the main reason for dissatisfaction in Kosovo. Talking about Kosovo, but thinking also about Vojvodina, he said that 'Kosovo has its own republic, and that is Serbia.'

'The disintegration of Serbia would be only the first step towards the disintegration of Yugoslavia... The unresolved issue of the Constitutional structuring of Serbia is today the only real social, the only socio-economic and socio-political root of Serbian nationalism which has not yet been cut', said Marković (1981:103).

Opening up (for the first time since Čosić's debate in 1968) the issue of the exodus of the Kosovo Serbs in the past 20 years, Marković warned members of the Serbian Central Committee that they should not bear any sense of 'guilt', when they raised their voices against such a tragedy.

'It is not a natural matter that the ethnic composition of those who left Kosovo is such

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<sup>46</sup> However, one member of the Yugoslav Central Committee, Slovene Jože Smole, disagreed on this issue, saying that the international dimension was over-emphasised. Even if it existed, Smole said, it could not have been successful without domestic support (Smole, 1981:143).

that the majority of them were Serbs and Montenegrins,' he said.

Marković concluded his speech quoting from Tito's speech in Zagreb in May 1945. Tito then said:

'Many still do not understand what Federative Yugoslavia means... It does not mean drawing a borderline between this and that federal unit, so that behind it they can do whatever they want or can, and I am here going to do what I can do. No! These borders, to make a comparison, ought to be like the white bands on one marble pillar. The borders of the federal republics in Federal Yugoslavia are not borders of division, they are borders of unification' (Tito, quoted by Marković, 1981:101).

Marković's speech met with support from three other leading Serbian politicians: Špiro Galović, Petar Stambolić and Ivan Stambolić.<sup>47</sup> These four politicians, two of whom (P. Stambolić and Marković) were of an older and two (Galović and I. Stambolić) of a younger generation formulated the Serbian discourse on the Kosovo crisis in 1981 and on the relationship between Serbia and its provinces between 1981 and 1984.<sup>48</sup>

The main elements of the Serbian discourse on Kosovo were:

1. Economic crisis, Kosovo and its relationship to Serbia are indicators and the outcome of the same problem - disintegration in Yugoslavia. Therefore, they should be treated at one and at the same time.

2. The disintegration is a result of misinterpretation of the Constitution (Stambolić, 1981/1988:61) and of its obstruction by bureaucratic statism. Nationalism is an anti-self-management action tolerated, supported and even directly organised by bureaucratic state structures throughout the country. In Serbia, this bureaucratic statism had its base in 'autonomism' in Vojvodina and 'separatism' in Kosovo. Although the bureaucrats based their legitimacy on their endless attacks on 'enemies', they left the issue of their own responsibility for the political and economic crisis untouched (Galović, 1989:80).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Marković was in 1981 President of the Yugoslav Assembly. In 1982 he was elected a member of the Yugoslav Party Presidency, in which he held the post of President in 1983-84. In 1986 he retired in protest against the election of Slobodan Milošević as President of the Serbian LC CC. Petar Stambolić was the Serbian representative in the Yugoslav Presidency (1974-1984), where he was Vice-President (1981-1982) and President (1982-1983). Ivan Stambolić, his nephew, was President of the Executive Council of Serbia (Serbian Prime Minister) in 1978-1982, President of the Belgrade Party Organisation in 1982-1984, President of the Serbian LC Central Committee (1984-1986) and President of the Presidency of Serbia (1986-1987) before he was forced to resign following his conflict with Slobodan Milošević and the majority of the Serbian CC. Finally, Špiro Galović was a member of the Presidency of the Serbian Central Committee in charge of ideology (1978-1982) and its secretary (1982-1984). All four politicians, just like almost all other members of their political generation, have been sharp critics of Slobodan Milošević, at least since 1988.

<sup>48</sup> By 1984, I. Stambolić had succeeded in decreasing the influence of his three colleagues and promoting himself to be the new leader of Serbia. In Slobodan Milošević (and, to some extent, in Dragiša Pavlović) he found his closest support.

<sup>49</sup> The rhetoric against 'statists' and 'bureaucrats' was Kardeljist.

3. Self-management remains the main ideological postulate, one which should not be abandoned. It was once again treated as 'the basis of democratic solutions of the national question' in Yugoslavia (Galović, 1981/1989:130), and as the pre-condition for the resolution of the economic crisis (Stambolić, 1981/1988:50). The society of the future should be an integrated self-managing community of people (Stambolić, 1983/1988:63). But, in as much as self-management was to be developed as a substitute for statism, Stambolić clearly objected to 'illusions' that the state itself was an enemy of self-management and to its being equated with 'statism' (1984/1988:90). The 'autonomists' were protecting state functions where they were not necessary and obstructing them when they needed to be protected or developed.

4. Just as the state should not be equated with 'statism', so unity should not be treated as 'centralism'. There is only one working class in Yugoslavia, and it should be united. The (Vladimir Bakarić's) idea of 'national economies' had been accepted without serious thought about the consequences. It led to nationalism (Stambolić, 1981/1988:23).

5. Serbian Communists continued to oppose any re-centralisation (Galović, 1981/1989:130), but centralism, they argued, was not a realistic danger in present circumstances. The federal state was so weak that it could not, even if it wanted, encourage or support any idea of renewal of centralism in Yugoslavia (Galović, 1981/1989:81). On the other hand, the 'de-centralised statism' in the republics and provinces was a real danger. This, it should be noted, was a departure from Kardelj's beliefs that Yugoslavia could be endangered by centralisation and not by disintegration.

6. 'Particularism' and 'autarkism' were developed not only in Kosovo, but as a general trend in Yugoslavia. 'Without other particularism in Yugoslavia, there would be no Kosovo particularism' (Galović, 1981/1989:36). On the issue of autonomy, the two Serbian provinces shared thoughts and practice (Stambolić, 1981/1988:57). Particularism led the country to the brink of dissolution. Unrealistic investment was the result of 'everybody's closing in on themselves and trying to structure their industry as if Yugoslavia would disintegrate at any moment' (Galović, 1981/1989:37). Such a policy simply did not count with Yugoslavia any longer. By doing this, 'subjective forces' (including the Party) 'expressed their concerns with the interests of their own nation to such an extent and in such a manner that it became difficult to distinguish them from nationalist rhetoric' (Galović, 1981/1989:38). This tendency must be stopped. If not, then 'Communists would, whether they wanted to or not, find themselves in conflict with one another on a nationalist basis, in a dispute in which their arguments and rhetoric would not differ much from those in a bourgeois society' (Galović, 1981/1989:38). The slogan 'Kosovo-Republic' in fact meant 'Province = Republic' and this is what should not be tolerated (Stambolić, 1981/1988:62). Action should be therefore taken not only against the

current Kosovo leadership, but against all other 'autonomists' and 'particularists' in the country.

7. With regard to Serbian nationalism, Serbian Communists concluded that they would not change their position. In their opposition to Serbian nationalism they could not be mistaken, even when acting too eagerly (Stambolić, 1981/1988:22). But, nationalism could be defeated only at its 'root', and, as Marković said, 'the only still uncut root of Serbian nationalism was in the undefined relations in Serbia'. If the problems in Kosovo were not resolved, Petar Stambolić said, Serbian Communists would face 'a serious task in fighting Serbian nationalism' (Report, 1981:128). Verbal opposition to nationalist books, plays and pamphlets should be only a part of the public action against nationalism. It was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for its defeat. By emphasising only its 'verbal side', Communists spent too much energy fighting nationalism in an inefficient way: they did not attack 'the main reasons for its appearance, which could be found only in bureaucratic statism' (Galović, 1981/1989:56,68). The focus of anti-nationalist activities should, therefore, be shifted to real problems. Instead of being 'socialist apostles', Communists should eliminate the real generators of nationalism. 'Criticism of autarky would miss the target if it did not aim at what 'legimitises' the autarky' (Galović, 1981/1989:59).

8. It is true that every nationalism is dangerous and should meet with sincere and strong opposition (Galović, 1981/1989:132), primarily by the Communists in the nation in which it appears. But, not all nationalisms are equally dangerous at the same time. At this moment, the most dangerous is Albanian nationalism, since this is the one which is active. The danger of Albanian nationalism is still neglected. By talking about nationalism *in abstracto*, one could even encourage the really active nationalists.

9. No one in Yugoslavia has reason to fear a 'strong and united Serbia'. A strong and united Serbia is a pre-condition, and not a hindrance for a strong and united Yugoslavia. The idea that a 'weak Serbia' means a 'strong Yugoslavia' was damaging and should be abandoned (Koliševski, 1981:67).

10. The debate on the relationship between Serbia and its provinces in 1977 - 1978 was based on a wrong assessment of the situation, and Communists should 'be brave enough to admit it'.<sup>50</sup> Ignoring the facts and warnings expressed in this debate (mostly in the 'Blue Book') resulted in the 'surprise' at the 1981 events in Kosovo (Stambolić, 1981/1988:56).

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<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, Jože Smole, a Slovenian member of the Yugoslav Central Committee, also said that, unfortunately, the problems had not been resolved in 1977. In 1989 Smole became one of the Slovenian politicians most criticised by the Serbian 'anti-bureaucratic revolution'.

11. In general, Communists should not be 'hostages' of their own regulations and laws. 'De-Kardeljisation' would not occur as a consequence of changes, but from a refusal to change laws, which caused inefficiency and disintegration. When Serbian Communists did not propose changes in the Constitution, they started criticising the Associated Labour Act. It was true, Galović said, that the ALA had not been fully implemented, but one should ask why this was the case (1981/1989:134). 'In a normative sense, we have been too optimistic... In regard to some provisions, we need to start from the beginning,' Stambolić argued in 1983 (1988:72). The interests of the working class were still at the focus of Communist rhetoric. But, to the Serbian Communists, it had become clear that anything that went against the efficiency and unity of the working class, went against its interests (Stambolić, 1983/1988:79).

12. Finally, the Stabilization Programme (Kraigher's Programme) was seen as a good first step towards economic reforms. It was welcomed for four reasons: a) it was an example of a *modus operandi* between politicians and experts; b) it proved that co-operation on the Yugoslav level was not only possible, but much easier among experts than among 'bureaucratic elites'; c) it demanded a radical reversal of the disintegration of the economy; and d) it recognised that Serbia was economically lagging behind the other republics (Stambolić, 1984/1989:89). But this Programme met with strong political resistance from 'statists' and was, therefore, facing failure. Economic reform was, therefore, impossible as long as political issues had not been debated (Galović, 1984/1989:60). Political reform was the pre-condition for the resolution of both the Kosovo and the economic crisis in the country.

By arguing in favour of political reforms and for changes in political practice, Serbian communists now became the leading 'reformers' within the Yugoslav political elite. Their demand for reforms (for which they were soon named 'reformers of the Constitution' – *ustavoreformatori*, by their opponents, the 'defenders of the Constitution' – *ustavobranitelji*)<sup>51</sup> pushed them into conflict with the most loyal Kardeljists in other republics (especially in Slovenia) and in both Serbian provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina).

### 5.2.3.3. The Discourse Three: the Provinces

The main position of the provinces (formulated mostly by Vojvodina, which took over the role of the mouthpiece for the weakened Kosovo)<sup>52</sup> can be summarised in the following four points:

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<sup>51</sup> The term *ustavobranitelji* has a historical connotation - it was used to mark progressive (pro-constitutional, liberal) forces in Serbian politics in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. One needs to notice here that to 'defend the Constitution' now became a position deserving political denunciation in Serbian political glossary.

<sup>52</sup> The leading 'autonomists' and 'defenders of the Constitution' within the leadership of Vojvodina were Serbs - Dušan Popović, the ideologue of the Provincial Committee, and Boško Krunic, the President of the Provincial Committee of the LC Vojvodina. This fact only confirms our conclusion that political divisions were not at that time primarily motivated by ethnic issues, nor were they structured along ethnic lines. To a similar extent as with the economic debate, they cut across lines of ethnic groups, and even republican borders.



1. The core of the problem was in undeveloped self-management and not in the relationship between 'socio-political communities'. Integration in Yugoslavia could be successful only as an association of free producers, and not as 'statist integration'. The national question and self-management were inseparable processes. Any attempt to deny this would be a 'diminution of workers' rights to decide on their surplus value' (Popović, 1982:88). Any attempt by 'certain republican leaderships in the League of Communists' to bring the national relationship back to the pre-Constitutional situation... would result in a conflict with the current level of the development of self-management' (Popović, 1982:89). This would be an 'unhistorical direction'.

2. Self-management and the decentralisation of state structure are major achievements of the Yugoslav Communist movement, and as such they should not be abandoned (Popović, 1982:86). Provinces were not 'gifts' or inventions by Tito and Kardelj, but expressions of the permanent efforts of the CPY/LCY to resolve the national question in Yugoslavia. Apart from ethnic considerations, there were also historical reasons for their existence. Vojvodina and Kosovo decided to join the Republic of Serbia as separate units in 1945. In the case of Vojvodina, its status within the party structure was until 1945 equal to that of Serbia. The autonomy of the provinces was guaranteed immediately after the war and is, therefore, a non-changeable element of Yugoslav federalism.<sup>53</sup> What happened in the 1967-1974 period was only a further development of their autonomy as a consequence of the de-centralisation of Yugoslavia, and not an action against Serbia or anyone else.

3. The events in Kosovo were being used to promote the re-centralisation of Yugoslavia. Serbian nationalism was gaining strength, especially in the media and cultural institutions. 'The outburst of Albanian nationalism in Kosovo has revived all other nationalisms in Yugoslavia as a whole, and especially Greater Serbian nationalism,' said Dušan Popović.<sup>54</sup> The main idea of this nationalism was that all autonomous provinces should be abolished. The Serbian leaders had not been sufficiently aware of this danger.

4. By opening up a constitutional debate in such a form, the Serbian Communists did not help the real fight against Albanian nationalism. On the contrary, it was impossible to beat the Albanian separatists if the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina decreased.

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<sup>53</sup> The leading Vojvodina Communist Boško Krunic said at the CC LCY Session on 7 May 1981 that the provinces had decided to 'enter the Socialist Republic of Serbia' of their own free will. Autonomy was not given to them, it was the 'result of our correct policy on the nationality issue' (1981:130-1).

<sup>54</sup> For Popović's discussion at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the LCY Central Committee see: RFE/RL, 17 November 1981.

The provinces, therefore, insisted that no significant changes in the 1974 Constitution were necessary and that no 'return to statism' should be allowed. They argued that the 'class dimension' of the problem was not understood in Serbia (Krunić, 1981:130). The Communists from Vojvodina also opposed the 'soft approach' towards liberal intellectuals in Belgrade, arguing that they were in fact Serbian nationalists.<sup>55</sup> They rejected the notion that Serbian nationalism was weaker than Albanian nationalism, even at this particular moment, immediately after 1981. If the Serbian leaders, they argued, showed any sign of abandonment of the Kardeljist concept of socialism, and especially his concept of the national question, they would come close to the Serbian nationalist opposition. The Communists of Vojvodina - especially the Serbs among them - believed that it was their duty to warn about this possibility. In the early 1980s, they, therefore, became the most conservative part of the League of Communists, one that distinguished itself by its anti-democratic conservatism and by fighting 'nationalism' wherever any sign of anti-Communism appeared.<sup>56</sup>

#### 5.2.3.4. The Position of Slovenia and Croatia: the 'Defenders of the Constitution'

The other Yugoslav republics, still hesitating to change anything in the economic and especially in the political system, now found in the Vojvodina Communists an excellent ally. Their opposition to growing Serbian demands for changes now could not be dismissed as the result of their 'anti-Serbian prejudice', since the Vojvodina Serbs themselves (as well as the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs among the Communist leaders) became the most stubborn opponents of the Serbian leadership.<sup>57</sup> By restricting their action to support of their colleagues in Vojvodina, the Slovene, Bosnian, most of the Croatian and some of the Macedonian and Montenegrin members of the Central Committee tried to avoid direct involvement in the sensitive issue of relationships within Serbia. They insisted that Kosovo was primarily a Serbian issue, for which reason the issue of Kosovo was not on the agenda of any federal forum between 1981 and 1985. But, just like Tito in 1978, the federal leaders from the republics other than Serbia showed more understanding for Krunić's 'self-management' ('class') argument than for Marković's 'statist' ('nationalist') views (Slovene Smole, Macedonian Gligorov and Bosnian Mikulić). They still

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<sup>55</sup> A good example of this rhetoric is given in Dušan Popović's interview to Polet, 15 March 1985.

<sup>56</sup> One can here perhaps recall Warren Zimmermann's much later warning about the inaccuracy of equating decentralization and democratization. The last US Ambassador to socialist Yugoslavia wrote: 'In one of my first cables I cautioned Washington not to equate decentralization with democracy or centralism with authoritarianism. Those equations might have described the Soviet Union, a ruthless dictatorship from the center. But they didn't describe Yugoslavia' (1996/1999:17).

<sup>57</sup> The most illustrative documents on how different were the views of the Serbian leaders and Serbs in the leadership of other Yugoslav republics, are letters exchanged between the Serbian representative in the SFRY Presidency Petar Stambolić and the Croatian representative in the LCY Presidency, Dušan Dragosavac (a Serb from Croatia). Stambolić and Dragosavac had been in permanent disagreement on the status of the provinces and the rights of 'nationalities' (as Dragosavac called them) or 'national minorities' (the word Stambolić used). (See - Dragosavac to Stambolić 20 June 1983 and Stambolić to Dragosavac 27 June 1983; copies of the documents in my possession.)

insisted on the Kardeljist view that if anything could really endanger Yugoslavia, it was not separatism but centralism and Serbian nationalism.<sup>58</sup>

The Slovenes, and many others in the Yugoslav political elite, believed that the Serbs were using the Kosovo events to promote their demand for changes, for which reason they exaggerated the proportions of the Kosovo crisis. The leading Croatian Kardeljist Stipe Šušteršič warned his Serbian colleagues that a too rigid stand towards the Kosovo Albanians following the riots might worsen the situation in the country as a whole, since it would 'brand a great number of people (as traitors), that is, future lifelong opponents and unjustified 'national heroes'.' Šušteršič was probably speaking for the majority of Yugoslav politicians when he said that 'other Yugoslav nationalities also had their own 'greater state' nationalism', not only the Albanians.<sup>59</sup> The solution, said Šušteršič, 'was not to consider Yugoslavia a sum of states but rather as a number of self-managed associations of people, working people, and citizens'. The Slovene Party leader Mitja Ribičič also criticised the 'draconian' approach shown in the long prison sentence given to the 'Kosovo teenagers' for having demanded a 'Kosovo Republic'. In his interview to the Zagreb daily *Vjesnik* (19 September 1981), Ribičič argued that Kosovo was an economic, political and self-management problem 'rather than a problem to be dealt with by courts and prosecuting attorneys'.<sup>60</sup> For him, the main problem was 'the functioning of the self-management system in Serbia, that is, things taking place outside this system'. He also used this opportunity to conclude that 'some people in Yugoslavia would like, for the time being of course, to revise some features in the system, as if they would like to jump into the vacant post of the first theorist of the system,' replacing Kardelj in this capacity. But, Ribičič said, 'nobody can fill his place.' Yugoslav problems, Ribičič argued, could not be resolved outside Kardelj's formulas.

The Kardeljists also differed from the *reformers* in explaining the causes of the Kosovo crisis. They emphasised much more the economic side, which the Serbian President Dobrovoje Vidić claimed 'was not a cause of the riots'. To Vidić, the main reasons lay in the nationalist intentions of the real organisers of the protests, in 'autarkic' tendencies in the country and in foreign (Albanian) interference in Yugoslav (Serbian) domestic affairs.<sup>61</sup>

The arguments of Šušteršič (Croatia) and Ribičič (Slovenia) were a clear indication that their two republics had been cautious about the Serbian reaction to the Kosovo events. The argument

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<sup>58</sup> See Popović's and Krunic's speeches at the 26<sup>th</sup> CC LCY Session, 1982.

<sup>59</sup> *Nin*, 30 August 1981. See: *RFE/RL*, 17 September 1981.

<sup>60</sup> *RFE/RL*, 28 September 1981.

<sup>61</sup> *RFE/RL*, 18 May 1981.

over the 'economic' and 'political' causes of the events, which started in May 1981, never stopped until the break-up of Yugoslavia. This gap between Serbia and the others only widened in the decade that followed the Kosovo events. At the same time, the Slovenes insisted on their 'conservative revolutionarism' up until late 1988. In 1982 the President of the Slovenian Central Committee France Popit denied that Yugoslav self-management was in a crisis. The 'difficulties' Yugoslavia was facing were the result of 'opportunism in the LC and a lack of readiness to fight those who are against this policy or this system', he argued, on the lines of the Vojvodina claims that anti-Communism was taking over in the Serbian League of Communists. Popit now said that 'party responsibility must be tightened up,' and suggested Yugoslav Party 'intervention' in the Serbian Party's affairs:

'Communal party committees are responsible to the republican central committees, while the republican central committees and their presidiums should be responsible both to the LCY CC and to the CC Presidium. I have the impression that, in this respect, we have been behaving in an opportunistic way, starting with the LCY CC Presidium, which does not dare summon the party leadership of a republic for conferences because it believes that this would be taken as interference in the internal affairs of that particular republic. If it were to be said that something is not right in a republic we could not consider this to be meddling in other people's business.'<sup>62</sup>

Another leading Slovene, young rising star Milan Kučan, favoured the 'revolutionary' approach in polemics with his Serbian colleagues in the Yugoslav Central Committee.<sup>63</sup> In October 1982 Kučan was speaking for the majority in the Party when he said that 'the abandonment of Marxism turns every revolutionary party into an opportunistic and pragmatic party of the social-democratic type.' In reply to his 'revolutionary' statement, the Serbian Party Secretary Špiro Galović - a representative of the dominant view in Serbia - was much more concerned with the state and its malfunctioning:

'By reducing the relationship between our nations to relations between different countries - which has somehow been the case with us - their democratic and socialist dimension would be lost.'<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> RFE/RL, 12 October 1982.

<sup>63</sup> Dušan Dragosavac (who was a member of the LCY Presidency together with Kučan in 1982-1986) describes Kučan as one who was 'endlessly quoting Tito and Kardelj at that time, even in very informal meetings, when this was entirely inappropriate and unnecessary. I think that his turn-about after 1987-88 could, to a large extent, be explained by his earlier hard-line position. He had to prove himself as a democrat after all' (interview with Dragosavac, 15 April 1998). Dragosavac believes the same could explain the behaviour of many other Slovene leaders - who (like Ribičič and Dolanc) entered politics from the secret police or military. Stipe Šušvar, Kučan's colleague from the 1986-1990 LCY Presidency, says that many secret police people from Slovenia (like Dolanc) distinguished themselves in the 1966 action against Ranković. Kučan was appointed President of the Slovenian Parliament in 1978, while Kardelj was still the main figure in Slovenian politics. In 1982 he became Slovenian representative in the federal LCY Presidency, where he remained until 1986. He was then elected President of the Slovenian LC CC.

<sup>64</sup> Both quotations are taken from the RFE/RL report quoted in footnote 62.

Kučan was, however, not persuaded by this argument. In 1984, when the Serbs demanded significant changes in the political system, he stated:

‘It appears that from time to time we almost forget - both in society and particularly in the LCY - that our main goal is still the creation of a communist society. In abandoning this idea some people, of course, have also lost the main criterion upon which their behaviour and decisions should be based...’.<sup>65</sup>

He also warned that these unnamed individuals could fall into the trap of putting ‘everyday problems’ before ‘revolutionary goals’, thereby changing the revolutionary Communist party into a ‘pragmatic party representing social democratic principles’. With such radical revolutionary rhetoric, the Slovene and Croatian Communists rushed into conflict with the intellectual elite, not only in other republics, but in their own. By supporting the ‘conservative’ elements within the LC Serbia (which were in a minority), they gradually entered into open conflict with the Serbian political elite, which became for the first time visible in the aftermath of the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress, on 29 June 1982. In the 1982-1986 period, this conflict only widened, including economic, inter-nationality and ideological elements.<sup>66</sup> The old divide between ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ groups within the Party was now becoming institutionalised and accommodated within the new division of power in Yugoslavia, becoming more and more a conflict between various republican leaderships. It is within this general trend that one can understand why the republican leaders moved to secure maximal unity amongst themselves by eliminating those who represented potential ‘allies’ of other republics and provinces in their own ranks. The conflict between the ‘defenders of the constitution’ (conservatives, mostly situated outside Serbia) and ‘reformers of the constitution’ (re-centralisers, mostly from Serbia) became visible already at the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress, only to be deepened in the next four years, until Slobodan Milošević became the President of the Serbian Party Presidency. These four years (1982-1986) were a period of consolidation of the dominant trends in the republican Party organisations by both the promotion of loyal supporters and the removal of those who opposed the dominant trends. At the end of this process, ‘the coincidence of political cleavages based on the internal divisions of the federal state and the party, and social cleavages based on nationality and levels of economic development’ (Burg, 1983:27) would occur once again, after it had been suppressed by Tito and Kardelj in 1971-1972.

### 5.3. The First Direct Conflict: The Case of Draža Marković (1982)

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<sup>65</sup> RFE/RL, 31 January 1984.

<sup>66</sup> In fact, it was reminiscent of the 1967-1972 intra-elite conflict, which is described by Burg (1983).

Two events at the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress (26-29 June 1982) demonstrated how deep was the conflict between the 'defenders' and 'reformers' of the Constitution. Firstly, the Serbian delegate Rade Končar <sup>67</sup> proposed an amendment to the LCY Statute, which would - if accepted - strengthen the 'horizontal' links within the party, helping the 'self-managing integration' of workers and thus introducing a balance to the 'territorial' principle of the party structure. Končar openly criticised a 'dominant idea of the 1970s' which he described in these words: 'let us break up everything in order to re-integrate it in a better way.' The only result of this policy was that 'we have disintegrated ourselves so far very efficiently without any attempt to re-integrate again' (Končar, quoted by Bilandžić, 1986:99).

Končar's proposal met with a swift rejection by Branko Mikulić (Bosnia-Herzegovina), the chairman of the Party Commission for the Statutes, who argued that such a change would lead to the elimination of republican party organisation, and thus went against the main trend of Yugoslav post-war history. Mikulić's argument was greeted with standing ovations from the delegates, who rejected Končar's proposal.

But the real conflict between the two factions within the party happened only a few hours later, at the constitutive session of the new LCY Central Committee, when the Serbian candidate for membership in the LCY Presidency Draža Marković failed to secure the 2/3 support for his candidacy. According to the Party Statute, each republican organisation nominated 'closed lists' of two candidates for the two positions in the LCY CC Presidency, while the Federal Central Committee was only to confirm them by secret voting. But in order to be 'confirmed', each candidate needed to win a two-thirds majority support from all CC members. It had always been a pure formality. Until then.

Serbia nominated two senior politicians - Dobrivoje Vidić and Draža Marković. Serbia held the place of the President in the LCY Presidency a year later (1983-84), and it was known that Marković was its candidate for the post. Marković's nomination met with disapproval in Vojvodina, but also in some other parts of the country, mostly in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. They preferred Miloš Minić, the leading Serbian 'Titoist' and one of the very few remaining 'defenders of the Constitution' among the Serbian leaders. Dušan Dragosavac explains why:

'Tito, Kardelj and other republics had a very high esteem for Miloš Minić, higher than for any other Serbian politician. This was expressed in the fact that Minić became Foreign Secretary in 1972, at a time when Tito distrusted other Serbian leaders... Also, in October 1979 we had a long meeting with Tito, discussing candidates for the

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<sup>67</sup> Končar was the only son of the Croatian wartime Communist leader Rade Končar (the only Serb head of the Croatian Party, with the exception of Stanko Stojčević, elected in 1988), who was killed by the Italians in May 1942.

Chairmanship of the LCY Presidency for the next three years. This was at the end of the first one-year term in office of the Chairman of the Presidency. Mikulić's term was expiring and Stevan Doronjski (Vojvodina) was about to take the post. Tito wanted to know who were the candidates for the two years after Doronjski, until the next Party congress. Branko Mikulić informed Tito that he had spoken to Petar Stambolić, who proposed Miloš Minić to take the post when it came to Serbia, which was due in the fourth year - 1981/82. Draža Marković was at that time the President of the Yugoslav Assembly and for this reason he could not be elected to the Party Presidency. Additionally, this was a year after the 'Blue Book' and there was great hesitation about having him in the top Party job. It was thought that he could not take the top position in the Party because of his attitudes towards Albanians and Bosnian Muslims, which were not entirely clear. Tito agreed with this, and it was decided that in 1980/1981 the president would be Lazar Mojsov (Macedonia), and in 1981/1982 Miloš Minić (Serbia). However, Tito died in May 1980, when Doronjski (Vojvodina) was the Chairman. In October 1980 Mojsov took over. But, when it came to Minić (in October 1981), Serbia changed its mind. This was the year of the Kosovo events and Serbia wanted a strong advocate of Serbian interests to be elected. It was Draža Marković whom they proposed. This, of course, was unacceptable to all the others. Minić withdrew, arguing that the situation in the country was so difficult that he could not agree to be the President if his own republic was against him. We were facing a stalemate.<sup>68</sup>

However, a compromise was reached when Serbia gave up its one-year term of office in favour of Croatia.<sup>69</sup> But, the whole affair was still fresh when the 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress took place, not least because Minić, enormously popular outside Serbia but equally unpopular in Serbia, seemed to be quietly removed from any list of top executive posts either in the Federation or in the Republic. However, in a series of clandestine talks with the republican and provincial leaderships, a Bosnian Croat Branko Mikulić, one of Tito's favourite politicians in his last years,<sup>70</sup> organised the voting-out of Marković.<sup>71</sup> Croatian leaders (such as the Croatian Serb Dušan Dragosavac,<sup>72</sup> then president of the LCY Presidency) supported him. Dragosavac explains his reasons:

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Dragosavac, 10 April 1998.

<sup>69</sup> In fact, Croatia agreed to exchange its term (which was due in two years, in 1983/84) with Serbia (1981/1982) for three reasons: (1) public embarrassment would be avoided; 2) the post would be taken by Dušan Dragosavac, a Serb who opposed the Serbian leadership even more than Minić himself; and 3) Croatia would have more influence at the forthcoming 12<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress. The others also accepted these reasons, and Dragosavac (unexpectedly) became the President of the LCY Presidency, after being Secretary for the two previous years.

<sup>70</sup> This is Petar Stambolić's assessment in his interview with S. Djukić (1992:240).

<sup>71</sup> In an interview we had in January 1998, the Croatian member of the Party Presidency Jure Bilić confirmed that Mikulić's role was crucial in this vote. He said that the Serbian leaders had long-lasting disagreements with the Bosnians, for which Marković's diary (1987 and 1988) is a good source. Mikulić was also one of the leading 'conservatives' and 'Titoists' in the Yugoslav leadership, and thus supported the Vojvodinian leaders rather than Marković.

<sup>72</sup> Dragosavac and Marković disliked each other for both political and personal reasons (Djukić, 1992:35) The important point here is, of course, that the divisions again did not follow ethnic lines. Minić, Marković, Krunic, Dragosavac were all Serbs. The lines of republics/provinces were much more important, though the conflict between Minić and Marković could not be explained by them either. The division was still much more political than territorial: Dragosavac and Mikulić, the most pro-Titoist members of the Yugoslav Party leadership in the last years of Tito's life, preferred 'Titoist' Minić to 'nationalist' Marković.

'I was against Marković because I disliked the whole manipulation with Minić. Many others were also against him. For example, the Party organisation in the Army, where Dane Čuić<sup>73</sup> was president, and, of course, Vojvodina and Kosovo. Draža (Marković) proposed a change of legislation on the use of the Albanian flag in Kosovo. I came out against it, saying that the Serbs had the same flag as Serbia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and that therefore we could not fall below this historic parallel. In general, the problem was how to treat Kosovo after 1981. The majority in the Party Presidency argued that the rights of republics and provinces guaranteed by the 1974 Constitution should not be reduced, still less withdrawn. Since 1977 some initiatives from Serbia aimed at reducing these rights, which was unacceptable to us... We argued that Kosovo became a province because the Albanians were a clear majority there, and that there are as many Hungarians in Vojvodina as the total number of Montenegrins, while the Serbs made up only 51% in this province... Additionally, neither Albania nor Hungary was attractive to our Albanians and Hungarians respectively. We ought to do all we could to preserve the reputation our country had in the eyes of its Albanians and Hungarians. Also, we knew that Enver Hoxha's regime would not be Albanian reality for good, and that we needed to preserve good relations with the Albanians in order to enable closer links, or maybe even unification with Albania, or at least a 'Scandinavisation' of the region once Hoxha had gone. We wanted to prove our openness to such a solution...'<sup>74</sup>

In a secret ballot at the constitutive session of the new Central Committee of the LCY Marković secured only 95 votes, 12 short of the two-thirds majority of the 159-member Central Committee (Djukić, 1992:34). Such a clear margin surprised even the organisers of this action. The Serbian leaders felt there might be a problem with Marković's election,<sup>75</sup> but now they saw that not only Vojvodina and Kosovo were against them, but many others in Yugoslavia. The two provinces together had 30 members of the CC LCY. Even if they all voted against, there were still 34 votes 'missing'. When the vote was declared, chairman Dragosavac simply asked Serbia to nominate another candidate. But, the Serbian leaders were outraged. In a passionate and sharp speech, Petar Stambolić attacked 'the great plot against Serbia'. He could hardly control his reactions. Stambolić situated the whole affair in the wider context of anti-Serbian actions after the 'Blue Book' (1977), since when others had 'constantly interfered in Serbian internal affairs'. Stambolić now directly accused Miloš Minić, saying that he was practically appointed to the LCY Presidency as Tito's personal choice in 1978, against the wish of Serbia. 'This time we will not accept such interference,' said Stambolić. He announced that he would 'consider further action', which many understood as the announcement of his own resignation from the Central Committee. Stambolić, who was then the President of the Yugoslav Presidency, directly accused Dušan Dragosavac, the head of the Party, of being responsible for what happened.

The resignation of the 'head of state' from the Party Central Committee would certainly have seriously undermined Party credibility, especially if accompanied with a public explanation of

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<sup>73</sup> General Čuić was also a Serb. The Army supported Minić for his Titoist and anti-nationalist pedigree.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Dušan Dragosavac, 10 April 1998.

<sup>75</sup> Dragosavac recalls that the other LCY Presidency member, Dušan Čkrebić said in the lobbies before the CC LCY session that 'it is good that unity was manifested at the Congress, but now we should confirm our unity in the elections of the LCY Presidency' (interview with Dragosavac, 10 April 1998).



the reasons for resignation. Furthermore, Stambolić and Marković were the leading figures in Serbian politics: their example could be followed by some, or even all the members from 'Serbian without Provinces', not only on the Central Committee but, possibly, in other federal institutions. Finally, Marković explained that all of this was not a personal matter, but a clash 'over the Yugoslav views on Serbia'. In protest, Marković resigned from the Central Committee, saying that he 'did not want to be a member of the Yugoslav Party Central Committee as long as such views existed'. For the first time, the Yugoslav League of Communists faced disintegration. 'Interference in Serbian internal affairs', as Stambolić put it, was declared the main reason for this. Party leaders certainly did not want this to happen. The newly elected President of the LCY Presidency, Slovene Mitja Ribičič, said that 'this dispute... only half an hour after the conclusion of the Congress, was a real shame for our country. If this continued, not only would it lead the country into political crisis, but into complete chaos' (Djukić, 1992:38). Nobody was really ready for this. When they realised that they had taken a step too far, the organisers of the 'plot' sought a way out.

In the break of the session, Croatian politicians Milka Planinc (the Yugoslav Prime Minister) and Jure Bilić (the President of Croatian Central Committee) proposed a new vote, offering 'guarantees' that Marković would be elected this time if he withdrew his resignation from the Central Committee and stopped short of making a public scandal. Marković gradually accepted this offer, but only when the Croats agreed to Minić's political elimination. Minić's sin, Marković said to other members of the Central Committee, was that he did not understand the Kosovo crisis.<sup>76</sup> It was now for the first time after the elimination of Dobrica Ćosić in 1968 that a leading politician was removed because of his 'misunderstanding' of the Kosovo problem. The necessity to strengthen the 'unity of Serbia' was now introduced in order to purify the Serbian political elite from all 'defenders of the constitution'. The process was only finished five years later, when Slobodan Milošević organised the last round of 'differentiation' between those who 'did' and those who 'did not' understand the Kosovo question; between those who wanted 'a change of the system' and those who wanted 'changes within the system'; those Serbian leaders who were acceptable and those unacceptable to other political leaderships in Yugoslavia.

In a second vote, Marković was elected to the Presidency. But, in a series of party meetings in the next few months, the Serbian leadership discussed the meaning of this incident and what changes in the Serbian approach towards others in the country it should initiate. Petar Stambolić apologised to his colleagues for how he had reacted to the event, but not for what he

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<sup>76</sup> Accusing (again for the first time in a speech from a Serbian leader) the others of obstructing the action in Kosovo, Marković identified his destiny with that of Kosovo. 'Unregulated relations in Serbia represent a source of manipulation and objectively provide a good opportunity for making various alliances. One should pose the question of the responsibility for Kosovo. One should pose many other questions as well. We shall then see what were the main attitudes on our policy towards Albania and who voted against the documents on the Albanian policy towards our country. Who obstructed the building of unity in the League of Serbian Communists and thereby in the League of Yugoslav Communists?', Marković asked rhetorically. The answer was self-evident: the former Foreign Secretary, Miloš

had said.

'I underline: I apologise for the way I spoke, but not for what I said. The basic problem is relationships in Serbia and towards Serbia. It has been constantly suggested that the Serbian leadership, as it is now with Draža Marković and Petar Stambolić, is more national [than it should be] and that we are not sufficiently Yugoslav. Secondly, there is a belief in the provinces that if these two people were not in the main leadership of Serbia, and if Miloš Minić were there, everything would be all right. This policy of trying to find allies among certain people in Serbia proper, which has continued up until now, is very damaging. I have always felt that whenever there was talk of unitarism, people always looked at me in this circle. Because, to judge by old habits, Serbia means unitarism and centralism. And I am here, so they look at me. This is what I meant when I said that what happened was a direct interference in Serbian internal affairs. I can prove it: those who have intervened are counting on some other political leadership in Serbia, which would be 'better' than this one' (Djukić, 1992:40).

Although Minić had spent the previous ten years (1972-1982) as a federal politician, his political destiny was now left to Serbia to decide upon. In an attempt to escape a public scandal, the Serbian leaders allowed Minić to remain a member of the Yugoslav Central Committee, but he was entirely marginalised. In his letter to members of the Serbian Central Committee immediately after the 'Marković affair', Minić warned that his disagreement with Marković and Stambolić was about political and not primarily personal issues.

'I have been convinced and I remain so that the major reforms of the federation in 1971 and 1974 developed the basis for a solution of the national question in Yugoslavia... [and] that they created long-term guarantees that our federation would further improve as a firm, stable and sound socialist and self-managing social and state community. In 1971 I rejected as deeply mistaken the conclusion... that Yugoslavia was becoming a confederation, or that the new constitutional reform promoted many elements of confederalism. Today, eight years after the 1974 Constitution, and 11 years after the constitutional amendments, I believe the same' (Djukić, 1992:53).

Minić's departure from the front benches of Serbian politics signalled that the position of 'genuine Titoists', Tito's closest aides in the late 1970s, had weakened in Serbia and Yugoslavia only two years after his death. Furthermore, it showed that Serbia would not accept a replacement of Tito's personal arbitration in political conflicts in Serbia with the arbitration of the post-Tito federal leadership. Serbia wanted 'to be equal to other republics' which meant to decide fully and alone about its internal affairs. No 'interference' in its own affairs could be tolerated.

The Marković case in 1982 also indicated how complex Yugoslav politics was now becoming. The Yugoslav republics (including Serbia) were much more interested in protecting their 'sovereignty' than in developing a Yugoslav political centre as an arbiter in political conflicts in

the country. Despite its rhetoric in favour of unity and against 'autarkism', Serbia was no different from others.<sup>77</sup> The attempts of the other republics to eliminate Marković by a simple federal vote did not succeed - this was a further boost to 'autarkism' and the logic of 'minding one's own business'. The events following it clearly showed that the system had no means to resolve a stalemate. The Serbs, who argued for unity and a majority vote, simply 'borrowed' a confederalist rhetoric whenever they were defeated (however minimally) in 'majority' voting. The others now learnt how to play the game, if not for other purposes, then to resist Serbia by rejecting its candidates.<sup>78</sup>

Already in 1982 it was, therefore, clear that the system of *consensus* was leading to a stalemate with no solution. But it was also clear that majority votes could have even more damaging consequences: the disintegration of the Yugoslav institutions. Yugoslav players were prepared to play the game as long as they were winners. In as much as they advocated changes, they simply blackmailed others by withdrawal every time the change did not suit them.

#### 5.4. 'Constructive Criticism' and 'Critical Analysis of the Political System'

By 1983 the debate on the economic and political crises dominated the Yugoslav media and political forums. To most of the academic audience it became clear that no solution to the economic crisis and no long-term solution for Kosovo could be found without changes in the political system.<sup>79</sup> The political system, they felt, was the core of the problem. But, it was almost impossible to change it without serious political conflicts, for which the divided leadership was not prepared. As in the case of economic crisis, the first initiative to change the political system came from academics who allied with the 'reformers of the constitution' in the Serbian political leadership.

In March 1980 Jovan Djordjević, a top Yugoslav constitutional lawyer and Kardelj's right-hand man during the preparation of all four Yugoslav constitutions, criticised the 'bureaucratic

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<sup>77</sup> In Chapter Three of this dissertation (on the 1967-1972 Constitutional debate) we concluded that Serbia agreed upon the Constitutional arrangement on the understanding that Serbia would become equally independent from the federal centre as the other republics, which - Serbian leaders felt - was not the case before 1966. The Provinces and the federal leadership were now seen as the main source of obstruction of this aim.

<sup>78</sup> This message was still in their ears in 1989, when the same 'scenario' was implemented against another Serbian member of the LCY Presidency, Dušan Čkrebić. Preventing the outcome of a majority vote in the LCY Central Committee, Slobodan Milošević repeated Petar Stambolić's argument in the Marković case. Since the Central Committee again could not risk a Serbian withdrawal, they simply re-interpreted the vote as 'non-obligatory' and only 'morally binding'. Čkrebić withdrew his resignation without even repeating the vote. The same situation (but now with a Croat in the main position) occurred with the election of the Yugoslav state Presidency President Stipe Mesić in 1991.

<sup>79</sup> 'A programme of economic stabilization conceived under the slogan 'economic reforms yes, political reforms no' cannot yield any serious results, because it attempts to deal with the consequences rather than causes of the crisis,' said Josip Županov (RFE/RL, 22 April 1985). Županov developed the same argument in his 1983 book *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi*. The most Kardeljist members of the political elite (such as Stipe Šuvar) called Županov a crisologist.

concepts' that followed the 1974 Constitution.<sup>80</sup> But it was another Serbian Constitutional lawyer - Najdan Pašić, the president of the Serbian Constitutional Court, who invited political leaders to launch a debate on the system, first in November 1980,<sup>81</sup> then again in September 1982, now as a newly elected member of the Central Committee of the LCY. In his open letter to the Party Presidency he suggested the establishment of a special Commission to study the problems of the functioning of the political system, similar to the one established the year before for the reform of the economic system (Kraigher's Commission).<sup>82</sup> He stressed four possible issues of the debate: 1) the still strong political control over the economic system; 2) changes in the electoral system in order to increase leaders' accountability; 3) the uncontrolled growth of the administrative apparatus (bureaucracy); and 4) the democratic issue, i.e. 'the exaggerated use of the state's legal power in all areas'. Pašić argued that these four points were the main reasons why the spontaneous action of citizens had disappeared, and why self-management did not show the expected results in practice.<sup>83</sup>

Pašić's proposal was followed by a wave of similar initiatives from Belgrade academics, both those in open opposition to the regime and those who allied with official politics. In May 1983 the Praxis Professor Svetozar Stojanović proposed democratisation of the system in four steps. The genuine reform of the system should begin with the internal democratisation of the LCY, including free, democratic and secret elections with more than one candidate for each position. The LCY should legalise 'factions' and 'groups' competing within the party. Secondly, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People should be genuinely reformed in order to include non-Communist political groups, as had been projected by its own statute. The LCY could still be guaranteed 'the leading role' within the SAWP, providing that the party itself had been democratised. Thirdly, the trade unions should be fully democratised and made independent of any state or party influence, in order to become - together with the Socialist Alliance - the basis for grass-roots democracy in Yugoslavia. The democratisation of these two organisations would not, Stojanović argued, endanger self-management, social ownership, federalism or non-aligned foreign policy, the four corner-stones of the Yugoslav political system. On the contrary, it would be a realisation of Kardelj's ideas on the 'pluralism of self-managing interests'. Finally, the federal structure of Yugoslavia should be preserved, but reformed. While the administration should be further decentralised (including some federal ministries being allocated outside of Belgrade), the Yugoslav economy should be further integrated.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Nin, 30 March 1980, RFE/RL, 3 April 1980.

<sup>81</sup> Politika, 6 November 1980.

<sup>82</sup> Politika, 29 November 1982.

<sup>83</sup> RFE/RL, 22 April 1983.

<sup>84</sup> RFE/RL, 1 June 1983.

Stojanović's proposal was formally introduced to 'official' political space by Mijalko Todorović, the former Secretary of the Yugoslav LCY Executive Bureau and President of the Yugoslav Assembly, who was silently ousted from the office in 1974 after his disagreement with Tito's action against the Croatian 'nationalists' and Serbian 'liberals' in the early 1970s. In November 1983, in what was seen as an action backed by if not openly directed by the Serbian leadership, Todorović promoted Stojanović's programme at the session of the Federal Advisory Council, but without any conclusive results.<sup>85</sup>

Pašić's initiative would probably again have fallen on deaf ears with the political elite, had it not been supported by several important Yugoslav leaders and the Serbian party leadership. Faced with the public pressure from both intellectual and political circles, as well as with demands from the international monetary and political institutions to secure a stable economic system, the Yugoslav leaders were simply forced to accept some form of debate on the political system as well. Because there was still great resistance to any change, however, only a 'working team' within the Federal Council for Social Order was set up, instead of a special commission at the highest party level. The 'team', chaired by Josip Vrhovec (since May 1984 Croatian member of the Yugoslav Presidency) invited in late 1983 the general public and political leadership to an open and democratic debate about the problems which the political system was facing. The widest ever public debate in Yugoslav history lasted for almost a year and a half - until the Spring of 1985, when the Vrhovec Commission offered its 'Critical Analysis of the Functioning of the Political System'. Only a limited presentation of the main arguments, analyses and proposals expressed in the course of this debate is possible here.

Among the academic contributions to the debate, the most influential was Jovan Mirić's book 'System and Crisis', extensive extracts from which had been published as a series in Borba (12-25 October 1984). The book, subtitled 'a contribution to the critical analysis of the constitutional and political system of Yugoslavia', was a direct response to Vrhovec's invitation. Mirić<sup>86</sup> argued that the 1974 Constitution itself, and not its interpretation or implementation, was the cause of the economic and political crisis. The Constitution, he said, was a departure from the principles accepted in 1943 by the Anti-fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ). While the AVNOJ Resolution established a federation of five Yugoslav peoples, the 1974 Constitution declared that Yugoslavia was 'neither a federation nor a confederation'. While in the AVNOJ Resolution provinces were not even mentioned, now they had become not only 'constitutive parts' of the federal structure, but 'sovereign entities' as well. For all these reasons the 1974 Constitution in fact derogated achievements of the partisan movement, especially when it came to the position of Serbia. By introducing the 'consensus principle' for all

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<sup>85</sup> RFE/RL, 7 November 1983.

<sup>86</sup> Jovan Mirić (Croatian Serb of Yugoslav political orientation) was professor of political science at Zagreb University.

important federal decisions, the 1974 Constitution also denied the main idea of politics: that there should always be (and always is) a majority and a minority, and that - in democratic regimes - no one should have the right to permanently 'blackmail' a majority by vetoing its proposals. Post-1974 Yugoslavia was based neither on democratic nor on class but on national principles. Neither citizens nor workers were represented in federal institutions directly, but only as members of their republics/provinces.<sup>87</sup> Mirić argued that, theoretically constructed on distant dreams of 'associated labour' and a 'self-managing' society, which had replaced the principles of parliamentary democracy, Yugoslavia in reality fell below the level of bourgeois society - in a feudalised system which preferred partiality over citizens' equality.

Mirić openly rejected Kardelj's argument that federation was an outdated category of bourgeois legal theory. If federation was an outdated form, the confederation was even more so. Kardelj was wrong, Mirić argued, in confusing forms of state structure (unitary vs. federal, and federation vs. confederation) with types of regime (bourgeois democracy and 'administrative socialism' vs. self-management). As far as Tito was concerned, Mirić said that it was the first time that he 'failed to recognise' where the changes were leading. He also criticised the leading post-war Croatian politician Vladimir Bakarić for advocating 'national economies', which Mirić saw as the main source of nationalism. The invention of 'national economies' was a typical example of unwillingness to accept any possibility that Yugoslavia might become a community *sui generis*. In the growing share of population who declared themselves 'Yugoslavs' in the 1981 census,<sup>88</sup> Mirić saw such a possibility. The 'Yugoslavs' were not 'misled' or 'confused' products of ethnically mixed marriages, but the best educated part of the Yugoslav population, only a quarter of whom originated from 'mixed marriages'. Nevertheless, the elite panicked at the emergence of 'Yugoslavs', which they saw as a re-emergence of 'unitarism'. For all these reasons, Mirić said, Yugoslavia was on the verge of dissolution.

Mirić's sharp analysis confused and split party officials and academics into supporters and opponents. Among the academics, Mirić's colleague from Zagreb University Zdravko Tomac was the sharpest critic. Tomac argued that the problem lay not in the Constitution, but in its slow and selective implementation. It was not the constitutional system, but 'extra-constitutional' and 'non-constitutional' behaviour that produced the crisis in Yugoslavia, Tomac concluded.

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<sup>87</sup> Goati (1989) offers a good explanation of this argument.

<sup>88</sup> The number of citizens who declared themselves as ethnically 'Yugoslavs/undeclared' rose from 320,853 in 1971 to 1,209,045 in 1981. Some demographic estimations in early 1981 projected a further growth of this population to 5 million people (about 20%) in 1991. This estimate played some role in fostering fears among the nationalists (Bilandžić, 1986). It also enabled Slovenia and Croatia to counter Serbian arguments that the 1974 Constitution destroyed a sense of Yugoslav belonging. The Serbs, however, argued that the growing number of Yugoslavs was a reaction to growing trends of disintegration in the country.

'Members of this parallel, informal system of business, executive, administrative and political structures abused their rights in order to make implementation of the Constitutional system impossible... Instead of criticising the Constitution for our present difficulties, one ought to analyse the reasons why this parallel system appeared, and why we could not implement the agreements .. and oppose the old system resolutely.'<sup>89</sup>

Tomac was in fact warning about the 'dogmatist' and 'statist' tendencies which had dominated Yugoslav politics before 1966.

'The power balance was objectively such that the forms have changed but not the real situation. Negative tendencies... which we knew from before we enacted the ALA [1976], have continued. This simply had to result in the destruction of a united market, thus strengthening autarkic tendencies, irrational investment... and stagnation.'

Tomac agreed that 'techno-bureaucratism as the political expression of statism has become the main source of nationalism', but his conclusion was entirely opposite to Mirić's: the 'problems cannot be resolved by changing the Constitutional solutions but only by resolute action to implement the Constitution'.<sup>90</sup> Similar views to Tomac's were presented by Ciril Ribičič, a Slovenian Professor of Constitutional Law, who (five years later) succeeded Milan Kučan as president of the Slovenian reformed Communists.<sup>91</sup>

In as much as Mirić's views were welcomed by the Serbian academics and political elite in that Republic, Tomac (and Ribičič) were the mouthpieces of what was to be formulated as the (Croatian and) Slovenian position. The leading Croatian, Slovenian and Vojvodinian politicians, such as Jure Bilić, France Popit and Dušan Popović shared this view. On the other side, the Serbian media, Macedonian Aleksandar Grličkov and Bosnian Muslim Hamdija Pozderac welcomed Mirić's appeal for changes. Mirić's book was also welcomed by the Partisan Veterans regardless of their ethnic background,<sup>92</sup> and by several 'free rider' politicians in Slovenia (Mitja

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<sup>89</sup> Kardelj argued, as explained in footnotes 58 and 59 in Chapter Two, that extra-parliamentary powers control the capitalist societies of the West. Now, Tomac argued the same for Yugoslavia.

<sup>90</sup> Zdravko Tomac, *Danas*, 13 December 1983. For Tomac's views see: Tomac (1984). Before becoming a professor, Tomac was the chief of staff to Croatian President Jakov Blažević (1974-1982). In 1990 he became the main ideologue of the reformed Communists in Croatia. As the SDP representative, he was the Deputy Prime Minister in the Croatian war-time coalition government (1991-1992). In 1997 presidential elections he came second to Franjo Tuđman with 21% of the vote. As an undergraduate at Zagreb Faculty of Political Science, I witnessed the differences between two of my professors - Mirić and Tomac.

<sup>91</sup> On the basis of similar views they held on Mirić's analysis, in 1988 Ribičič and Tomac published a book 'Federalism measured by the future', to which Milan Kučan wrote a preface. Mirić, on the other hand, was a referee for Ivan Stambolić's book 'Debates on Serbia' (1988). This split within the intellectual elite illustrates the position of the Croatian political elite at that time: even if they had shown much more political ability than they did, the Croatian leaders would have faced enormous difficulties in finding a 'Third Way' between the Slovenian and Serbian options. The failure of the Croatian political elite to promote its own alternative proved fatal for Croatia itself, because it encouraged radical Croatian nationalism, which only helped to close the circle of disintegration of Yugoslavia.

<sup>92</sup> Although the Croat Jure Bilić, for example, strongly opposed Mirić's analysis, Pero Car, a member of Croatian Presidency, in his interview with *Danas*, said: 'The fear of unitarism, in my firm belief, is a creation and a tool of those people whose intention is to destroy Yugoslav togetherness. The time when *unitarism* was successfully used as a scarecrow has gone. There is no danger that togetherness could become 'unitarism'. But there are many things that

Ribičić<sup>93</sup>) and Croatia.<sup>94</sup> It is fair to say that significant support for Mirić's ideas came from all parts of Yugoslavia, while in the most conservative circles of the party leadership it was treated as the 'worst attack on the Yugoslav socialist system since Milovan Djilas' articles in 1953'.<sup>95</sup> Despite the now increasingly visible match between the dominant attitudes to Mirić's book and republican borders, there were significant and not infrequent exceptions to this 'rule'.

But although it was a major event among social scientists and with the general public, Mirić's book 'did not inspire' Vrhovec.<sup>96</sup> 'We argued,' recalls Vrhovec today, with regard to his position and that of his political allies, 'that the republics should continue to have, even to a greater extent, full responsibility for themselves:

'The confederative principles should be fully developed. On this issue I differed not only with Mirić, but with the official Croatian position. Because, both in Slovenia and in Croatia, many were ready to make concessions to the Serbs regarding Kosovo. Finally, these two republics accepted the new Serbian constitution in 1989 and whatever Serbia did in Kosovo at that time. They believed they could satisfy Serbian frustration by offering major concessions on this issue.'

However, if Vrhovec did not pay much attention to Mirić's book, he could not disregard the official position of Serbia, which was formulated at the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Serbian Central Committee on 23 and 24 November 1984. The main message of this session was best summarised in the title of *Politika's* report: 'The changes are the condition for the way out of the crisis.' This time, the main speaker (Bogdan Trifunović) was more determined than ever to say that 'the main problem... of how to implement the constitutional principle that the provinces are part of Serbia ... has still not been dealt with. This was still a matter of 'different interpretations' between the republic and provinces, but now these differences occurred with respect to 'almost every single issue on the agenda'. Trifunović left no doubts that 'although the principles of the 1974 Constitution should be better implemented, developed and defended,

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people who live together need to share. If one calls unitarism what happens when people who live together share their responsibility for decisions taken in their country, then this is a positive *unitarism*. Then one should be for such unitarism' (*Danas*, 10 January 1984). Although Car was not representative of the majority in the Croatian or other political leadership, it was nevertheless true that these were not only his views. The same division between those supporting and those opposing Mirić's ideas occurred in Slovenia (Mitja Ribičić vs. France Popit) and Serbia (republican leadership vs. Vojvodinian ideologue Dušan Popović).

<sup>93</sup> Interestingly, Ciril Ribičić was Mitja Ribičić's son. To explain Mitja Ribičić's behaviour in these years, I quote from the interview I conducted with Jure Bilić, April 1998: 'He conducted a cold-hot policy; at one moment he would make a most democratic, almost outrageous proposal about something, only to deny or withdraw it a few days later. It seems to me that his past as an UDBA [secret police] officer immediately after the War did not give him peace, so he wanted to go much further in the process of democratisation than any of us in the Presidency.'

<sup>94</sup> *RFE/RL Situation Report Yugoslavia*, 30 November 1984.

<sup>95</sup> This was how Milan Rakas, a Croatian Serb in charge of the media in the Federal Conference of the Socialist Alliance of Working People described Mirić's book. Needless to say, Rakas was the most appropriate person to react, since he was - like Mirić - a Croatian Serb.

<sup>96</sup> In interview I conducted with him in January 1998, Vrhovec confirmed that he was aware of Mirić's criticism, but that Mirić's position was very different from his.



we ought not to think that any of its articles were the final and definite word in the formation of our relationships if our practical experience shows that we need to find better and more suitable solutions for existing circumstances.' This was, Trifunović argued, 'especially the case with the Associated Labour act'.<sup>97</sup>

The Serbian demands were formulated in 38 theses for reform of the political system, which were accepted by the Central Committee of the LC Serbia. In general, four key demands were put forward by this document: 1) enlargement of economic units by associating several BOALs with larger enterprises; 2) strengthening the executive branch of government (including the federal executive council and other federal institutions); 3) the democratisation of the electoral system (by introducing more than one candidate for each post); and 4) uniting Serbia by increasing the prerogatives of the republic in its relations with Kosovo and Vojvodina. Particular attention was given to the fourth point: relations in Serbia. Serbia proposed that the economic and financial aid Kosovo received from Serbia should not go, as had been the case, through federal institutions. In this way, Serbia would assume greater control over the economic development of Kosovo. Finally, the Serbian proposal explicitly obliged the leaders of Kosovo to prevent any further exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo and to ensure full equality of the Serbs and Albanians in the province.<sup>98</sup> Such a proposal was accompanied by strong verbal opposition to 'autonomism', the term re-introduced to the Serbian political vocabulary by Spiro Galović in November 1981 as a synonym for the 'autarkism' of the provinces.<sup>99</sup>

The 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the Serbian Central Committee for the first time concluded that the rules which were always interpreted in different and opposing ways in Serbia and in its two provinces, should indeed be subjected to careful examination. This session also introduced a new type of rhetoric, which now included the possibility of an open clash between members of the Central Committee, for the first time in front of the general public. Probably the most famous of such polemics at the 18<sup>th</sup> LC CCS Session was the one between the Belgrade party leader Slobodan Milošević and a member of the CC from Vojvodina, Marija Miškolci Zvekić. When Miškolci Zvekić opposed the '38 theses proposal', saying that it reminded her of Mirić's

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<sup>97</sup> Politika, 24 November 1984.

<sup>98</sup> RFE/RL, 30 November 1984.

<sup>99</sup> It did not need more than three days for the Serbian proposals to meet with criticism from Stane Dolanc (Slovene), the leading Kardeljist in the Yugoslav leadership. Speaking at a public rally in Jesenice, a Slovenian town on the border with Austria on 1 December 1984 (the day when the First Yugoslavia was created in 1918) Dolanc was critical 'of those in Yugoslavia who want to change the constitutional provisions concerning the workers' right to control the fruits of their own labour as well as the provisions guaranteeing national equality and the right of the republics and autonomous provinces to decide independently about their own development and about the development of the federation as a whole.' Repeating the Slovenian Communists' rhetoric, Dolanc warned that the politics of opposing the Constitution might well favour various 'bourgeois-reactionary attempts to restore a system hostile to socialist self-management' (RFE/RL, 20 December 1984).

concept of reform of Yugoslavia and that it would, if accepted, further divide groups in the Yugoslav League of Communists, Milošević replied:

'We have been threatened with a political crisis if we continue to [do nothing more than] discuss these problems. All right, let us enter that political crisis! This crisis is going to produce a great uproar about the question of unity or separatism. In such a crisis separatism will not prevail, because the people have accepted unity. Those leaders incapable of seeing this will and should lose the public's confidence. If separatism is not opposed, our country will have no prospects for the future. It can only disintegrate.'

In what happened to be his first prominent public appearance, the young rising star of the Serbian leadership said that 'the Serbian Communists have never been in favour of unitarist ideas,' and that the others should once and for ever cease to accuse them of a policy pursued by the inter-war Serbian bourgeoisie. The Serbs were tired of charges of having been oppressors, as a result of which they were constantly having to clear their name and to confirm their acceptance of a united Yugoslavia. 'We [Serbs] have no reason whatsoever to bow our heads to anyone,' concluded Milošević. Differing in style but not in policy from the majority of the Serbian leaders, Milošević warned the Vojvodinian leaders that their policy of 'autarkism' led to economic and political isolation from Europe and the developed world. The League of Communists, he said, had the opportunity to remove obstacles to the further development of Yugoslavia and its nations. The time was up for those who hesitated to change their behaviour quickly (Milošević, 1984/1989: 30-8).

In these circumstances, however, Vrhovec's analysis of the 'functioning of the political system' fell short of any adequate proposal on how to resolve the crisis. The problem of this commission was, as Vrhovec admitted in 1985, that 'it was just another inter-republican body in which the opinions and proposals could not be accepted without a full consensus of all republics and provinces'.<sup>100</sup> Because the majority in the leadership still opposed serious changes in the political system, but also because those who favoured changes had entirely different visions of what changes they wanted, the whole debate organised by the Vrhovec Commission fell short of any conclusion. The majority in the leadership, including Vrhovec himself, were still inspired by Kardelj, rejecting any notion of 'changes' and talking only of 'building up' the system he projected.<sup>101</sup> In this context, it is easy to understand why the Critical Analysis offered in fact further devolution of power rather than a re-centralisation of Yugoslavia.

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<sup>100</sup> *Nin*, 24 February 1985.

<sup>101</sup> Ivan Stambolić recalls the great pressure he came under when the report was published because he proposed 'changes of the system' rather than 'changes in the system'. He even now admits only that it was a typing error of his secretary, but the federal party leadership was so suspicious of this explanation that he became very unpopular. This would be reflected in their indifference to his removal by Milošević in 1987 (Stambolić, 1995). For this see also Goati, 1989.

'The Critical analysis promoted the idea that the new model should be based on the *confederative* principle, and not on any return to unitarism, which was hidden behind the *one person - one vote* slogan... I saw this slogan as fatal for Croatia. It would have destroyed the equality of the federal units. This principle would have been acceptable only when and if the national question had been already resolved, when equality had been guaranteed. In our circumstances, this would have blown up Yugoslavia.'<sup>102</sup>

'We wanted to preserve Kardelj's concept of the nationality question and his ideas about the relations between federal units,' Vrhovec said in the interview.

'The main conclusion was that the basic ideas of the Constitution should not be put under question. Above all, the right to self-determination, which is a non-transferable historical right. Any denial of the right to self-determination we considered as attack on the concept of Yugoslavia... Then, it was crucial to re-confirm that the sovereignty remains in the republics, and that the Federation has only those competencies on which the republics agreed as common... The republics should be made to an even greater extent responsible for themselves.'

Like Šušvar and Ribičič before, Vrhovec considered that Serbia was using Kosovo as an alibi for a new re-centralisation of Yugoslavia. For this reason, the federal leadership, still controlled by Kardeljists, simply ignored the existence of the problem of Kosovo between 1981 and 1985, trying to play down the Serbian attempt to change 'relations within Serbia' by using Kosovo. Vrhovec, as well as his main colleagues in the federal leadership, today believes that the Serbian leadership was already 'infected by nationalism' and that Milošević was a consequence, rather than a cause of Serbian nationalism.

'Serbian nationalism penetrated the highest ranks of Serbian politics with Ranković, and remained there under Draža Marković's and Ivan Stambolić's protection. The 1974 Constitution to the Yugoslav leaders from other republics, and especially from provinces, was the most powerful tool to defeat it. And we did not want to lose it.'

Of course this caused endless disputes within the Commission on almost every relevant issue. The debate spilled over into the media, which increasingly started promoting the views dominant in their own republic/province. The media, still under the control of the political elite in the republics and provinces, now looked increasingly liberalised and freed from political influence. But this was a false image, since they were given the 'green light' by the leaders themselves to criticise the views of the leaders in other republics, and (in the Serbian case) in both provinces.<sup>103</sup> Information about political events behind the scenes was 'leaked' to the media directly from the political 'patrons' themselves. The media would never dare to attack

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<sup>102</sup> In an interview, January 1998. Note here that Vrhovec speaks about defending Croatian interests, although he was the chairman of the Federal Commission, and also a member of the Yugoslav state Presidency.. A few years later, the Serbian leadership and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts complained that the Slovenes and Croats promoted their views through Kraigher's and Vrhovec's Commissions, while Serbian views were under-represented or even disregarded.

<sup>103</sup> The same applies to political conflicts within republics: it was, for example, obvious that Stipe Šušvar controlled Polet, while Mika Špiljak patronised Danas in Croatia.

'their own leaders'. This situation, indeed, opened up some space of freedom for the media in Yugoslavia. But it was far from making them independent.<sup>104</sup>

The same was true of the intellectual elite, which was now encouraged to support the views of one or another side. The elite and newspapers gladly accepted this role, with honourable exceptions in each republic. When the media and academics joined politicians in a dispute over the political system, it looked as if Vrhovec's Commission had produced more conflicts than it was capable of resolving. At the same time, its recommendations were no more than just another 'compromise', condemned in advance to be unsuccessful.<sup>105</sup>

Another mega-debate without results not only exposed how divided, inefficient and incapable the elite was, but eliminated those few credentials it still had in the eyes of the public.

## 5. 5. Conclusion

By 1984, the two political blocs had already been created and fairly consolidated. The one (led by the Serbian leadership) insisted on 'reforms of the Constitution', while the other (most strongly represented by Slovenia, but also dominant in other Yugoslav republics, and in the Army) firmly defended all provisions of the 1974 Constitutional arrangement and Kardelj's constitutive concept. Although the Kardeljists (the 'defenders of the Constitution') were stronger in all direct conflicts, successfully preventing any significant change of the political system, the confederalist principles of 'non-intervening in other republics' shielded the 'reformers of the Constitution' from being removed from politics. Yugoslav politics in the early 1980s was, therefore, in a permanent stalemate.

While in the case of economic reforms, some agreement between the republics and provinces was made possible after enormous pressure from international factors, the reform of the political system was entirely left to the Yugoslav elite, unwilling and incapable of serious change. The only effective pressure for changes, therefore, could have come from a coalition between the 'reformers' and dissatisfied segments of the population. This formula was not implemented in the first half of the 1980s, since the elite was still committed to changes from within the system. But the public pressure, channelled and controlled by segments of the elite

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<sup>104</sup> For this reason, it seems understandable that some leaders believed that the media were pushing the country towards dissolution and civil war (see Dragosavac's letter to Raif Dizdarević, 1987). They did not see (or, better, did not want to see) that the politicians themselves were behind the media, pulling the trigger at each other. At the same time as helping openness and democratisation, the media became tools of new conflicts, which they would remain during the war in the 1990s.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Milka Planinc, 19 April 1998. In this interview she said that Vrhovec's analysis was 'a compromise to an even greater extent than Kraigher's Programme of Economic Stabilisation'.

through the now increasingly open media, played its role and was now – for the first time – used as an asset in intra-elite conflicts. As the conflict between the groups in republics and between republics increased, the media and masses were mobilised in support of 'their' leaders. This all set up the stage for a later phase in which practically a two-party system appeared out of the divided LCY leadership. In this phase, which began in 1986 with the election of Milan Kučan and Slobodan Milošević as presidents of the Slovenian and Serbian Central Committees respectively, the political elites now moved closer to the local intellectual elites, widening the gap between themselves and the other republics. Surveys conducted in the mid-1980s showed that the difference between Communists in the various republics was greater than between Communists and non-Communists in the same republic.<sup>106</sup> In these circumstances, any common Yugoslav policy became very unlikely.

While the debate on economic issues was not structured primarily along the lines of ethnic groups or republics, the political discussion in the early 1980s more closely followed the lines of republics but not of ethnic groups. By 1985, only the oldest generation of Yugoslav veterans remained untouched by the divisions into republican camps. But, their influence significantly decreased after the election of the first post-Titoist LCY Central Committee (1982), in which the most loyal Titoists (such as, for example, Miloš Minić) were marginalised, and especially after 1984, when the first representatives of republics/provinces elected after Tito's death replaced Tito's appointees in the Federal Presidency. However, it was not before the late 1980s that ethnicity became a dividing factor within the Yugoslav political elites. In the mid-1980s the Communist elites within republics/provinces remained united (or disunited) regardless of their ethnic origins, even in the case of the 1981 Kosovo conflict.

As in the previous chapter, the analysis presented here confirms that the tools used in the last years of the 1980s were 'invented' and even 'tried out' during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The 'case of Draža Marković' analysed in this chapter shows that the Yugoslav League of Communists faced a serious danger of splitting up as early as 1982. It was in the early 1980s that the policy of non-intervention in 'internal affairs' of republics was established as a general rule. Although arguments between the republics and provinces permanently characterised

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<sup>106</sup> Goati (1989:98). At the same time the survey of the employed population of Yugoslavia (N=4,460) conducted in November 1985, showed, for example, a drastic decrease in the attractiveness of the LCY among the younger generation. While in 1974 only 9% of young Yugoslavs said they did not want to become LCY members, in 1985 this number increased to 50%. Although the sharp increase was observable in all the Yugoslav republics and both provinces, it progressed faster in the more developed (but most Kardeljist) Yugoslav regions of Slovenia, Croatia and Vojvodina. While in 1974 32% of young Slovenes did not want to become LCY members, now it was as many as 88%. In Croatia the number rose from 13% to 70%, in Vojvodina from 4% to 54%, in Serbia Proper from 6% to 40%, in Macedonia from 7% to 40%, in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 5% to 36%, in Kosovo from 4% to 35%, and in Montenegro from 8% to 18%. The data also showed a steep fall in esteem for the Party, again more in the most developed Yugoslav Republics and Serbia Proper. In fact, the esteem for the LCY was highest among the Kosovo Albanians (43% of whom said that the LCY enjoy 'high esteem') and the lowest among the Slovenes (10.2%). The results of the survey mirrored data on the admittance of new members into the LCY: the highest rate of recruiting new members was in Kosovo, the lowest in Slovenia and Croatia. In the first half of 1983, for example, the Slovenian party organisation experienced no growth at all.

Yugoslav post-war politics (for which the analysis of the Constitutional debate of 1967-1974 offers sufficient evidence) it was only after Tito's departure that the danger of disintegration of the Party became real. The dissolution of the LCY and the Yugoslav state in 1990 and 1991 was, therefore, not a simple result of a 'turning point' that happened after the 'anti-bureaucratic' (1987) or the 'velvet' revolutions (1989), but rather an outcome of long-existing controversies, which became difficult to reconcile once the 'supreme arbiters' had gone. These controversies were not, however, the expression either of 'ethnic hatred', or of the struggle between 'democracy' and 'Communism', as is frequently argued. They could not be fully explained by the controversies over economic issues, since the economic debate did not follow ethnic or republican lines, as we have seen in the previous chapter of this dissertation. I argue that the main line of division between the two newly created 'blocs' in Yugoslav politics was about their willingness to remain committed to the ideological picture of the world, most closely expressed by Kardelj, even when it became obvious that the results of its implementation were radically different from what had been intended and expected. It is in the elite unwillingness to abandon the ideology and to face reality in order to respond to the growing challenges of post-1974 Yugoslavia that I find the main reason for the collapse of the regime.

In the last two chapters of this thesis, I follow the development of the two separate 'constitutive concepts' which emerged out of two different interpretations of Kardelj's concept: in Serbia (Chapter Six) and Slovenia (Chapter Seven). These two new concepts, which emerged at the same time and in reaction to one another, ultimately drove Yugoslavia apart in the second half of the 1980s.

## Chapter Six:

# The Emergence of Alternative Concepts and the Reaction of the Political Elite in Serbia (1986-1988)

'We made it clear that we were in favour of Yugoslavia, but only if the Serbs were equal to the other Yugoslav nations. We knew the Slovenes and Croats would not accept such a Yugoslavia. But we wanted them to say so and to take responsibility for it. And indeed, it did not take long before the Slovenes and Croats clearly revealed their views on Yugoslavia: they supported it as long as it was a tool for keeping Serbia under permanent surveillance.'

**Antoniје Isaković**  
Vice-President of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts,  
In an interview for this thesis, April 1996.

'Accompanied by intolerance and hatred against the Albanian nation, which is the case in some media, this struggle is becoming more and more distanced from socialist principles and closer and closer to nationalism. The editorial boards and journalists in the media who do not want to understand that today's struggle against Albanian nationalism means permanent struggle against Serbian nationalism, in effect promote the kindling of nationalist passions as their main policy'.

**Dragiša Pavlović**  
President of the Belgrade LC Committee, ousted at the Eighth CC LC Serbia Session,  
In his address to editors and journalists, September 1987.

'It is true that we are under pressure from ideological opponents, but the League of Communists must not make the big mistake of reducing its activities only to disputes with them. Because we are also under pressure from a crisis that must be solved. And to be excessively preoccupied with our opponents would put the LC in a defensive position. This is a real, historically confirmed, way to lose the leading position in society...'

**Slobodan Milošević**  
President of the LC CC Serbia Presidency,  
Speaking in Kragujevac, December 1986

### 6.0. Introduction

The political monopoly of the LCY was in reality undermined in the first half of the 1980s, as the result of economic and political crisis, and greater openness of the media. Consequently, two new participants entered Yugoslav politics: 1) various groups of intellectuals, critical of the elite; and 2) spontaneously emergent groups within the population. Both of them centered on Serbia: the

former in Belgrade, the latter in Kosovo. By 1986, the elite found itself under heavy pressure from both the 'critical intelligentsia' and popular protests. It became difficult, if not impossible, to ignore their existence.

Gradually, the political elite recognised the need to respond to their demands. This chapter analyses the reaction of the political elite to these two new participants in Serbian politics in the second half of the 1980s. The chapter first briefly analyses the emergence of alternative concepts within the 'critical intelligentsia', as well as the responses of the elite to these challenges. It also examines popular pressure on the leadership, which ignited in Kosovo, and the reaction of the leadership to the actions of 'the people'. It is within this 'triangle' (elite, 'opposition', popular protests) that one needs to frame the events that unfolded in the last four years before the actual disintegration of Yugoslavia.

It is argued that the new situation was initially produced neither by members of the elite, nor by the masses, but by individuals and groups within the 'critical intelligentsia'. However, once the new political agenda was set up through the media and by direct popular pressure, the leadership (especially in Slovenia and Serbia) took the initiative, trying to canalise and control popular protests. But, as was the case in the 1967-1974 period (described in Chapter Three), the elite itself was divided on how to react to the new challenges.

A new wave of political conflict in Serbia ended with victory for the 'revolutionists' led by Slobodan Milošević, over the 'institutionalists', represented by Ivan Stambolić. The 1987 conflict within the LC Serbia was the last intra-party and intra-republican conflict on a large scale. As a consequence of the 'unity' achieved within Serbia (and - as will be explained in the next chapter - within Slovenia) by 1988 two clearly different concepts had emerged in Yugoslavia: one insisted on further confederalisation of the state and of the Party and was most strongly represented by Slovenia; while the other (Serbian) used a revolutionary methods to change the Constitution and establish a 'socialist' and 'united' Yugoslavia. They both moved away from the Kardelj concept, but in opposite directions. This is how the constitutive concept of the Fourth Yugoslavia ceased to be the main glue of its identity. Unlike in previous cases (analysed earlier in this thesis) Kardelj's ideology no longer had an integrative function. Instead, two new narratives were now invented (by the joint action of the elite and its 'opposition') in a major shift, which ultimately led to the disintegration of the Party and of the state, both of which were functions of the ideology that created them. Left without its ideological glue, both Party and state became unsustainable.



## 6.1. Intellectual Dissent in Yugoslavia

Regrettably, lack of space makes it impossible for us to analyse in detail the origins, main points and development of Serbian nationalism throughout the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Instead, we can only briefly map out the main elements of the new narrative, as it emerged in this period, challenging (and thus influencing) the actions of the political elites. Our main focus will, however, remain on the political elites and their reaction to these challenges.

As Dragović Soso points out (1999), the relationship between the Yugoslav regime and its 'dissidents' differed from that between most East European states and their opponents. Although Yugoslav intellectuals frequently criticised the regime (as documented in the previous two chapters), it was only in exceptional circumstances that the state reacted to such criticism by brutal coercion.<sup>2</sup> Unlike their counter-parts in the Soviet bloc, the Yugoslav dissidents published at home<sup>3</sup> and in general (with the exception of Milovan Djilas and Mihajlo Mihajlov) attracted less attention in the West.<sup>4</sup> There were three main reasons for this.

First, Kardelj's concept promoted the notion of 'constructive criticism' of the regime from within itself. The ideological basis for this was found in the vanguard role of the Party and the scientific character of Marxism (as explained in Chapter Two). The Party and science (especially the social sciences) were allies (not 'partners') in building socialism. Even those whose views were not strictly Marxist (and thus could not be represented within the LCY) were, at least verbally, encouraged to participate in public debate within the Socialist Alliance of Working People. The boundaries of what was socially acceptable were much more flexible than in any other East

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<sup>1</sup> Several PhD theses, the best of which were by Veljko Vujačić and Jasna Dragović Soso, as well as several articles and books, have recently analysed this dimension. I refer readers to these analyses.

<sup>2</sup> According to Stipe Šuvar's report at the Seventh CC LCY session in April 1987, in the five years between 1981 and 1985, there were 36 bans on publications: ten newspapers, 16 books, 3 journals, two calendars, two tourist prospectuses, one geographical map, one bulletin and one poster. One here needs to take into account that censorship in Yugoslavia did not officially exist, and in practical terms it was easier for a book to be published than elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Also, this was a period of 'counter-revolution' in Kosovo and of the rise of the 'critical intelligentsia' in Belgrade. Between 1982 and 1987, 2,443 people were charged for 'political delicts' (1,748 for 'verbal delicts'). The largest number of them were from Kosovo (1,020), followed by Croatia (473), Serbia without provinces (306) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (291). In Slovenia 90, in Montenegro 71, in Macedonia 51 and in Vojvodina 37 people were charged with 'political crimes' (Šuvar, 1988:131).

<sup>3</sup> This does not mean, however, that it was the same situation in all the Yugoslav republics. In the early 1980s, the most tolerant was Serbia, followed by Slovenia. The situation was more difficult for dissidents in the other republics.

<sup>4</sup> In this sense, Havel's definition of 'dissidence' (1978/1991:168) could hardly apply to the Yugoslav 'critical intelligentsia'. In strict sense, the term 'opposition' is as inadequate as 'dissidents'. In the real terms opposition exists only in parliamentary systems, in which there is freedom of expression. In the socialist societies of Eastern Europe, the term 'opposition' was used by the elite as 'the blackest of indictments, as synonymous with the word *enemy*, (Havel, 1978/1991:166). The Serbian dissidents themselves rejected both terms and preferred to call themselves the 'critical intelligentsia'. For a debate on dissidence in Yugoslavia see Republika, No. 179-182 (1998).

European country. Thus state action against those who overstepped them was not like that in the Soviet bloc states.

Secondly, for this reason many more intellectuals in Yugoslavia than in other East European countries believed that the system could be gradually reformed and need not necessarily be overturned by a revolution. Many of them (being – such as for example, the *Praxis* professors – Marxists themselves), restricted their criticism to deviations from what was officially proclaimed. With growing 'constructive criticism', including that which originated from various branches of the elite itself, the gap between criticism from outside the regime and from inside the regime was narrowing.

Finally, some of the most prominent figures among the Yugoslav 'dissidents' had long-standing personal links with political leaders, established during the Partisan struggle or while they themselves still belonged to the communist establishment. Many of these friendships survived political break-ups, providing a certain amount of protection.

In the course of the events followed in this thesis, a fourth reason emerged: the political elites – being divided into two blocs (as described in Chapter Five) – often tolerated, if not openly encouraged, the 'critical intelligentsia' to say what they themselves did not want to state publicly.<sup>5</sup> The 'dissidents', therefore, often played the role of 'probe balloons' for the elite, which used their existence to push forward their own options in the conflict within Yugoslav politics.

It would be, however, incorrect to assume that 'opposition' to the regime did not exist or that the regime did not take any action to restrict its activities. This was especially the case with those groups of intellectuals whose criticism Kardelj described as potentially the most damaging – the 'radical left' groups around the Marxist philosophical journal 'Praxis', as well as those linked to the 1968 Belgrade student protests (such as 'the black wave' in Serbian cinematography, etc.). As presented in Chapter Two, Tito and Kardelj had warned that the 'leftist', 'statist' and 'unitarist' alternatives to the 'self-managing concepts' would naturally tend to emerge within the largest Yugoslav nation, and, in fact, with the high levels of criticism within the Serbian political elite regarding the 1974 Constitution, intellectual dissent was indeed strongest in Belgrade. Tito's personal animosities towards Belgrade intellectual circles (whom he often criticised for their 'čaršija' mentality) had forced Serbian leaders to take several unpopular measures against them in

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<sup>5</sup> An example of such a link between intellectuals and elite is the polemic between the Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić and the Slovenian Dušan Pirjevec in 1961. This polemic was encouraged by two groups in the Yugoslav leadership (Pirjevec for the Kardeljists, Ćosić for Ranković's supporters), as explained in Djukić/Ćosić, 1989.

the mid-1970s. Consequently, Tito's departure was awaited among the Belgrade dissidents with more hopes for the future than in any other part of the country.

And indeed, only five months after Tito's death, in October 1980, 36 of the leading Belgrade dissidents addressed an open letter to the Yugoslav Presidency requesting an amnesty for those who had committed the offence of expressing prohibited political views (Review, 5/1983:412). In December 1980, 102 petitioners proposed an amendment to the Criminal Law, requesting that the phrase in its Article 133 which sanctioned 'false description of social and political circumstances in the country with ill intentions' be deleted. The political elite, however, chose to ignore both demands.

But, when 120 intellectuals (including now some from Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Novi Sad) attempted to launch a journal Javnost (*Public*) in November 1980 the elite decided to react, perhaps also because the initiators were Dobrica Ćosić (whose removal in 1968 we followed in Chapter Three) and Ljubomir Tadić (a Praxis philosopher). In their proposal, the two stressed their commitment to 'democratic socialism', which was - as explained in Chapter Two - in itself dangerous for the elite. The 'democratic socialism' would be based on 'freedom of speech and effective communication, [characterised by] the synthesis of knowledge, experience and imagination'. But the formal application for registration of Javnost was refused, whilst its initiators faced public criticism from the Federal Interior Minister Stane Dolanc for 'attempting to put themselves on a footing with subjective forces and to present themselves as an elite of society'. In his speech of 13 December 1980, Dolanc (the leading Kardeljist among the Yugoslav politicians) attacked those 'small groups' who 'raised their heads' in order to impose their 'monopolistic tendencies' over the process of understanding the problems of society (Review 5/1983:444).

Instead of gradually opening up to new initiatives, the post-Tito elite intensified its ideological action. In 1980 the Law on Higher Education was amended, introducing the criterion of 'ideological, moral and political aptitude' for all teachers, instead of the much less ideological demand for 'appropriate social and overall behaviour'. Following this change, in January 1981 eight Praxis professors were fired from Belgrade University on the grounds of 'seriously damaging social interests'. However, it was only with the Kosovo protests that the regime began to notice and react to initiatives by its dissident 'critical intelligentsia'.

### 6.1.1. The Rise of the 'Critical Intelligentsia' as a Political Counter-Elite (1981-1984)

#### 6.1.1.1. Political Engagement

The brutal reaction of the elite to the protests of the Kosovo Albanians in March and April 1981 revealed that the Yugoslav leadership was frightened of the possibility of mass protests, not unlike those that seriously threatened to destabilise Poland.<sup>6</sup> For the first time, the dissidents realised that the regime did not have such unanimous support as it seemed to have immediately after Tito's death.<sup>7</sup> The Kosovo events, therefore, sent various signals to all sides: the elite decided to toughen its actions against any type of opposition, while the dissidents saw new possibilities of compromising the regime.

Ensuing events bore this conclusion out. When, a month after the publication of his book *'The Woollen Times'* in April 1981, the (Bosnian Serb) poet Gojko Djogo was arrested and charged with 'insulting the highest values and symbols of the revolution' (Review 5/1983:467-91), Serbian intellectuals organised petitions and other forms of protest against Article 133 of the Penal Code, which sanctioned 'delict of thought' ('verbal delict'). When, after a long trial full of controversies, Djogo went to prison in March 1983, more than 100 Belgrade intellectuals petitioned Ivan Stambolić (then the Serbian Prime Minister) and other Serbian senior politicians to release Djogo. When they received no reply, the Writers' Association of Serbia launched 'Evenings of Solidarity with Djogo' every Wednesday in Belgrade. The sessions were sometimes attended by a couple of hundred Serbian intellectuals and supported by several semi-official organisations (such as the Serbian Philosophical Society and the Serbian Literary Youth Organisation), becoming the main stage for the criticism of the regime. They now demanded that the gap between the letter of the Constitution and political practice be eliminated. This joint action resulted in the formation of the Committee for the Protection of Art Freedom in May 1982 within the Serbian Writers' Association.

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<sup>6</sup> The Party leadership debated the situation in Poland on several occasions in 1980 and 1981. According to Dušan Dragosavac, the then President of the LCY Presidency, there were two groups in the Yugoslav leadership regarding the situation. As Dragosavac explained to me in April 1998: 'One group was for unconditional condemnation of Jaruzelski's Martial Law. The others, including myself, argued that the Russians were already there with 400,000 soldiers, and that they had an additional 600,000 on their borders with Poland. They were already intervening in Polish internal affairs, and there was very little we could do to stop them. Secondly, the USA were strongly involved as well, especially via the Catholic Church and the Vatican. Hence, we concluded that the most we could do was condemn any intervention in the internal affairs of Poland and support Polish independence. Also, we had to say that we were against bloodshed and that we would oppose any military intervention or violence. The majority in the leadership accepted this position, and the differences vanished soon afterwards. However, some Communist Parties, such as for example Carrillo's Spanish Communists, criticised our politics. Carrillo thought this was too mild towards the Russians. He was somehow anti-Soviet all the way through.'

<sup>7</sup> As Dobrica Ćosić admitted in his diaries on 13 May 1980, 'all anti-Titoists [were] confused by the way people [were] reacting to Tito's death. Such grief, especially among the young people, [was] confusing' (1992:39).

This institution (chaired first by Zoran Gluščević, then by Vuk Drašković<sup>8</sup>) soon became a symbol of democratic resistance to the regime.

Such a strong reaction surprised the political elite and showed up the internal divisions within it. The non-Serbian leaders urged the Serbian communists to condemn the actions of the Belgrade intellectuals, who were undermining the stability of the country. It was still expected that the Serbian communists would act against the Serbian 'opposition' without any interference from outside. But, the Serbian leaders felt that the other republics in Yugoslavia (and even more, the provinces) wanted to redirect attention from the causes (the position of Serbia in Yugoslavia) to the consequences (the growing opposition to the regime in Serbia). Having personal links with some of the main dissidents, and being themselves critical towards the implementation of the 1974 Constitution, the Serbian leaders hesitated to take firm action. This was only confirmed when in June 1983, after only three months, Gojko Djogo was released from prison on grounds of 'poor health'.<sup>9</sup> The last 'protest evening' by the Serbian Writers' Association was held soon after - in June 1983.

In August 1983 Aleksandar Ranković died and about 100.000 people in Belgrade attended his funeral, applauding all the way to the cemetery. Ranković's funeral was a demonstration of the discontent of many Serbs with his ousting from office in 1966, but also a sign of solidarity with those who (like Dobrica Ćosić) criticised the Brioni Yugoslavia. At the same time, it was a demonstration of the growing anti-Albanian atmosphere, which gained much strength in the two years after the 'counter-revolution in Kosovo'. The Federal Party Presidency convened to criticise Ivan Stambolić (between 1982 and 1984 the president of Belgrade Party Organisation) for 'losing control in Belgrade'. Stambolić, already suspected for his role in writing the 'Blue Book' (1977) and in 'the case of Draža Marković' (1982), narrowly survived this criticism, but he never regained the full trust of the other Yugoslav leaders. As explained in Chapter Five of this thesis, Serbia was slowly but persistently slipping towards further isolation within Yugoslavia.

Seeing Stambolić not reacting to the growing opposition in Belgrade, the federal police (led by the Interior Minister Stane Dolanc) took further steps. In April 1984 the police raided a session of the 'flying university' and arrested 28 its participants, including Milovan Djilas. All of them but six were released the next morning, while the trial of these six 'New Left' intellectuals was organised

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<sup>8</sup> Ever since then Vuk Drašković has been one of the leading figures of the Serbian opposition. While in the 1990 elections he was the leading candidate of the Serbian nationalists, he later evolved towards a more moderate political position.

<sup>9</sup> The Serbian opposition celebrated the decision as a significant political victory. But, the Serbian political leaders now came under a new wave of pressure from their colleagues in the federal leadership for being 'soft' on or even sympathetic to Serbian 'nationalism'.

later that year. At the same time the trial of the young University lecturer Vojislav Šešelj started in Sarajevo. In an unpublished manuscript commissioned by the Belgrade 'Komunist' newspaper (the official newspaper of the LC Serbia), which police found while searching his flat, Šešelj proposed to abolish four of the eight Yugoslav federal units, by abolishing the two provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo) and incorporating Montenegro, Macedonia and the largest part of Bosnia-Herzegovina within Serbia.<sup>10</sup>

The wave of repression by the post-Titoist leadership against the Kosovo demonstrators and 'opposition' throughout the country initiated a new wave of protests by Serbian intellectuals, which alerted the foreign press and governments to the political trials. It was on this occasion that 19 prominent Belgrade intellectuals (twelve of whom were members of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts) formed the Committee for the Defence of Freedom of Thought and Expression, chaired by Dobrica Ćosić. In the next five years (1984-1989) the Committee sent more than 100 letters to political institutions in protest against violation of fundamental rights. Although the Committee originally invited Croatian and Slovenian writers to join, they politely refused, already doubtful about the treatment of the national question in the new initiatives of the Serbian 'critical intelligentsia'. The Committee, nevertheless, took an interest in the violation of fundamental rights in other parts of Yugoslavia, protesting against the arrest of Alija Izetbegović and other Muslim intellectuals in Sarajevo (1983), as well as against that of Vlado Gotovac and other Croatian intellectuals associated with the 1971 Croatian Spring. It also organised several petitions in defence of Albanians prosecuted for 'hostile propaganda' and 'counter-revolution' following the 1981 unrest in Kosovo. In 1986, the Committee established a 'Solidarity Fund' which secured financial support for those 'whose existence (was) threatened because of their critical views and social activism'. By 1986 the Belgrade intellectual dissidents had already created institutions through which they co-ordinated their actions against the regime. Democratisation and regionalisation of the media and the overall atmosphere of criticism (both within the elite and from 'constructive critics' of the regime) helped publicise their views. More dependent on international financial support than ever before, Yugoslav political leaders found it much more difficult to ignore protests by foreign institutions about human rights and even – as in the case of the Belgrade Six Trial – by their fellow communists in western countries.<sup>11</sup> As a result, both the Djogo case and the Belgrade Six trial proved to be a complete disaster for the regime. In the Belgrade case, one of the six

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<sup>10</sup> The Šešelj trial followed earlier charges against a group of Muslim intellectuals (including Alija Izetbegović) accused of spreading 'Islamic Fundamentalism' in Bosnia. Izetbegović was charged on the basis of his book published 12 years earlier ('Islam Between East and West') and received a long prison sentence.

<sup>11</sup> This was especially obvious when Enrico Berlinguer, the head of the Italian Communist party, supported the Six and even announced his wish to attend the trial.

defendants was acquitted, two saw their trials indefinitely postponed, while only three received sentences, ranging from one to two years. The Serbian Supreme Court then even acquitted one of these three, while reducing the sentences of the remaining two to eighteen and eight months respectively. At the same time, Vojislav Šešelj in Sarajevo (one of the strongholds of the 'Kardeljist' section of the political elite) was sentenced to eight years. This demonstrated the differences within the elite on the issue of reacting to the 'opposition' and the obvious lack of any federal platform regarding the use of coercion.

#### 6.1.1.2. 'The Literature of Apocalypse'

Apart from the openly political activities of the 'critical intelligentsia' in the early 1980s many of the leading participants in these protests had published literary works in which they undermined the main constitutive myths of Yugoslav socialism.<sup>12</sup> Four of the main points presented in the literature of the early 1980s were shared by authors of different ethnic backgrounds, while some of them were exclusively argued by Serbian authors. Among those argued by those in all parts of Yugoslavia were:

First, the main argument of Kardelj's concept, that Yugoslavia offered a viable alternative to Soviet experience, was undermined in a series of articles and books on 'anti-Stalinist Stalinism'. A wave of books on the coercion used against the 'Stalinists' in 1948 (on the Adriatic *Naked Island - Goli Otok*) emphasised these points. The 'prison literature' described the inhumane character of Yugoslav socialism, which was based on the destruction of individual freedoms for the sake of ideological doctrines. Their authors argued that Tito was not substantially different from Stalin and thus the regime he created was just one of the variants of the Soviet model (Gruenwald, 1987). It was clearly argued that Tito became the CPY leader as Stalin's choice and remained a 'Soviet agent' throughout the wartime period (Cencić, 1981).

Secondly, the Partisans' role in the Liberation War was now re-interpreted. Contrary to the official interpretation that the Partisans were the only anti-fascist force in the country, several authors now argued that they were just one of many sides fighting the civil war. The bulk of the literature in Slovenia, Serbia and Croatia argued that the Partisans were perhaps even less sincere about their true political intentions than the others. They came to power by hiding their true

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<sup>12</sup> Ramet (1985:104-7) argues that five topics were kept out of public debate throughout the whole period of Titoism: 1) criticism of non-aligned foreign policy; 2) Tito's personal role and the official version of the Partisan struggle (including the main enemies of the Partisans, such as the Chetniks and Ustasas); 3) promotion of religious views and of any 'political' activity of churches; 4) criticism of the state's nationality policy; and 5) any discussions of military issues and - especially - any criticism of the Yugoslav People's Army. By 1984, all these areas had come under either openly political or literary criticism from the 'dissidents'.

intentions both from their own people and from their international allies (the British and the Soviets). Not only did they take power by deliberately misleading the public about the communist character of their struggle, but they continued to con foreign governments for the whole period of Titoism. The West was misled about the real face of Tito's regime, they argued.

Thirdly, as a consequence of such an interpretation, some authors in Croatia (for example, Franjo Tuđman, later President of Croatia), Slovenia (Spomenka Hribar) and Serbia (Dobrica Ćosić, later the first President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) demanded 'national reconciliation' within their respective nations. It was time to end the war, they argued. Instead of further divisions based on the Partisan - Chetniks (in Serbia), Partisan - Ustashas (in Croatia) and Partisan - White Guard (Slovenia) WWII splits, the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes should 'end' the last war, primarily because its legacy was still being used to divide the nations into those 'included' and those 'excluded'.

Finally, in several accounts published in the early 1980s, Tito's personality and politics were examined in a critical light. The controversies about his pre-war life were emphasised even by Tito's personal biographer Vladimir Dedijer's 'New Contributions to the Biography of Josip Broz Tito' in 1981.<sup>13</sup> That Tito remained 'the Comintern's agent' was evident, the nationalist stream of the Serbian opposition now claimed, from his political actions which followed the hostile line that the Comintern had taken towards the existence of Yugoslavia. This unprecedented criticism of Tito culminated in Antonije Isaković's public demand for a 're-evaluation of Tito's role' in his speech in the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SANU) on 27 September 1984.

There was, however, additional criticism of Tito and the Communist myths promoted by Serbian authors exclusively.

First, for the first time ever, the Chetniks ('the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland'), the most exclusively Serb fighters in WWII, were presented to the Yugoslav public as anti-fascists as well (most notably in Veselin Djuretić's 1986 book 'The Allies and the Yugoslav War Drama'). For the reasons explained in Chapter Two of this thesis (fear of Serbian supremacy and of a 'return to the past') the official ideology treated the Chetniks as the main internal enemies of the Yugoslav Partisans during the War. Serbian writers, such as Vuk Drašković (in his novel 'Nož'), now argued

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<sup>13</sup> Dedijer's controversial biography of Tito was published in Rijeka (Croatia) in 1981 and it was sold out in a month. After Vrhovec's criticism, the publishing house refused to publish a second edition. Dedijer, a Montenegrin who supported Djilas in 1954 but then moved back to Tito, lived in Slovenia. He complained that the Federal Police (led by Stane Dolanc) bugged his home, stole some of his documents and even murdered his son. Vrhovec thinks Dedijer was paranoid (Interview with Vrhovec, April 1998).



that they were a spontaneous defensive movement created by those patriotic soldiers and officers of the legitimate Yugoslav Army who did not wish to obey their supreme command and to surrender to the occupiers after the 17-days war in April 1941. On the other hand, the Partisans were an organised ideological sect, concerned only with their own ideological goals rather than with the fate of their people and their country. The Partisans, it was argued, did not start their resistance before 22 June 1941, but only after and as a consequence of Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. They did not care about Yugoslavia (which was, as the Comintern had argued earlier, only an 'artificial creation' of World Imperialism); only the Soviet Union and the international socialist revolution were of concern to them.

Secondly, the Serbian authors now addressed the mass exterminations of the Serbs by Croats and Muslims in the wartime Independent State of Croatia (NDH).<sup>14</sup> One after the other, the authors (such as Drašković, Lubarda, Radulović, etc.), often deeply influenced by tragedies that happened to their own families during the war, accused the Communist Party of trying to cover up these massacres and the post-war tensions between Serbs and Croats in Bosnia and Croatia. Instead of facing the horror of the war and the deep scars that were still fresh in these regions, the elite turned a blind eye on inter-ethnic tensions, doing nothing to prevent their re-emergence. Consequently, it was claimed that Titoist Yugoslavia was not much better to its Serbian population than Ustashes' Croatia.<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, the Communist interpretation of the Chetnik movement, which equated it with the genocidal Ustashes' regime, and the deliberate misinterpretation of the WWII sufferings of the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, now became symbols of Serbian humiliation in Yugoslavia. The Serbs, being a majority in both anti-fascist movements, were the only ones who had fought against their occupiers for justice and who in fact liberated others from their own collaborators. But what did they receive in return? The 1985 best-selling novel *The Book about Milutin* by Danko Popović summarises the answer: the Serbs gained nothing from Yugoslavia, for which they fought in the First World War and in which they suffered injustice ever after. As the

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that the Independent State of Croatia, run by the Ustashes' *Poglavnik* Ante Pavelić, extended to most of today's Croatia (without Istria and the northern part of Dalmatia) and the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The crimes committed by the Croatian Ustashes were now attributed to the whole of the Croatian and Muslim nations. While in the Partisan interpretation, the Ustashes were a minority of the Croats who sided with the occupiers (just like the Chetniks were treated as a small part of the Serbian nation that betrayed national interests), they now became representatives of both Croats and Muslims. The re-interpretation of the WW II role of these two nations had an enormous impact on further events, practically setting the agenda for military conflict between the Serbs on the one hand and the Croats and Muslims on the other in 1990-1995.

<sup>15</sup> An open statement to this effect was expressed in the 1986 'Memorandum' of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which claimed (1986/1996:327) that 'Serbs in Croatia have been exposed to a subtle and effective policy of assimilation.'

disappointed Serbian *domaćin* Milutin, the main character of the novel, argued, the Serbs had fooled themselves in attempting to live with the others, instead of turning to themselves. Popović's book, which was re-printed a dozen times and sold several hundred thousand copies, became the strongest literary expression of an alternative option for Serbia - to opt out of Yugoslavia in which she had lost 'in peace' everything she had won 'in wars'. Popović's novel, written in simple and accessible language, was the most explicit example of the forthcoming shift of many Serbian nationalist writers from 'Yugoslavism' to 'Serbianism'.<sup>16</sup>

Through both the political and the literary engagement of the Serbian 'critical intelligentsia', one simple message, formulated in Dobrica Ćosić's 1978 Inaugural Speech to the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, entered the public discourse:

'In Europe there is no other small nation that in the last two centuries, and particularly in the 20th, has been so burdened by history and has made such sacrifices for the goal of liberation and the improvement of its existence as the Serbian nation... In the same century we survived Austro-Hungarian, fascist and Ustasha genocides, and in terms of our human losses we have been brought to the limits of biological extinction... What kind of a nation are we, what kind of people, that in wars we die so willingly for freedom and in peace we lose it?' (Ćosić, 1982:126-31).

Words such as 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing' entered the public debate, making a link between the Serbian past (WWII) and present (Kosovo) sufferings. Nowhere was this link between the tragic past and present expressed more closely than in Kosovo, the Serbian Academicians argued.

'The physical, political, legal and cultural genocide of the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija is the worst defeat in the battles for liberation that Serbia waged from 1804 until the revolution in 1941' (SANU Memorandum, 1986).

The sense of defeat was only underlined by the fact that it was to the Albanians that the Serbs had to 'surrender'. The sense of Serbian 'spiritual superiority' (developed again by the myth of the 'heavenly people', built upon various interpretations of the 1389 Kosovo Polje Battle) was now released again by the nationalist opposition.<sup>17</sup> Again, this was described in Popović's 'Book about Milutin':

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<sup>16</sup> Eight years later, Danko Popović argued that Milošević's attempt to use Serbia's citizens (such as his Milutin) to fight for 'another grandiose political project, such as unification with the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs, was in fact one in a line of tragic decisions by Serbia's politicians in the 20th century'. The Serbian peasants, such as he described in his 1985 book, willingly went to war to fight and to die, but were ultimately betrayed by the ludicrous projects of their politicians (see Pavković, 1998:517).

<sup>17</sup> A good illustration of this feeling was the answer of an anonymous Montenegrin respondent to Slovene sociologists in an opinion poll conducted in 1989. There was still 'an inherited belief that they [Albanians] are something of a 'lower race', he said. 'In fact, they now have an inferiority complex and believe that as soon as they say they are Albanians, I would immediately think of them as lower than I. They believe that we treat them worse because they are Albanians' (Gaber and Kuzmanić, 1989:252). One should, however, admit that ethnic prejudice against Albanians did not exist only among the

'If God had wanted us to surrender, he would have sent an enemy to whom we could surrender, not Albanians... What would the Germans think of us, and would they respect us if we surrendered to them? Is it not so? We had stronger and more civilised enemies than the Albanians, yet we did not surrender. How could we now become their prisoners? Should we stoop that low? Not that I am a hero, but again, I would be ashamed if I had to surrender to them. Also, I wonder, what do they think of us when they want us to surrender to them?' (Popović, 1986:26).

'The fate of Kosovo,' they claimed, had now become a 'matter of life and death for the Serbian people.'

## 6.2. The (Croatian) Political Elite's Reaction: The *White Book* (1984)

When the police action (organised by Dolanc) collapsed in 1983-1984, the Croatian party ideologues Josip Vrhovec<sup>18</sup> and Stipe Šušvar<sup>19</sup> took the initiative to launch a political (ideological) 'counter-offensive' against the 'opposition'. Following its 1982 Congress, the Croatian Party leadership organised a series of 'advisory seminars' with its prominent members in various areas of the 'cultural and public sphere' in order to debate the public criticism of the regime. In preparation for these meetings, the Party administration produced six internal party 'books', in which quotes from newspapers contending with various criticisms of the regime were presented.<sup>20</sup>

The seventh party publication (which would later be named 'the White Book' in the opposition press) was used in the preparation for a seminar 'On some ideological and political tendencies in art creativity, literary, theatre and film criticism, and on public speeches by a number of creative

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Serbs but also among other Yugoslav nations (as demonstrated by a Slovene Public Opinion Poll which revealed a strong social distance between Slovenes and Albanians in 1987 (Toš: 1987; and Pantić, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> In 1982-1983 Vrhovec was a member and in 1983-1984 President of the Croatian LC CC Presidency. In 1984 he became the Croatian representative in the Federal State Presidency, where he remained until his retirement in 1989. He was also a member of the LCY CC.

<sup>19</sup> Šušvar was among the most colourful political figures in Croatia. As one of the most open critics of the Croatian nationalists in 1967-1971, he was likened to Croatia's leading politician Vladimir Bakarić. As Croatia's Education and Culture Secretary in 1974-1982, Šušvar was associated with the re-ideologisation of schools (introduction of Marxism, destruction of the 'old school system' and implementation of the Kardeljist concept of self-management in education). In 1982 he became the main ideologue for the Croatian Party, the position from which he moved to the Federal Party Presidency as ideologue (1986-1988) and President (1988-1989). In 1989 he replaced Josip Vrhovec as Croatia's representative (and Vice-President) in the Federal State Presidency, to remain there until the election of the CDC majority in Croatia's Parliament in 1990.

<sup>20</sup> The topics of these 'books' in 1982 were: 'recent criticism of Miroslav Krleža' (25 February 1982), 'Goli Otok and the Informbiro' (14 April 1982), 'The de-mythification of the past' (10 May 1982), 'The role of the media' (16 July 1982), 'Some political, social and ideological tendencies' (1 February 1983) and 'On historiography' in general (May 1983). But, it was not before the seventh of the 'books' was written that the public knew of their existence.

artists in which politically unacceptable messages have been expressed', held in Zagreb in April 1984. The 'White Book' was a collection of excerpts from interviews and articles by about 120 authors (ninety of whom were Serbian, a dozen or two Slovene, while only a few were Croatian)<sup>21</sup> in the four years following Tito's death. It also presented poems and aphorisms, which the (anonymous) bureaucrats in the Party apparatus found unacceptable. Occasionally, these quotes would be commented on, but in most of the cases problematic lines of poems or other texts would simply be underlined.

The document warned about growing opposition to the regime and sought prompt reaction by Communists in cultural institutions and in the media. In introducing the 'book against book' method, the organisers of the Conference opposed any action of coercion against the authors and publications and urged 'ideological action' and 'Communist struggle' in public against their opponents. Šušteršič argued that although the main danger for the future of Yugoslav socialism still came from disunity within the Party, the struggle against the growing opposition to the regime should not be neglected. Like Kardelj before him, Šušteršič believed that the clarity of the ideas for which the Communists fought was the main pre-condition for success.

The document concluded that much of the contemporary literary production painted Yugoslav reality in such dark colours, that it deliberately misinterpreted it.<sup>22</sup> Šušteršič argued that if the trends were not reversed, the country would be led into another civil war, since the ideas expressed destabilised not only socialism but the country's independence in general.

Not surprisingly, Šušteršič's initiative met with a sharp reaction from Belgrade and Ljubljana dissidents, who made up almost 80 percent of those quoted in the 'White Book'. Appalled by what they saw as a nationalist and dogmatist attack from Zagreb on free-minded intellectuals in Belgrade and Ljubljana, more than 100 writers signed a petition to the Yugoslav Party Presidency

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<sup>21</sup> As Lazar Stojanović explains in an interview for this dissertation (1998), the regime showed more tolerance to books than to newspapers and especially to electronic media, since the books were read by a limited number of people and could not really influence public opinion. This is how one can explain the publishing of many non-Communist or even openly anti-Communist authors in Yugoslavia, including leading East European dissidents (Havel, Kundera, etc.). The regime even used these books to show the advantages of the Yugoslav model of socialism, as opposed to its Soviet counterpart. It was also relatively easy to buy and import any book in foreign languages, since the borders were fairly open. Ramet concluded (1985:5) that 'in Yugoslavia, one encounters the curious example of a communist regime which, in the last several years, has repeatedly allowed its publishing houses to publish highly critical and controversial material, only to subject these same works to vilification in the press for anti-socialist views' (1985:5). This openness somewhat changed in 1983 when a deposit for foreign travel was introduced for economic reasons (explained in Chapter Four).

<sup>22</sup> This was not only the Croatian Party ideologue's conclusion: some Western analysts too spoke about the 'apocalypse culture' that had developed in Yugoslav literature (Ramet, 1985:2-26).

seeking protection from the emerging 'Stalinism'.<sup>23</sup> *Književne novine* and *Književna Reč* protested against the 'Index Librorum Prohibitorum', calling it 'the Black Book of Yugoslav dogmatism' in an unprecedented series of anti-regime articles. Šuvar's action, which intended to replace police repression by a public dialogue, now faced an opposition as strong as if faced with brutal police coercion itself.

However, what surprised Serbian and Slovene writers much more than Šuvar's 'ideological offensive' was the fact that 150 leading Croatian intellectuals participated in the meeting, only a few of whom disagreed with the methods and content of the 'White Book'.<sup>24</sup> Not all of the participants were party members, but none of them was really an opponent of the regime either. This was a demonstration of the unusual closeness between the Croatian Party and a large segment of the Croatian intelligentsia, both of whom were already concerned with what they saw as a Serbian nationalist offensive. But, it was also a demonstration of how detailed the purge of independently-minded Croatian intellectuals in the decade following the 'Croatian Spring' (1971) actually was. Dozens of Croatian intellectuals, labeled as nationalists, were still entirely out of the public sphere, while those few promoting liberal and democratic Yugoslav ideas fled to Ljubljana and (especially) to Belgrade to publish there, rather than at home.<sup>25</sup> Considering the dozens of Croatian popular writers in 'internal exile',<sup>26</sup> and others outside the country, as well as the main participants in the Croatian Spring either imprisoned<sup>27</sup> or become 'non-existent people', the

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<sup>23</sup> Evidence for Šuvar's 'Stalinism' was found when the Czechoslovak ambassador to Belgrade praised his 'White Book' in a public interview with Yugoslav Television for criticising publishing houses that published novels and plays of the Czechoslovak dissidents Kundera and Havel.

<sup>24</sup> The meeting was open to the media – and I remember attending it as a journalist for *Polet*. Short and authorised versions of the speeches were later published in 'Naše teme', the official journal of the Croatian LC. Only four out of more than 50 speakers opposed some aspects of the 'White Book' material. The summary of the context of 'White Book' is here given from reading the document itself. In 1985, a publishing house in Belgrade attempted – unsuccessfully – to publish the 'White Book'. The police prevented it, claiming that, in this case, quotes from Djogo's banned book would be reprinted too. The 'White Book' has never been available to the general public.

<sup>25</sup> The visible weakness of dissidence in Croatia should be compared with the absence of Slovaks from any common action of the opposition in Czechoslovakia. Among the first 243 signatures collected for Charter 77, only one was that of a dissident living permanently in Slovakia (Wehrle, 1994:254, quoted in Innes, 1995:125). Czech dissident František Kriegel argued (in 1977) that this was only a reflection of the fact that 'the Slovak minority exercised power over the Czech majority, although the federation meant to establish parity' (Innes, 1995:125). The same argument was put forward by the Serbian nationalist opposition in the late 1980s, especially in the SANU Memorandum (1986). They argued that the 1974 Constitution accomplished most of what the Croatian nationalists had been aiming at. For a detailed account of the relationship between the Croatian Spring and the Constitutional changes in 1967-1974 see Chapter Three.

<sup>26</sup> Authors such as Igor Mandić, Predrag Matvejević, etc. were welcome to publish in Belgrade magazines, while *Nova Revija* and *Mladina*, opposition publications in Ljubljana, published even the Croatian nationalists such as Dobroslav Paraga, Vlado Gotovac and Vladimir Šeks. Throughout the 1980s the Belgrade media were open to all those who could not publish in their republics. This fact was exploited by the Serbian nationalist opposition when the Slovene and Croatian writers 'turned their backs' on them in the late 1980s.

<sup>27</sup> Leading Croatian poet Vlado Gotovac, historian Franjo Tuđman, economist Marko Veselica, student leaders Dražen Budiša and Ivan Zvonimir Čičak were all imprisoned following 'the Croatian Spring'. The leading Communists of the period, such as Savka Dabčević Kučar and Miko Tripalo were forced to abstain from any public activity. 'We shall not jail you, but shall not allow any public activity either,' Vladimir Bakarić told Miko Tripalo on the day of Tripalo's dismissal

massive attendance of 150 people at Šuvar's debate gave only a partially correct impression of the real situation in Zagreb.

At the same time, Šuvar himself was surprised when he learned that many within the Croatian Party leadership and the majority of the Serbian party leaders were equally outraged by his initiative. The Serbian leaders saw it as yet another intrusion into 'Serbian internal affairs' and as a sign of the lack of confidence of the Croatian Communists in their Serbian comrades. What Šuvar had done was a clear violation of the main principle: that Serbian nationalism should be fought against by Serbian Communists, while the Croatian Communists were expected to oppose (for any practical purpose – only) Croatian nationalism. Additionally, the 'White Book' initiative was seen as another attempt to accuse Serbian leaders of being 'soft' on Serbian nationalism and to re-direct public attention from the main issues (such as the economic crisis and the constitutional position of Serbia) to less important issues (such as ideological struggle). Croatia was now once again accused of ideological 'vanguardism' and 'lecturing' (patronising) Serbia.<sup>28</sup>

Ivan Stambolić, who became President of the Serbian Party Presidency in 1984, complained about Šuvar's initiative to the new Croatian Party President Mika Špiljak, initiating at the same time a debate within the Federal party leadership about the whole affair. Špiljak, whose personal animosity towards Šuvar was a consequence of a widespread perception in the Croatian and Yugoslav political elite that Šuvar was becoming 'the new Bakarić' (Bilandžić, 1986)<sup>29</sup> and thus the most serious of Špiljak's contenders for the position of Party President of Croatia, concluded that Šuvar's initiative led Croatia into conflict with the Slovenian and Serbian leadership. He therefore ordered Šuvar to shelve his ideological counter-offensive. In order to downplay the whole affair, the ideological commissions of the Serbian and Croatian Central Committees met twice in late 1984. 'The Serbs were furious at these meetings,' said Šime Pilić, then the Executive Secretary to the Croatian Central Committee, in an interview for this thesis in January 1998:

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following the Croatian Spring in January 1972 (Tripalo, 1990). Indeed, no alternative interpretation of the events was allowed till 1990, and police reacted harshly to any sign of 'Croatian nationalism' even in its most benign form.

<sup>28</sup> For similar accusations of 'vanguardism' in the late 1960s and before December 1971 see Chapter Three.

<sup>29</sup> In the whole period between 1945 until his death in 1983, Bakarić was the unchallenged leader of Croatia. His support for the controversial Šuvar was a crucial element in Šuvar's promotion to both Croatian minister of Culture and Education (1974-1982) and ideologue of the Croatian Party (1982-1986). Šuvar, just like Bakarić in earlier years, portrayed himself as the most intellectual member of the Croatian leadership. On the other side, Špiljak had a working-class background. Bakarić disliked him and suspected him of 'unitarism'. For this reason, Špiljak was 'sent' to Federal positions in Belgrade where he was first the Yugoslav Prime Minister, then president of a Chamber of the Yugoslav Federal Assembly and President of the Yugoslav Unions Federation. As the Croatian politician with the longest federal career, he replaced Bakarić as member of the Federal Presidency and became its president in 1983-1984. Finally, in 1984 he returned to Croatia to chair the Croatian Party Presidency, the place of real power. The conflict between Špiljak and Šuvar (i.e., between their proteges) in the whole period of 1984-1990 was the main reason for the weakness of the Croatian leadership and for its inability to play an adequate role on the Yugoslav political scene.

'They argued that this was a violation of democratic centralism and that their position in Serbia had been significantly weakened by our action. They said that the Serbian public saw the 'White Book' as a punch in the face of the Serbian party. The opposition was now accusing them of not being able to protect the dignity of Serbia and the processes of liberalisation within it.'

The Serbian Party Secretary Špiro Galović was open enough to say that 'to talk endlessly about the enemies of socialism, and at the same time to leave out one's own responsibility for the socialist content of social trends, was a typical bureaucratic characteristic and one of the means of defending the status quo.'<sup>30</sup> The Serbian Communists put Šuvar's initiative into the context of the constitutional debate, in which Croatia was, together with Slovenia, the most stubborn opponent of any changes to the 1974 Constitution. In fact, the Serbs believed that the crisis of socialism could not be resolved by ideological offensives, but only by cutting the roots of the crisis - which they saw in the 'illogical' position of Serbia following the implementation of the 1974 Constitution.

In contrast, Šuvar believed that Yugoslav Communists should not stop their activities in front of the borders of other republics and provinces. In his article in the Party official review 'Socijalizam' (January 1985) Šuvar explained his motives for the 'White Book':

'We need to normalise relations in the whole country. As Communists, and as citizens, we need to know what is happening in each corner of our country, in national and social territories in which we do not live, as well as in those where we do. And not only must we know it, but discuss it openly and intervene in it. In this respect, there should be no divisions into 'ours' and 'theirs', like 'foreign' territories. We are all inter-linked by our destiny, and any nationalism should be of equal concern to all of us, because they are all against us, they all work to head us off. The only condition we need to meet before we criticise others is that we ourselves have done the same with regard to our own nation, where we live... And this is not always the case today, and therefore some of us have lost the moral legitimacy to talk about the others...' (Šuvar, 1985:48).

Šuvar's criticism was clearly addressed to Serbian leaders but also to Špiljak's group in the Croatian leadership. As one of the leading opponents of 'Croatian nationalism' in and after 1971, Šuvar now warned his colleagues against 'opportunism' and divisions into 'our' and 'their' matters.

By his open conflict with the Serbian leadership, Šuvar promoted himself as a potential leader of a growing majority in the Yugoslav party elite, dissatisfied with the trends in Serbia. Vojvodina and Kosovo, but also Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina now began to treat him as the viable alternative to nationalism and 'opportunism', hoping that he was the right person to keep afloat

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<sup>30</sup> Nin, 25 November 1984. The same argument was expressed in several speeches by Slobodan Milošević in these years. Milošević remained convinced that the Party should have a 'positive programme', rather than being focussed on criticism of its opponents.

'the flame of the revolution', while not endangering the basic construct of the 1974 Constitution. This belief was shared by the generation of old Partisans and by the Army, the most Titoist segments of the political elite, which was concerned with the growing trends of anti-Communism in Serbia. They were favourable to him not only because Šušteršič had built up a reputation as a true Yugoslav and as a follower of Bakarić, but also because Croatia (unlike Slovenia and Serbia) was an example of an 'opposition-free' territory. These groups in the Party would bring Šušteršič to the position of Yugoslav Party President in 1988, and would subsequently shield him from Serbian demands for him to resign, from Croatian 'plots' against him, and from Slovenian discontent with his refusal to accept a more 'social-democratic' position. But, they would not be able to marginalise Milošević's influence in Serbia, well secured by the same confederalist principles that Šušteršič defended while arguing in favour of the constitutional status quo.

Šušteršič's action in 1984 aimed at uniting Yugoslav Communists in their fight against the democratic opposition. But it produced rather different results: new divisions within the Party, both within republics and between them. The fact that these divisions became public only further encouraged the opposition which saw them as yet another of its successes. But most of all, the events following the 'White Book' seriously undermined Stambolić's position in Yugoslavia and more notably in Serbia. Already treated as a 'Serbian nationalist', a title he 'inherited' from his office predecessors (Petar Stambolić and Draža Marković), Ivan Stambolić was now losing political support. His proposal to re-introduce the post of the President of Yugoslavia (in 1985) was seen as a direct threat to the confederalist rota system of collective leadership. His candidacy for the position of Federal Prime Minister was rejected by a decisive 7:1 vote in the Federal Presidency in 1986.<sup>31</sup>

### 6.3. Serbia Between the 'White Book' (1984) and the 'Memorandum' (1986)

Pressed from the federal leadership and other republics Stambolić moved to demonstrate that he was not soft on Serbian nationalism. In 1984 and 1985 he delivered several anti-nationalist public addresses that surprised many.<sup>32</sup> In October 1985, he promised no dialogue with Serbian

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<sup>31</sup> Instead, the Bosnian Croat Branko Mikulić was elected. As demonstrated in Chapter Five, Mikulić belonged to the closest circle of Tito's confidants in his last years. As a hard-line 'defender of the Constitution', he distinguished himself by his role in the 'case of Draža Marković' (1982), as well as by organising the Šešelj Trial in Sarajevo (1983) and by effectively undermining the reforms proposed by the Planinc government (1982-1986). His candidacy met with public criticism in 'Mladina'. Since Mikulić was the fourth Croat in the office of Yugoslav Prime Minister after the War (Tito, Špiljak, Planinc, while only one, Petar Stambolić, had been a Serb), the Serbian nationalists later used this as evidence of an 'anti-Serb coalition' in Yugoslavia.

<sup>32</sup> For example the *Times* correspondent Desa Trevisan. Immediately after these speeches, she told Stambolić that she had thought he was a wise politician, but now she was afraid that he was about to 'lose his head', by fighting the nationalists. She referred to the opposition which at one time had had some sympathies for Stambolić's isolation from the others, but had now lost them after these speeches. (Stambolić, 1995:106).



nationalists. He sent a clear message to all those who argued that 'the Serbian people have not had their own revolution but have been led by others; (...) [to those who argue] that the Serbs were not Partisans, that the Chetniks were not traitors to the Serbian people but anti-fascists, that the Federation was opposed to the historical interests of the Serbian people':

'When it comes to what the Partisans and all Serbian and Yugoslav patriots decided by their blood and their weapons, we shall not accept any dialogue with anyone. The Partisans defeated the Chetniks and Nazis in such a way that between us there is no room for reconciliation, no arguments in any form, not now and never' (Stambolić, 1985/1988:143).

The Serbian Party President invited the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts to dissociate itself from its nationalist members if it did not want to be accused of supporting nationalism. 'The League of Communists must not allow any institutional gathering of those who advocate nationalist theses and actions. We shall prevent any attempt by any of our institutions, which survive on workers' money, to transform itself into a seed-bed of nationalism,' he said as a response to the growing opposition in semi-official institutions of the system.<sup>33</sup>

But, at the same time (in July 1985), Stambolić initiated a new debate on Kosovo, this time in the federal party leadership. The Yugoslav Party Presidency, surprisingly, had not debated Kosovo since 1981, except in general terms and as a security issue. The main reason, as Stipe Šušvar recalls, was a firm belief that this was a matter of Serbian 'internal politics' in which no one wanted to be directly involved.<sup>34</sup> But by summer 1985 the Kosovo question had become an unavoidable political fact, both because of the activity of the Critical Intelligentsia and because of the public protests of Kosovan Serbs and Montenegrins that erupted in the Province, only to be spread all over Serbia.

### 6.3.1. The 'Martinović Case' and the Emergence of Public Protests in Serbia

The event that sparked the strongest wave of public protests, linking the Serbian dissidents with the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo, happened on 1 May 1985, when an Army employee Djordje Martinović, a Serb from Kosovo, was allegedly attacked by Albanians who 'impaled' him

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<sup>33</sup> The Serbian critical intelligentsia and especially the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts have never forgotten and even less forgiven this threat. Two years later, when Milošević ousted him from the office of Serbian President, they celebrated his downfall. 'He spoke for nobody and nobody listened to him,' said Antonije Isaković in April 1996. 'He was a traitor to Serbian interests. This is why we welcomed Milošević's action to remove him from office. Especially when we saw that Milošević understood the Serbian situation in a more or less similar way to what we did (Antonije Isaković in an interview with the author in April 1996).

<sup>34</sup> Even when Stambolić initiated a federal debate in 1985, Croatia's representative in the Federal Presidency Josip Vrhovec argued that Serbia should deal with it alone, since 'we did not create this problem, and can not accept any responsibility for its resolution'. He openly attacked Stambolić for 'failing to resolve' Serbia's internal affairs (Interviews with Vrhovec and Stambolić, 1995). See also Meier (1999).

on a bottle while he was working in his fields.<sup>35</sup> The story, widely publicised by the Serbian media, was immediately interpreted as the final evidence of Serbian sufferings in Kosovo. Not only had the personal safety of the Serbs and Montenegrins been put at risk, but also their honour had been attacked by 'savage' and 'violent' Albanians. Martinović himself became a metaphor for the 'raped Serbdom'. Stories of 'politically motivated' rapes of Serbian girls in the province, as well as of the 'politically inspired' high birth rate of the Kosovo Albanians entered the Serbian media, constructing the image of Albanian violators and Serb victims. Recalling the myths of the Ottoman practice of impalement, the case was used to link the past and present sufferings of the Serbs. It was also used to underline the need for historical 'revenge' on the Muslims for the fate of the Serbs under their rule.<sup>36</sup> In the minds of many Serbs, who felt that the high birth rate of the Kosovo Albanians was a deliberate political action aimed at their 'minoritisation' in the Province, every (male) Albanian was now potentially dangerous.<sup>37</sup>

The Martinović case was on the top of the agenda of the Yugoslav media in the following years. The Police and Army investigated it, but could not agree on the final report. Martinović himself later withdrew his allegations, admitting that there had been no attack on him. But, nobody believed him. On the contrary, the narrative of the event was so convincing that the Serbs in Kosovo considered any medical report that denied this narrative as a political attempt to cover the real truth, especially since the main Army hospital in Belgrade confirmed what the Kosovo civilian hospitals denied. The Serb and Albanian versions of truth were by now established so firmly that the facts mattered little.

Figures on crime in Kosovo did not support any notion of *genocide*, the word that now replaced *pressure* and *terror* to describe the criminal activities of Albanians against the Serbs. On the contrary: between 1981 and 1987 Kosovo made up 7.5% of the Yugoslav population, while only between 2.5% (in 1982) and 3.5% (in 1987) of total (recorded) crimes in Yugoslavia were committed

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<sup>35</sup> For details of this event see Mertus (1999), while for analysis of the narratives created in the Serbian 'opposition' media on it see Bracewell (1998).

<sup>36</sup> Together, these two elements as permanent reminders of the 'muslim genocide' against the Serbs and the need to protect the Serbs from its repetition, set the context for the future war between the Serbs and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1991-1995) and in Kosovo.

<sup>37</sup> Dobrica Ćosić's letter to Slovenian sociologist Spomenka Hribar, written in November 1986, reveals the extent to which the new image of Albanian sexual crimes had entered the public discourse. Ćosić quotes his friend, a frequent visitor to Kosovo, who told him: 'In the village of Klina, there have been over twenty girls raped this summer, and no word has been said or published about it. These rapes are form of a total war against the Serbian nation, which is planned and systematically implemented by battalions of young people poisoned with ethnic hatred, and who are protected by the law and the government' (Ćosić, 1992:87). In his speech at the closed session of the Serbian State and Party Presidencies on 5 September 1988, the President of the state Presidency Petar Gračanin said: 'In Kosovo, we came to the point at which no girl from a kindergarten, no woman, young or old if she is of Serbian or Montenegrin nationality, could walk through an Albanian village without being protected and accompanied' (IB CKSKS, 8/1988:6)

in the Province (Horvat, 1989:153).<sup>38</sup> When the ethnic structure of criminals and victims was analysed, the extent to which the claims of Serbian intellectuals differed from the facts became even more striking. Between 1 January 1981 and 1 November 1986 there were 360 crimes of rape, attempted rape, indecent assaults and other 'acts against honour, morality and reputation' in Kosovo. In 277 cases both violators and victims were Albanians, while in 38 cases they were both Serbs. Albanians were violators and Serbs and Montenegrins victims in 58 cases (out of which 16 were rapes), while only seven cases showed opposite situations (Horvat, 1989:154). According to these data, Albanians committed relatively fewer crimes of this type than Serbs (when compared with their share in population) but directed them more often against other national groups. Once the campaign against the 'inter-ethnic' crimes began in 1986, criminal activities of this type almost entirely disappeared. From the beginning of 1986 to June 1988, the following crimes against Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo were registered: no murder, two attempted murders and four rapes. There were also 784 charges for physical attacks, 67 for threats, 18 for verbal abuses, 69 for street fights, 56 for damages to fields, four for damages to woods and two for water poisoning (Horvat, 1989:155).

Still, the perception of the Kosovo Albanians as being *genocidal* against the Serbs and Montenegrins was progressing with almost incredible speed. The relatively low rates of crime registered by official statistics, according to a now ever larger segment of Serbian public, constituted more evidence of the inefficiency and bias of the 'Albanian' courts and police, who simply did not want to take any action against Albanian violence. The judges-Albanians simply turned their eyes away from these crimes, while Serbs did not even dare to report them. No arguments helped to change this conclusion. At the Serbian Writers' Association meeting in June 1985, the situation in Kosovo was compared to the 'most frightening fascist experiences of World War II' and an appeal was made for the personal engagement of all Yugoslav citizens in order to stop the 'hesitations, games and manipulations undertaken in the name of false social, political and national interests, to cover up the real situation [in Kosovo], the slowness of government action... the impediments to the free flow of information'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> But there was a significant difference in the type of criminal activities in Kosovo when compared with the rest of Yugoslavia. While in 1980, 7.9% of all 'crimes against the state order' were committed in Kosovo, in 1987 this share rose to 52.7%. More than half of the political convictions in Yugoslavia were confined to Kosovo. Except for 'industrial criminality' (which also included crimes against the 'economic undermining of the state order'), all other types of crime were lower in Kosovo than the Yugoslav average. Crimes against property, human rights, freedom, life and body, as well as against the honour and reputation of citizens, declined in 1987 when compared with 1980, being three to ten times less frequent in Kosovo than in other parts of Yugoslavia (Horvat, 1989:154).

<sup>39</sup> *Književne novine*, 1 September 1985.

Clearly, it was the 'critical intelligentsia' that now took the lead in promoting the 'Serbian national question', ranking it second to none. What started as an action for the protection of basic human rights, by 1985 was almost entirely transformed into an action to end 'the tragic fate of Serbia and the Serbs' in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Destroying one type of myth - that constructed by the communist regime - the 'critical intelligentsia' now rapidly promoted another myth - that of Serbia's great past and dark present. Showing little concern for either Martinović's right to privacy, or indeed for the facts, the Serbian 'critical intelligentsia' now used every tool in its offensive against the regime. If it expected support from anyone in Serbia, then it was from the Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo. The Martinović case provided an excellent opportunity to bind these two groups of discontented citizens together.

The Martinović case initiated a wave of protests by the Kosovo Serbs, 2,016 of whom signed a petition to the federal government in December 1985. In what the 'Defenders of the Constitution' immediately compared with the 1981 Albanian protests in Kosovo, the Kosovo Serbs demanded the return of Serbian migrants to Kosovo; the abolition of the Albanian flag in Kosovo (in principle, the same as the Albanian state flag); 'rehabilitation' for politicians ousted for warning about the dangerous consequences of Constitutional changes (such as Dobrica Ćosić); the implementation of Serbian language laws in the province; the removal of the 'Greater-Albania chauvinists' and the 'Serbian opportunists' from all public offices; the deportation of 'all 260,000 Albanian immigrants in the province';<sup>40</sup> and the annulment of all sale contracts between Albanian buyers and Serb sellers in the province. The language of the petition was remarkably similar to that used by the Serbian Writers' Association:

'The Serbian nation in Kosovo and Metohija is exposed to genocide(...) The authorities in Kosovo are masked by socialist ideology but in fact do nothing to prevent (the genocide)... This is the last effort to preserve our families' lives in Kosovo in a legal way...<sup>41</sup> To endanger the people in Kosovo means to endanger the Serbs in general.'

From the elite's point of view, the Serbs from Kosovo simply demanded the impossible. While Serbian leaders could not remain deaf to their demands, they could even less accept almost any of

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<sup>40</sup> The figure of 260,000 cases of illegal immigration of Albanian citizens into Kosovo was in sharp contrast with the study by the Federal Ministry of the Interior published in July 1986 which found that between 1948 and 1981 only 5,587 people emigrated from Albania to Kosovo, out of which only 1,391 actually lived in Kosovo in 1986. Only 31 Yugoslav citizenship applications had been made (*Politika*, 6 July 1986). Nevertheless, an already sky-high figure of 260,000 illegal immigrants rose to 350,000 or even more by 1989 (Gaber and Kuzmanić, 1989:252). The enormous difference between the official report of the Federal Interior Ministry and claims by the Serbian nationalist opposition may help in understanding the Albanian anger in these years.

<sup>41</sup> On several occasions after 1985 the Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo threatened 'collective migration' from the Province in protest at what they saw as an indifferent leadership. Their marches to Belgrade were, therefore, seen as unprecedented pressure on the federal and Serbian governments. They created an atmosphere of permanent emergency, which was later exploited by Slobodan Milošević.

their demands without revision of their ideological commitments to the Kardeljist concept. They therefore condemned the Petition in the strongest terms, labelling it as yet another act of Serbian nationalists. In return, they further antagonised its signatories, most of whom saw the Petition as the last attempt to correct injustice and to stop the inefficiency of the state administration in the Province. To the protesters, their claims were not at all anti-Albanian, but aimed at equality between the two ethnic groups in Kosovo. In as much as the Albanians felt unequal in economic, political and constitutional terms in 1981, the Serbs and Montenegrins now felt the same. Economically, they suffered as much as the Albanians, but more than the Serbs in Serbia and (especially) in Vojvodina. Politically and ethnically they felt unprotected and endangered by the growing majority of Albanians in the Province. Their response to this situation was similar to the Albanian one four years before - both of them sought real protection, and both understood that only a Republic could grant it. But while the Albanian demonstrators demanded Kosovo as the seventh Yugoslav Republic, the Serbs had already their own republic - Serbia. This republic, having two provinces within its borders, however, was not like other Yugoslav republics. Now they wanted to change this. The demand that Serbia should become a republic equal to others was now heard for the first time, only to be repeated by Milošević and other Serbian leaders three years later - now as official Serbian policy.

The sense of the inequality of Serbia in comparison with other republics was now paralleled by the sense of inequality between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo and by the feeling of social injustice in general. The problems of inefficient and corrupt administration, economic hardship, 'personal networks of survival' - these all now became *ethnic* problems. To illustrate this, one can quote Čedomir Bojković, a Serb peasant and one of the signatories of the petition:

'It has been six years since an electric power transformer was promised to the Serbian village. Then, I went to see a doctor to check my knees one day. He told me: 'Come again tomorrow.' When I came again the next day, he told me the same. The next day - again. Again and again. I complained to his boss, and only then I managed to be examined by this doctor, but only as the last in the queue. When I signed the Petition, I wanted to support a public debate about these things, I wanted to say that we should all be equal: Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins and all others. I fought for this. Do I need now to leave my land?'<sup>42</sup>

Bojković's demand for equality in Kosovo only mirrored similar demands by the Kosovo Albanians, who also felt discriminated against (as explained in Chapter Five). A general sense of inequality now characterised all participants involved in the Kosovo crisis and - in a broader sense - in that taking place in Yugoslavia. They all believed that the others were 'more equal' than them. But they also claimed that since the others were in fact privileged, their demand for equality was

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<sup>42</sup> *Politika Ekspres*, 22 December 1985.

not sincere. This is how the demand for equality became a demand for affirmative action that would reduce the present inequality. Kosovo demanded to be economically supported and politically upgraded to equal other parts of Yugoslavia. Serbia claimed to be given a status equal to other republics, which it did not have because of its two provinces. Finally, the Serbs asked to be additionally protected in Kosovo, to become fully equal in rights to the Kosovo Albanians. Equality understood in these terms was, however, a non-zero-sum-game: it could be reached only when the 'past injustice' was reversed by (at least a temporary) 'positive discrimination'. In the eyes of the 'other side', however, this demand for equality necessarily became a road to discrimination.

The 'positive discrimination' policy was the main reason why the two protests were by no means treated equally by the Belgrade media and official politics. At a joint session of the Serbian state and party presidencies in September 1988, Petar Gračanin, the President of the State Presidency explained this policy:

'For as long as there is a counter-revolution in Kosovo, it is unacceptable to equate those who demand protection of their basic rights on the one hand and Albanian nationalists and separatists who endanger these rights by destroying the Yugoslav constitutional order and by requesting an ethnically pure Kosovo, on the other' (IB CKSKS, 8/88:9).

While the Albanians were accused of 'counter-revolution', the Serb protests in Kosovo were treated as justified.<sup>43</sup> Yet, it was not Albanians but Serbs who now protested.

While people like Bojković signed the Petition for motives which were not exactly purely ethnic, the Serbian intellectuals (200 of whom, including 35 members of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, supported the petition of the Kosovo Serbs<sup>44</sup>) now poured oil onto the fire of ethnic divisions in Kosovo. In their Letter to the Federal and Serbian Assemblies, they argued that the expulsion of the Serbs from Kosovo had lasted over three centuries under the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, only to continue with the new violations by the Albanian state and Kosovo leadership.

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<sup>43</sup> Between 1981 and 1985, 96 'enemy' groups were discovered in Kosovo, 1,102 people were sentenced and 2,657 cautioned for 'counter-revolution'. 176 teachers were 'removed from teaching' including 11 university professors. 511 students were expelled from the University. As many as 1,800 members of the LCY were expelled from the League of Communists in Kosovo, 1,600 of whom were Albanians (*Politika Ekspres*, 1 Feb 1986). At the same time, an attempt to arrest the leaders of the Kosovo Serbs in April 1986 failed after it brought the Kosovo Party Organisation to the edge of splitting on ethnic lines. From then it became clear that the state would not treat the two groups of protesters equally.

<sup>44</sup> The full text of the petition was published in *Nova Revija* 48-49/1986:801-7.

'Instead of violent Islamization and Fascism [as in the past, we are now facing] - Stalinist chauvinism. The only new element in all this is a link between tribal conflict and genocide, disguised in Marxist language.'

In almost revolutionary rhetoric, the Serbian intellectuals compared Djordje Martinović to the martyr Avakum in the Serbian epics on the Kosovo Polje battle of 1389. 'The case of Djordje Martinović is the case of the whole Serbian nation in Kosovo,' they said. The link between 'the endangered Serbs of Kosovo' and their supporters in Belgrade was now firmly established.

### 6.3.2. Stambolić's Initiatives

This link between the Belgrade critical intelligentsia and the Kosovo Serbs became a serious challenge to the Serbian Party. Not only did it connect popular discontent with the intellectual elite which opposed the regime, but the people protesting were Serbs from Kosovo, a category for which the status of victims of the 'counter-revolution' was recognised by official statements after 1981. In addition, people like Bojković were themselves Partisans during the Second World War and saw their dreams betrayed by the country they had fought for. Would it then come as a big surprise if they felt nostalgic for the 'good old times' of the Ranković period (or even that before 1948) or if they indeed opened their minds to an alternative story, rather than the official interpretation of reality? Was this not then exactly the situation that Kardelj described in his writings as the biggest potential danger for the future of Yugoslav socialism?

This pressure, created by the common action of the Belgrade opposition circles and the Kosovo Serbs, forced the Serbian leadership to increase its pressure on other republics, its provinces and the federation in order to secure more effective control over the situation in Kosovo.

On Stambolić's proposal, in the summer of 1985, the Federal Party Presidency formed a group chaired by Slovenia's representative Milan Kučan, to conduct talks with all sides involved and to offer conclusions on 'relations in Serbia'. Kučan's report was accepted by the Presidency on 29 July 1985 and by the Central Committee on 31 October 1985. It described the situation in Serbia as 'tense... full of serious discord and controversies, mutual distrust, which has significantly influenced political life'. Kučan's report supported Serbian demands for more unity, saying that 'the right of the Serbian people to create its own state in the same way as all other nations in SFR Yugoslavia has not yet been fully implemented because constitutional principles - by which the Provinces were within Serbia - have not been always consistently realised in political reality' (Šuvar, 1989:120). Kučan's position, shared by other members of the Yugoslav political leadership, was based on the Kardeljist principle that Serbia is a state, while the Provinces were not. It was up

to the republics to exercise their sovereign rights and to decide freely on their internal matters. It also emphasised that the Party, unlike the state, was not a federalised organisation - if the principle of democratic centralism applied to the whole of Yugoslavia, then it should be exercised within Serbia as well. Finally, Stambolić still claimed that the solution could be found within the existing Constitution. In other words, despite his criticism of the practice that had emerged because of misinterpretation of the Constitution by the provinces, the Constitution itself was not yet treated (at least not by the political elite) as the cause of this practice. Since no major constitutional changes were required by the Serbian leadership, it was much easier to reach consensus on supporting the Serbian demands, which would not change the position of others in Yugoslavia.

This statement by the federal Party Presidency and the Central Committee was the first real political victory for Stambolić. In a way, it was a reaction to his anti-nationalist rhetoric, which was now 'rewarded' by his colleagues from other republics. It was also a sign that, perhaps, when facing popular protests, Yugoslav leaders could forget their differences, especially if the proposals did not really endanger their own positions or those of their republics. But it also proved to Serbia's leaders that pressure by the Kosovo Serbs did not necessarily need to be a threat to the interests of the Serbian political elite, but could - on the contrary - support their position in the Federation. This message would be later fully understood by Slobodan Milošević.

Nevertheless, the support given by his colleagues in the Party leadership now obliged Stambolić to eliminate the influence of nationalists and opposition leaders in Kosovo. When the Serbs from Kosovo organised a protest march to Belgrade, Stambolić, the head of the Serbian Party, flew to Kosovo Polje to stop them. On 6 April 1986 he addressed a group of demonstrators in Kosovo Polje in what was the first direct contact between the elite and the protesters. In what was an obvious allusion to their new links with Serbian dissidents, Stambolić told the crowd that 'this was the right place to solve your problems, and any other place is wrong.' He urged them 'not to leave their homes, not to allow anyone to manipulate [them] or to form any bad and dangerous intentions based on [their] justified discontent' (Stambolić, 1986/1988: 166). The crowd applauded Stambolić's claims that everyone should be equal before the law, and that no one should be allowed to sow hatred between Serbs and Albanians. But, while Stambolić was probably referring to several leaders of the Kosovo Serbs, arrested just a few days before his speech, the crowd was more likely to associate this demand with the Albanian nationalists. Stambolić's speech was an example of the rhetoric of a Serbian communist fighting Serbian nationalism:

'I am convinced that in the Kosovo League of Communists, among the Albanians, as well as among the Serb and Montenegrin nations, amongst the whole population of Kosovo, there is enough strength to beat counter-revolution. If we unite and organise, we shall win!



Do not allow a bunch of irredentists, regardless of the fact that they are becoming more violent as we press them harder, to poison relationships between the Serbs and Albanians here, and do not allow a bunch of Serbian nationalists to do the same!' (Stambolić, 1986/1988:167).

However, the Kosovo Serbs did not give up their intention to visit Belgrade and talk to federal leaders. The next day, 7 April 1986, 550 of them arrived in the Yugoslav capital, where they spoke to Lazar Mojsov, a member of the Federal Presidency from Macedonia. Stambolić's speech in Kosovo Polje, it is true, had made them less angry and their criticism of the Serbian leadership less direct. But still, they bitterly repeated their main claims: they were discriminated against, threatened by the 'counter-revolutionaries' and disappointed by the ineffectiveness shown by political leaders in the capital. Several speakers both in Kosovo Polje and in Belgrade threatened public self-immolation, and some of them even suggested talks with Gorbachev (!) if the Yugoslav leaders were not capable of resolving the situation (Stambolić, 1986/1988:173). In his speech to the demonstrators, Mojsov again insisted that the main line of division in Kosovo was between 'revolutionaries' and 'counter-revolutionaries' and not between Serbs and Albanians. The meeting in Belgrade was the first of a series of protests by Kosovo Serbs outside Kosovo, in which they tried to initiate 'solidarity' and focus their claims. The 'rallies of solidarity with Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo' became a regular practice in the last years of Yugoslavia.

The federal leadership was very worried about the protests of the Kosovo Serbs. When they convened on the day of the demonstrations, Josip Vrhovec, the Croatian representative, asked Stambolić to stop the demonstrators from coming to Belgrade, and even accused him of organising the protests in order to obtain support for his programme of Constitutional change. Even Stambolić himself described his visit to Kosovo Polje in dramatic words: 'The real situation in Kosovo, in Serbia and here (in the Federation), is much worse than we think and know.' The Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins had no confidence in the Kosovo leadership, and are losing confidence in the leadership of the rest of the country. If this continued, the Yugoslav leadership would face a mass movement, which would link the Kosovo Serbs with students, workers and the opposition in Belgrade. 'Our main task is to prevent this from happening.' Stambolić hinted that the movement of Kosovo Serbs was led by the opposition in Belgrade and he warned his colleagues that 'the elements on which they rely are multiplying and that the chances of them becoming leaders of the masses are high.' Stambolić proposed the following action: 1) much greater involvement with the masses in order to prevent their being influenced by the nationalists; 2) a continuation of 'differentiation' in the Kosovo leadership, forcing especially its Serb and Montenegrin members who were not supported by the Serb and Montenegrin population to resign; 3) giving a free hand

to the Serbian leadership when it came to Kosovo; 4) the use of 'all legal means', including police action, to prevent the Serbian nationalists from Belgrade from spreading their influence in Kosovo. However, the police action should not take place before the Communists had firmly 'rooted themselves' among the people in Kosovo. In the meantime, Stambolić opposed those members of the federal leadership who suggested that the Kosovo Polje demonstrators should be treated as nationalists.

'It is not about concessions to enemies, but about the wishes of the people...The people believe they have no rights, no freedom, and they react with all enthusiasm to words such as equality and equal rights. They are in favour of Tito, brotherhood and unity, Yugoslavia, etc... It is true that some unacceptable and counter-revolutionary demands have been heard. But, these people are in such a mood that they would sign anything to secure a change in the situation. Should we now treat them as Serbian nationalists? What if it were true that 81,000 signatories live there?<sup>45</sup> Are all of them nationalists? They simply talk about the terrible things to which they have been exposed. Should we call these illiterate women nationalists? I would suggest realism in differentiating between them and real nationalists,' Stambolić told the federal Party Presidency (Stambolić, 1986/1988:142-5).

With this speech, Stambolić challenged certain elements of the ideological discourse constructed immediately after the 1981 Albanian demonstrations in Kosovo. His warning about the widespread use of labels, such as 'nationalism', as well as of the need to regain the trust of the people before the opposition leaders were 'isolated' indicated a more realistic approach.<sup>46</sup>

After his visit to Kosovo Polje in April 1986, Stambolić was facing a decision: either to put himself at the head of the popular discontent and become leader of the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins, or to remain committed to the institutions of the system and its ideology. Subsequently, all other Yugoslav leaders faced the same dilemma: Milošević and Kučan chose the former, while Šušteršič in Croatia (as well as leaders of the Montenegrin, Macedonian and Bosnian LCs) preferred the latter option. Stambolić, however, hoped he could avoid the answer by moving to the 'reserve' post of the President of the collective Presidency of Serbia, from which he could do more for the changes to the Constitution, a task he still saw as the main objective. From such a safe position, he escaped the direct implementation of 'democratic centralism', and increased his autonomy as a political actor. But, he was now directly accountable for any use of force in Serbia, including both against the opposition and the Kosovo demonstrators. Stambolić soon found that by escaping one danger,

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<sup>45</sup> Since signatures for the 2,016 petition were collected all the way through, the opposition claimed that 81,000 people signed the Petition in the six months between December 1985 and June 1986.

<sup>46</sup> What he failed to do, however, was to extend the same demand to the protests of the Albanians in Kosovo. Unfortunately for him, Stambolić was still confined to intra-party debates. Most of his rhetoric would be repeated in public the following year by his successor Slobodan Milošević, who visited Kosovo Polje in April 1987 with the same objective as Stambolić had before him. It was the publicity that made the difference.

he had moved closer to another - that of being held directly responsible for the repression of these two Serb groups. When faced with another attempt by the Kosovo Polje demonstrators to organise a rally in Belgrade on 21 June 1986, he ordered the police to block all ways to the capital. To them, this was the final sign that he declined to be their leader. This decision would cost him his career in September 1987, when the person he trusted most, Slobodan Milošević, presented himself as the protector of the Kosovo Serbs, trying to do exactly the same as Stambolić announced at the closed Party meeting in June 1986: to strengthen Party influence and isolate the 'opposition', which was now presenting itself as an ever more viable alternative.

### 6.3.3. The 'SANU Memorandum' and the Reaction of the Political Elite (1986)

In May 1985, when Stambolić urged the Federal Party Presidency to discuss Kosovo for the first time after 1981, the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (better known by its Serbian acronym – SANU) established a 16-member Commission to prepare an analysis of the economic and political situation in the country. The Academy's action was both a response to the public invitation given by the Vrhovec Commission on the reform of the political system, and to Stambolić's view that the Academy should help find a way out of the crisis.<sup>47</sup> It was also a reaction to a meeting between Slovenian 'dissidents' connected to the journal *Nova Revija* and their Serbian colleagues in November 1995 that influenced the writing of the Memorandum. As Ćosić described in his diary (1985/1992:76-9), the Serbian writers realised that the Slovenes had their national programme almost ready, while they themselves were 'disorientated' and confused about their national objectives.<sup>48</sup>

The Serbian leaders hoped that the involvement of the Academy in public debate would lower tensions between government and opposition, and would further support the changes to the Constitution proposed by the leadership. The leaders of the Academy, being critical of the regime but still somehow close to many Serbian politicians, wanted - as their Vice-President Antonije Isaković, the chair of the Commission, explained in 1996 - to push them further towards radical constitutional reform.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> In line with Kardelj's attempt to see the Party gradually transformed into becoming almost like an Institute, rather than being involved in the everyday business of running the state, Ivan Stambolić concluded 'that science needs to be more involved in attempts to resolve social, economic, political and other problems'. When he met with the Academicians later in 1986 to discuss plans for the centennial celebration of the SANU (due on 1 November 1986), he approved their intention to present their vision of possible solutions (Stambolić, 1995:119).

<sup>48</sup> More about the Slovene 'national programme' in the mid-1980s, and about the interaction between the Slovenian and Serbian 'dissidents' in the next chapter.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Antonije Isaković in April 1996. The Commission was first chaired by the SANU President Dušan Kanazir, who soon resigned his position to Isaković, the Vice-President of the Academy.

Between May 1985 and September 1986 the Isaković Commission met between 15 and 20 times. Their report was, however, only in its draft version, when under somewhat suspicious circumstances,<sup>50</sup> on 24 September 1986, the Belgrade daily Večernje Novosti published large excerpts of the manuscript and powerful attacks on its main conclusions.<sup>51</sup>

There was little in the draft 'Memorandum' that had not been previously published by the leading members of the Serbian 'critical intelligentsia'. The text itself was more a description of the economic and political crisis as its authors saw it, than a political programme for action, as it was later often described. It was a mixture of Communist (self-management; Councils of producers in Federal Assembly, etc.), democratic (civil rights) and romantic-nationalist ideological elements expressed in a declaratory style.

Retrospectively, Isaković reveals the position the Memorandum had on Yugoslavia, the most controversial point of the debate, and the one that could have easily divided the various groups of the opposition and of the political elite itself:

'We made it clear that we were in favour of Yugoslavia, but only if the Serbs were equal to the other Yugoslav nations.<sup>52</sup> We knew the Slovenes and Croats would not accept such a Yugoslavia. But we wanted them to say so and to take responsibility for it. And indeed, it did not take long before the Slovenes and Croats clearly revealed their views on Yugoslavia: they supported it as long as it was a tool for keeping Serbia under permanent surveillance. The 1974 Constitution, written by the Slovene Kardelj and the Slovene-Croat Tito, was the result of this belief. This is why Slovenia and Croatia opposed any change in the Constitution. This is also why they kept Serbia under control by using the two Provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo. Finally, this is why they divided up the Serbs between various semi-states, thus making them unaware of their own national identity. This was the main argument of the Memorandum, the one that we all agreed with.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Isaković believes that the manuscript was given to journalist Aleksandar Djukanović by his father-in-law Professor Jovan Djordjević, one of the leading experts in Constitutional Law, who participated both in drafting the 1974 Constitution and in criticising it after 1977. Djukanović was the official Party commentator for the largest Belgrade daily. He was the last journalist who interviewed Ranković before his ousting in 1966 (RFE/RL, 28 June 1983).

<sup>51</sup> For all these reasons, the 'Memorandum' was in fact an unfinished and unofficial paper. The Academy refused even to comment on it and especially to condemn it, treating it as a non-existing document. Nevertheless, 'the document' was attributed to the SANU. It was published for the first time in Zagreb in the theoretical journal of the Croatian League of Communists Nase Teme (1989:128-63), and translated in Čović's book: 'Roots of Serbian Aggression' (also in Zagreb, 1993:289-337). Finally, on the tenth anniversary of the affair, the SANU published the entire text of 'the Memorandum', together with Mihailović's and Krestić's comments. In this dissertation it is quoted from the SANU edition.

<sup>52</sup> As we demonstrated in Chapter Two, the 'only if' approach to Yugoslavia was promoted first by Kardelj himself, only to be continued within Slovenian politics (especially with Kučan) in the late 1980s.

<sup>53</sup> Isaković, in interview, April 1996. For further explanation see Krestić's and Mihailović's introductory text to the 1996 edition of the Memorandum.

Developed into approximately a ten thousand word text (the main conclusions of which were expressed in ten points), the Memorandum constituted the core of the Serbian dominant discourse in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s.

First, it demanded radical changes in the economic and political systems in order to reverse those introduced after 1964. It opposed 'national (republican) economies' (favoured by the Croatian leader Bakarić) as well as the ideology that 'neglected economic laws... by relying on people's consciousness rather than on their interests' (1995:105).

Secondly, the Memorandum criticised the political elite for being incapable of 'breaking with the illusions that had brought the country to the verge of collapse' (1995:107).

Thirdly, the Academicians criticised the 'unhistorical tendency' to transform the Yugoslav federation into a kind of a confederation. The only way out of this 'paralysis' was - 'to get rid of the ideology which gave priority to the concepts of nationality and territoriality' (1995:112). It was concluded that, unfortunately, Slovenia and Croatia, the two Yugoslav republics 'which had managed to realise their national programmes through this Constitution', defended a system which did not deserve to be defended.

Fourthly, the Memorandum argued that the worst of all the crises in Yugoslavia was the moral crisis of Yugoslav society. Corruption had affected the rank and file of Yugoslav society.

Fifthly, the Memorandum concluded that 'parts of the Serbian nation, who, in considerable numbers, live in other republics, do not have the right, unlike the national minorities ... to organise themselves politically and culturally' (1995:124). The expulsion of the Serbs from Kosovo illustrates this most drastically.<sup>54</sup>

Sixthly, the Memorandum described Serbia's 'disastrous position' in Yugoslavia as consisting of three elements: 1) Serbia was lagging behind economically; 2) Serbia was the only republic with provinces, and hence was un-formed as a state; and 3) Serbs were undergoing genocide in Kosovo. This situation, the Memorandum concluded, was the result of 'consistent discrimination' following the Second World War, which was a consequence of the CPY's belief that

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<sup>54</sup> Contrary to many later interpretations, the Memorandum did not deny the right of self-determination (including that of secession) to other Yugoslav nations, if Serbs (not Serbia) had the same right. By nations, they understood ethnic groups, which only in the Slovene case largely coincided with the 'demos' of existing republics. According to the authors of the 'Memorandum', only nations, not republics had the right to secede. Republics were provisional and only domestically recognised entities, while the 'self-determination of the nation (narod)' was an internationally recognised principle, which could not be altered by the domestic, 'Titoist' Constitution.

Serbia had been privileged in the whole inter-war period and thus had to be 'punished' for this now. The Serbian leaders had capitulated before Tito and Kardelj, and in fact had acted contrary to Serbian interests (1995:131).

Seventh, these anti-Serbian policies continued in the post-Tito period, in which politicians from other republics were 'lecturing Serbia and the Provinces on the fact that the solution could be sought by the strict application of the same Constitution' (1995:133).

Eighth, the 'genocide in Kosovo', the Memorandum claimed, was a consequence of this unsustainable position of Serbia. The Memorandum warned that the goal of Albanian separatists 'to ethnically cleanse Kosovo' would be fully accomplished within the next ten years, unless something were done quickly. Therefore 'the fate of Kosovo remains a matter of life and death for the Serbian nation' (1995:136). If not resolved it would turn into 'a European issue with the gravest, unforeseeable consequences' (1995:136). The same urgency should be applied to the position of the Serbs in Croatia, who were 'exposed to a subtle but efficient policy of assimilation'.

In its ninth section, the Memorandum warned about the 'disintegration of the Serbian cultural space'. Deliberate action had been taken to divide Serbian culture into 'Vojvodinian', 'Montenegrin', and 'Bosnian-Herzegovian'<sup>55</sup> literature, while Serb democratic history was ignored or misinterpreted.

Finally, the tenth point of the unfinished Memorandum read as an invitation to the Serbs to 'divest themselves of their historical guilt' and to 'establish their full national and cultural integrity regardless of which republic or autonomous province they live in'. The Serbs, it was written, must 'become a historical subject' by 'regaining awareness of their historical and spiritual being'. Although Serbian nationalism was condemned in words, the establishment of Serbia as a state in its entire territory was declared as not any longer an impossible option for the resolution of all problems, especially for the 'genocide in Kosovo'. Favouring a Yugoslav<sup>56</sup> resolution of the crisis, the Memorandum warned that the Serbs 'cannot peacefully await their future under such uncertainty', nor should they allow themselves 'to be surprised by events' if others decided to

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<sup>55</sup> This conclusion indicates that Montenegrin and even Bosnian-Herzegovian cultures were in fact elements of the Serb culture. In the interpretation of Serbian nationalists, Bosnian Muslims had in fact been Serbs who agreed to accept Islam in order to obtain privileges from the Ottoman Empire. Tito's Yugoslavia in fact sanctioned this historical 'loss' of the Serbian nation by recognising the Bosnian Muslims as a separate ethnic category in the 1960s.

<sup>56</sup> The SANU Memorandum explicitly defined Yugoslavia through the AVNOJ 1943 agreement, not through the 1974 Constitution. The criticism of the latter and approval of the former confirm our conclusion that these were perceived as two conceptually different Yugoslavias (see Chapter Two). Importantly, the Memorandum was much more critical of Kardelj than of Tito: all positive examples were taken from before 1964.

separate from Yugoslavia. 'The Serbs must not be passive, waiting for the others to speak first, as Serbia has done many times up to now' (1995:147). Instead, Serbia should take the initiative. This was possible only if Serbia transformed itself by mobilising all its democratic potential.

Publication of the Memorandum launched yet another wave of criticism of Serbian nationalism in all parts of the political elite. The Croatian representative in the Federal Presidency Josip Vrhovec, whose 'Critical Analysis of the Functioning of the Political System' (1985) was sharply criticised by the Memorandum, accused the Serbian leadership of inspiring the most radical nationalism by their proposals for Constitutional changes. The sharpest critics of Stambolić were again from the Communist elite in Vojvodina.<sup>57</sup>

Stambolić had all the right reasons to react: he did not share the views of the Serbian nationalists; he felt obliged - as a Serbian Communist - to condemn them in public; he also wanted to dissociate himself from any action by the Academy and to reject accusations of his being a nationalist. On 30 October 1986, speaking at the University of Belgrade, Stambolić labeled the Memorandum as a 'chauvinist initiative', aimed at 'inflaming conflicts and poisoning relations' between the Yugoslav nations. The authors of the Memorandum, Stambolić said, did not see that it was precisely under his leadership that significant advances had been made in changing the position of Serbia. They even accused him of 'Stalinist sins', though they themselves had been members of the elite during the Stalinist period.<sup>58</sup> In addition, there was a clear difference between 'them' and 'us': while the Serbian nationalists sought a solution for the 'Serbian question' in the ruins of Yugoslavia, Serbian Communists would 'never accept the destruction of Yugoslavia, not only because Yugoslavia is the result of revolution, but also because it is the guarantor of the independence of all its nations' (1986/1988:219).

At the same time, Slobodan Milošević, the newly elected president of the Serbian LC Central Committee decided to act differently from his patron Stambolić. He remained surprisingly silent on the Memorandum in public, at the same time launching a party action against its main authors. Despite direct pressure by Ivan Stambolić, he avoided any public statement on its claims,<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The leading daily newspaper in Novi Sad (*Dnevnik*) directly linked the Serbian political leaders with the authors of the 'Memorandum'. The journalist Tomislav Marčinko, the ideologue of the Novi Sad Party Committee, wrote that no one could guarantee safety in Vojvodina to those who wanted to ruin the Yugoslav political system (Djukić, 1992:115). In 1990 Marčinko, a Croat from Vojvodina, became the editor-in-chief of Croatian Television in Zagreb and one of the closest confidants of newly elected Croatian President Franjo Tuđman.

<sup>58</sup> A clear allusion to Dobrica Ćosić, Antonije Isaković and - indeed - many pro-Ranković critics of the 1974 Constitution, who now participated in the 'critical intelligentsia'.

<sup>59</sup> An exception being his brief remark at the Belgrade Party Committee meeting in February 1987 on the inactivity of the Communists in the Academy who did not find it necessary to distance themselves publicly from 'the attacks on Tito and the

'delegating' his authority to other members of the collective Party Presidency. But he chaired the Party Presidency session on 27 May 1987, when an 'ideological offensive' (not unlike Šušteršič's earlier initiative) was proposed against several leading cultural and media institutions, including the SANU. And indeed, the Party Presidency decided to cut the public funds for 'those programmes and projects which are not in accordance with social criteria'. 'Black-listed' institutions included the Institute for Social Sciences ('especially the Department of Philosophy', where the Praxis philosophers were employed), the Writers' Association, the Sociological Society of Serbia, the Philosophers' Society, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Student Cultural Centre. The leading opposition media: 'Književna reč' and 'Književne novine' were also on the list, while several others, such as 'Student', 'NON', 'Intervju', 'Svet', 'NIN' and 'Duga' were criticised. The Party Presidency explicitly asked the Serbian Assembly to re-assess the criteria for financing the SANU. It also invited Communists in these institutions to 'make the necessary cadre changes' and to react publicly 'to articles in the press and in academic publications, to broadcasts on TV and radio, and to any other public attempts to deny the achievements of the revolution and the leading role of the working class in our society by smuggling historical and scientific lies and by non-objective interpretation of historical events, occurrences and personalities' (IB, 6/87).

In order to implement the Party decisions in important cultural and academic institutions, Party Actifs were created in December 1987 in professional associations of economists, sociologists, political scientists, philosophers, lawyers, journalists and writers. A Party activist group was formed in the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts as well (IB, 1/88).<sup>60</sup> Following the 'Operational Programme', leading Serbian politicians engaged in public debates, sometimes even by writing unsigned articles in the press,<sup>61</sup> with the noticeable exception of the Serbian Party President.

Current interpretations often misunderstand these events, and more notably the reasons why Milošević remained aloof. It is often assumed that Milošević was by 1987 already an 'ethnic nationalist' and was deliberately avoiding any public statement against the Academy. However, as demonstrated by the Operational Programme, Milošević was not at all soft on the opposition. There were, of course, pragmatic reasons for him to avoid becoming 'a new Stambolić' in annoying both Serbian intellectuals and other Yugoslav leaders. But the reasons for his decision not to engage

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revolution and from the destruction of Yugoslavia'. Milošević was expected to offer a 'platform' on the Memorandum at the 5th CC LC Serbia session in April 1987, but he appointed Milenko Marković to give an introductory speech, and decided to close the session to the public (IB, 4/1987).

<sup>60</sup> However, not much changed after these decisions were taken: the elite soon learned that the old times of 1974 and 1981 had gone and that the ban on all these institutions and papers would be too costly for the regime itself. Ultimately, the Party decision remained just one more unrealised announcement, which left the opposition unaffected.

<sup>61</sup> Like Dragiša Pavlović, the President of Belgrade Party Committee. Pavlović published several articles in the daily 'Politika' under a pen-name. In 1987 he even published a book against the opposition (see: Pavlović, 1987).



directly in this public ideological debate would not be fully understood without noticing that he believed that deeds, not empty words could change the unfavourable situation, and that Party should be the real generator of these changes in practice, instead of simply verbally. Furthermore, he believed that the 'opposition' should not be treated as a partner, and even less should the Party aim at wasting precious time in debates with the 'dissidents'. Despite his appealing to some Serbian nationalists as a determined protector of Serbian interests in the constitutional debate, Milošević's reasons were originally far from ethnic nationalism. It happened, however - as with so many people in the collapsing Communist systems - that they gradually evolved towards an open flirtation with it.

Before moving onto explaining the Milošević discourse in the 1984-1987 period, one needs to emphasise that by 1987 the 'critical intelligentsia' had transformed themselves into a strong opposition, organised in several institutions and controlling much of the Serbian media and cultural space.<sup>62</sup> Through these institutions (and finally with the 1986 'Memorandum') they formulated a new discourse, which consisted of three main demands: 1) democratisation of Yugoslavia by rejecting the Communist legacy; 2) changes to the 1974 Constitution in order to improve the position of Serbia, making it equal to other republics in Yugoslavia ; and 3) resolute action against the 'genocide against the Serbs in Kosovo' and elsewhere in the country. While all three demands were present in their rhetoric at all times, the national question and the status of Serbia occupied now the central position. The opposition linked itself to the movement of the Serbs in Kosovo, keeping its finger on the pulse of the enormous pressure put upon the Serbian political elite. In turn, this resulted in a new division within the LCY and the LC Serbia. As in previous situations (described in Chapter Three - the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate, and Five - the political crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s) the elite split on how to react to anti-Communist action by the 'opposition'. Since the 'opposition' in Serbia now became much more concerned with the national question than with democratic rights, the ensuing divisions in practice split the Party on the national question as well.

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<sup>62</sup> I quote from Stambolić (1995) the titles of plays at Belgrade theatres in Summer 1987: 'The Defeat of the Serbian Tsardom', 'The Salonika Fighters Speak', 'The Prince is Assassinated', 'The Battle of Kolubara'; 'The Memoirs of a Priest'; 'The Secret of the *Black Hand*'; 'Serbia, Where's Your Shadow?!'; 'Migration of the Serbs'; 'The Rhapsody of St. Andrew', etc. These were all 'historical plays' in a 'political theatre', almost all of them about Serbian First World War bravery.

#### 6.4. Slobodan Milošević's Discourse in 1984-1987

To an outside observer, the Serbian party leadership seemed to be fairly united at its 1986 Congress.<sup>63</sup> The Serbian political leaders (with the exception of those in Vojvodina, and some in Kosovo) shared the same strong line when it came to divisions between the 'defenders' and 'reformers' of the constitution. However, there was a lot boiling below the surface of the apparent unanimity. The young generation of 'technocrats' (led by Ivan Stambolić) clashed with the older generation of Partisan veterans who returned back to leading positions in Serbian politics following the removal of the 'liberals' in 1972. As was the case in other Yugoslav republics, the young cadres were winning in this conflict. While Petar Stambolić, the leading Serbian Communist of the entire post-war period (with the short exception of the 1967-1972 period) retired in 1984, Draža Marković was marginalised to a level at which he decided to resign in 1986.<sup>64</sup>

Milošević became the President in a tight vote within the party leadership, and primarily because he was strongly backed by Ivan Stambolić, who in 1986 moved to chair the Serbian state Presidency. Milošević and Stambolić were, as Stambolić later explained, political twins. One spoke for them both.

But, while Stambolić had a longer career in Serbian politics, and thus many opponents both at Federal level and amongst the 'dissidents' whom he now openly criticised, Milošević was a newcomer. Being a protégé of Stambolić, whose programme he promoted, Milošević distinguished himself as the most radical critic of disunity, inefficiency and 'anarchy' in Yugoslavia and Serbia. In his programmatic speech in December 1986, he was speaking from the hearts of the whole leadership, when saying:

'Serbia does not seek to be a republic more than any other republic, but – certainly – it cannot accept to be a republic less than the others. The fact that Serbia has two autonomous socialist provinces within itself cannot be a reason for it to be reduced to its narrower territory, so called 'Serbia without provinces'. Neither should the Republic of

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<sup>63</sup> Not surprisingly, the Serbian Party congress in 1986 used as its symbol a large fist – the symbol of the unity and strength of the Party.

<sup>64</sup> The main reason was the election of Slobodan Milošević, the former President of the Belgrade Party Committee, as president of the Serbian Central Committee. Marković was Milošević's wife's uncle. Stambolić recalls in his book: 'Immediately after the election of the new president, Draža told me that history would never forgive me this choice, that the Serbian nation would never forgive me for my backing of Milošević, and that Milošević would spoil everything... It seemed to me that he said this only because he was a counter-candidate for the position of the CC president... I stood up and left the room' (Stambolić, 1995:149). Among those who opposed Milošević's election was also Cvijetin Mijatović, the most prominent politician among the Bosnian Serbs.

Serbia be denied political and legal authority over its entire territory, or be forced to apply it only to a part of its territory... We shall change everything that stands in our way to end this crisis' (1986:121).<sup>65</sup>

There were four points he often repeated in his public speeches in the 1984-1987 period:

First, he was the most outspoken critic of disunity in Serbia and Yugoslavia. To his mind, unity was the key to all problems in the country.<sup>66</sup> Yugoslavs, Milošević claimed in 1987, thought of themselves as citizens of the world, yet 'everything has been done to make them members of their regions, provinces and narrow communities'. Disintegration is against the 'spirit of the continent and of this epoch', Milošević had concluded in 1985. The Yugoslav nations, he said, invented the idea of togetherness (*zajedništvo*) a century ago, when still fragmented by foreign empires. 'Today, when this idea has conquered Europe and the whole world, we are going back to thoughts and actions that have been abandoned by everyone else, or at least everyone in the developed world. We ought to be worried and we have to resist this' (1985:55). The key to the reintegration of Yugoslavia was in the Party. Just like Tito earlier, Milošević insisted that even in a federal state (perhaps precisely because of its federal character) the Party must remain united in order to prevent disintegrative tendencies from the republics and provinces. For him, just as for Tito and Kardelj, the Party was the key institution, the one that decided the future of the nation.<sup>67</sup> In Milošević's view the disunity of the Party was the main reason for the growth of the opposition. The political and economic crises, the 'counter-revolution' in Kosovo and the emergence of 'nationalist' concepts throughout the country were just the results of the Party's inability to act resolutely. This had to be changed.

Secondly Milošević demanded 'change in the practice' but not the aims of Party activities. These changes should be 'major and urgent' (1984/1989:34) but they should not endanger two

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<sup>65</sup> I happened to have a telephone conversation with Pepca Kardelj, Edvard Kardelj's widow, on the day when Milošević's speech was published in the Belgrade daily *Politika*. Pepca Kardelj was very upset with his statement, considering this to be the most outrageous criticism of the 1974 Constitution. When I met her a few days later she told me how worried her late husband was about the possibility of the re-emergence of Serbian nationalism after his and Tito's death. She was convinced that Milošević's 1986 speech was nationalistic.

<sup>66</sup> 'People can hold their present and their future in their own hands only if they are resolute and remain united,' Milošević said in 1984 (1984:21). On the other hand, 'lack of unity and disintegration are at this moment the greatest problems of Yugoslav society' (1985:54).

<sup>67</sup> As he claimed in April 1987: 'The future of socialism and that of Yugoslavia depends upon the unity of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia' (1987:139). Milošević remained committed to this position until the very end of Yugoslavia. In his later speeches (like in *Gazimestan*, 28 June 1989) he preferred the word concord (*sloga*) to unity (*jedinstvo*). Unlike 'unity', 'concord' was not directly associated with the Partisans and Tito's Yugoslavia, but more with the Serbian 19th and early 20th century tradition. Concord is one of the key words of the Serbian national slogan: 'Only Concord Can Save the Serbs' (*Samo Sloga Srbe Spasava*).

supreme values: socialism and Yugoslavism. Socialism was still 'the best and the most progressive idea of our time' (1986:102). To him, socialism was yet to come, and the revolution was still continuing (1986:193). But, his description of the society he envisaged did not develop much further than saying that market laws should be implemented, so that 'the working people who govern society are not poor, but rich' (1987:136).<sup>68</sup> It is within this context, that Milošević indeed became an open advocate of market socialism, which – as he said – was not 'a concession to the capitalist mode of production, and is not an abandonment of socialism and self-management – on the contrary, it is a condition that social ownership of the means of production survives and promotes itself as the optimal form of ownership' (1987:135).<sup>69</sup> Some of Milošević's reformist initiatives, indeed, sounded threats to 'those individuals' and 'those territories' whose interests they would endanger. It was perfectly logical for a 'reformer of the Constitution' to say, for example (in December 1986):

'The stubborn, permanent and dogmatic opposition to all change, even to that which is unavoidable, at this moment has the same effect as the activity of the anti-socialist opposition. It can even be more dangerous, because delaying the change presently demanded provokes the justified anger and discontent of the workers, intellectuals and youth. By refusing economic and political change, we would end up with the absurd situation of the leadership of the League of Communists defending the existing concept of socialism against workers, intellectuals and youth – and this would bring socialism to an end much faster and more efficiently than hoped for by anti-Communists' (1986:122).

Thirdly, seeing again the main problem in the Party and its disunity, Milošević said that the Party should concentrate on its own 'positive programme', rather than on disputes with the opposition. It was true that between Communists and oppositionists there could be no reconciliation. But:

'whenever we, Communists, talk about the activities of anti-socialist forces, we should have in mind not so much them but more the arguments with which we have provided them for such activities... It is, therefore, not a task of Communists in such a situation just to argue with anti-socialist ideas and their advocates... but – above all – to offer solutions to the crisis... It is true that we are under pressure from ideological opponents, but the League of Communists must not make the big mistake of reducing its activities only to disputes with them. Because we are also under pressure from a crisis that must be solved. And to be excessively preoccupied with our opponents would put the LC in a defensive position. This is a real, historically confirmed, way to lose the leading position in society... (1986:117).

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<sup>68</sup> Modern Serbia, Milošević said in 1989, would be a Serbia with \$ 10,000 income per capita (1989:316).

<sup>69</sup> In her interview for *Mladina* (27 September 1999) Desa Trevisan recalls that Milošević, visibly annoyed, insisted that he had advocated market reforms before Milan Kučan (Slovenia). Indeed, he did.

It is this 'hierarchy of problems' and not his sympathies with the opposition or with Serbian nationalism that prevented Milošević from criticising the Academy and the Memorandum in public.<sup>70</sup>

'I see the main problem in the economic and political system.<sup>71</sup> To treat poems, novels, exhibitions as the main ideological topics – as happens with some leaderships – I consider this to be a lack of consciousness of what the real problems are' (Milošević, 1984:23).

To debate about the past – Milošević said – was futile and counter-productive.

'A society whose eyes are looking to past instead of the future, will have no future. Those who now try to force us to debate the origins of nations and poems, who offer us reconciliation of armies and classes, and who advocate separatism today, at a time when integrative processes have conquered the whole world, they know this even better than we do' (1986:79).

Not only did Milošević (sharing the view of the majority in the Party) refuse to put opposition activities at the top of the public agenda, but he advocated much closer links with intellectuals than any of his predecessors, by making clear that the Party should rely on them when attempting to formulate its 'positive programme'. More than most of his predecessors, Milošević emphasised the role of the intelligentsia, saying (in 1984) that 'our relations with the intelligentsia are our relations with our own future' (1984:13). Emphasising the necessity of distinguishing 'honest' intellectuals from the counter-revolutionaries, Milošević argued that the Party should not forget that a large majority of intellectuals saw their future in socialism:

'Intolerance towards educated and determined people, who at the same time do not believe that everything is dark and that existing difficulties cannot be overcome successfully – which is still the attitude of some people – should not be tolerated any longer' (1986:122).

Milošević was also a more frequent visitor to the University than his two predecessors – Draža Marković and Ivan Stambolić. While they contacted the University only when asking various Faculties to warn their professors about the Party line, Milošević now offered a hand of co-operation. In 1987 Milošević declared that 'Balkan dogmatism expressed itself by its almost feudal views on the intelligentsia. The struggle for economic and social prosperity cannot be won if there

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<sup>70</sup> Finally, it was his predecessor Ivan Stambolić, who gave the same explanation for his 'silence' in polemics with Šuvar about the 'White Book' two years earlier. On this occasion, Milošević only repeated Stambolić's old argument: that 'some people' (sometimes 'dogmatist' forces, which opposed political and economic change; sometimes the 'opposition') wanted to distract Serbian Communists from the main issues.

<sup>71</sup> In the end, as a Marxist, Milošević believed that 'cultural questions do not exist independently of economic and material conditions of living' (1984:25).

are no educated, capable and clever people in the first ranks (of this struggle)' (1987:139). Bearing in mind that his wife, Mirjana Marković, was herself a University Professor of Sociology who controlled the Belgrade University Party Organisation,<sup>72</sup> it came as no surprise that many of his closest aides were recruited from among the academics and students.<sup>73</sup>

Finally (fourthly), Milošević introduced into Serbian political rhetoric the notion of 'firmness against anarchy' and of 'optimism'. Milošević believed that Yugoslavia was slipping into anarchy, 'in which anyone can criticise anyone, without any responsibility for what he does and how he behaves' (1986:101).

'Precisely because of this anarchy, despite all these expansions of the bourgeois consciousness, we are not under the threat of a restoration of Capitalism, but much more of the restoration of those dark bureaucratic forces which we have once avoided'<sup>74</sup> (1986:115).

This means, he concluded, that if the processes which led to anarchy continued, 'there would be a strong chance that the way out would be found in some version of a totalitarian state and of personal rule' (1986:115).<sup>75</sup> Milošević considered opposition to be dangerous since it promoted anarchy in society. The 'atmosphere of defeatism and pessimism', which had taken over many areas of political and cultural life was promoted on purpose to spread fear and helplessness (1986:78). Milošević warned that it was entirely illogical that the most pessimistic people led the country, occupying positions from which they could stop or slow down any development. Young people, he said in 1986, should not allow optimism to be pushed aside by the spirit of inferiority, of criticism and mourning, which was encouraged by those who were in conflict not only with society but with themselves as well (1986:87). The criticism of 'pessimists' referred not only to the apocalyptic Academicians in the SANU, but also to those leaders who endlessly criticised one another for the failures they had caused. The rhetoric of optimism that he introduced in his

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<sup>72</sup> In 1993 Mira Marković described her influence over the cadre policy in the University: 'I was pushing through a certain cadre solution very energetically and very successfully' (Marković, quoted in Popov, 1996:356).

<sup>73</sup> Milošević's openness to intellectuals and to the University earned him sympathies among many University Professors and students, even from those who had belonged to the opposition to the regime ever since the 1968 student protests, and the constitutional debate preceding the 1974 Constitution (like Mihailo Marković, Ljubomir Tadić, et al.). Even Milovan Djilas acknowledges he was 'soft' on Milošević, since it was under his government that he was allowed to speak in public for the first time after his ousting from office in 1954. Although it was certainly not his intention to support dissidents, he seemed to be willing to tolerate them. Support from Belgrade students for Milošević reached its peak with the massive anti-Slovenian and anti-Albanian rally in November 1989 ('the largest since liberation in 1945', as Milošević said), which was organised by the students. The 24-hour long rally ended with demands for the arrest of the Communist leader of the Kosovo Albanians Azem Vllasi, which duly happened three days later.

<sup>74</sup> A clear reference to 1948 (the break with Stalin).

<sup>75</sup> For further understanding of the anarchic nature of Yugoslav socialism, see Doder (1978). If there is any doubt about the link between anarchy and Stalinism, see Tikholaz (1996:131-8). For Kardelj's warnings about the 'Chilean scenario' in Yugoslavia after Tito, see Chapter Two.

speeches, was in sharp contrast to the 'culture of apocalypse' developed in the first half of the 1980s.<sup>76</sup>

As a consequence of all this, Milošević declared 'war' on those political leaders who were not ready: a) to accept the necessity to change Party methods; (b) to be optimistic in public; (c) to follow the right hierarchy of problems, among which constitutional changes were an absolute priority; (d) to re-direct their attacks from ideological enemies to a 'positive programme'; (e) to abandon 'dogmatism'; (f) to support Party unity, in Serbia and Yugoslavia. Milošević soon moved to unite the Party by eliminating all those who did not want to follow these requirements.

## **6.5. From Divisions to Unity: the Emergence of 'Institutionalists' and 'Revolutionaries' Within the LCS (April - September 1987)**

Three incidents between April and September 1987 set the stage for the conflict within the Serbian leadership, after which 'unity' would be achieved in opposition to 'anarchy', 'anti-socialist tendencies' and 'pessimism'. Firstly, in April 1987 Milošević addressed the Serbian and Montenegrin protesters in Kosovo Polje, creating a new direct link between the elite and the most dissatisfied segments of the Serbian population. Secondly, in May 1987 he launched an 'ideological offensive' against 'various attacks on Tito', displaying his determination to stop any further growth of the Serbian opposition movement, and any further disunity within the Party. Finally, after an incident in a barracks in Paraćin in September 1987, when an Albanian soldier killed four and wounded seven of his colleagues, Milošević moved on to convince others in Yugoslavia that urgent action was needed. While the first event (the Kosovo Polje speech) linked the elite with the population, the second ('the Student case') split the Party into 'institutionalists' and 'revolutionists', the two groups that would finally drift apart at the Eighth CC LCS Session in September 1987. The

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<sup>76</sup> So were his rhetorical qualities when compared with his predecessors. By the mid 1980s people were tired of listening to the same phrases and endless descriptions of the situation. Bureaucratic language could not inspire anyone. Milošević acknowledged this. He spoke a different language, using short and simple sentences, simple but emotionally extensive images (like 'heart', 'children', 'snake in the bosom', etc.). As Serbian poetess Desanka Maksimović said, reviewing his book of speeches in 1989: 'By his speeches he aroused in many people a desire to fight, shaking out patriotism that had fallen asleep and duties that were neglected'. Or, as Kosta Mihailović, one of the authors of the SANU Memorandum said: 'He does not use phrases and empty words from which every trace of content has evaporated. Instead, he expresses his arguments in clear words familiar to everyone' (Milošević, 1989: cover page). This was not only recognised by intellectuals, but by ordinary people as well. 'Milošević's greatest contribution was that he came down to the level at which even children could understand him, even the elderly without any education. This is what matters. He spoke from everyone's heart,' said an unnamed Kosovo Serb in an interview with Slovenian sociologists in 1989 (Gaber and Kuzmanić, 1989:247). His rhetorical qualities, relatively young age and the look of a determined Party leader made him a perfect candidate for a popular myth, built with substantial help from his friends in the media. Milošević now became the first person who understood the importance of media 'spinning' in post-Titoist Yugoslav politics. Nowhere was this more obvious than in his speech to the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo Polje on 25 April 1987.

third event (the 'Paraćin case') was used to justify his rhetoric and practice of an 'emergency situation'.

### 6.5.1. The Kosovo Polje Speech

On 25 April 1987 Milošević faced an angry crowd of about 2,000 Serbs and Montenegrins when he visited Kosovo Polje aiming to prevent yet another protest march to Belgrade. They demanded to talk to him directly, without 'representatives' they did not trust. When they pushed forward towards the building where Milošević was holding a meeting with local politicians, police<sup>77</sup> used truncheons. Milošević, informed of the course of events, went out of the building to talk to the demonstrators. Obviously moved by what he saw (people calling the police 'Murderers', and claiming they had been beaten by them) Milošević uttered a sentence that would later become a myth: 'No one will ever beat you again. No one should dare to beat you!.' Frightened and confused by what he saw, Milošević moved among the people, inviting as many of them as was physically possible to attend his meeting with the local leadership in Kosovo Polje. During the 13-hour long session with the local population, people presented hundreds of cases of maltreatment, injustice and oppression by local politicians and police. Not only were most of these stories similar to those in the 'Book about Milutin' and other novels, but the political demands echoed those of the Serbian Writers' Association and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Milošević realised that the opposition to the regime was potentially powerful and that radical action should be taken immediately so as to prevent the collapse of the regime.

At the end of 'the night of bitter words' (as the media called this unusual event), Milošević gave a speech of about 2,500 words. In fact, the content of his speech would now perhaps surprise those analysts who tend to focus their historical analyses on the text alone, neglecting the context. What Milošević said did not differ much from what Ivan Stambolić told the same crowd a year before on a similar occasion but it was said in Milošević's style and heard by a larger number of members of the media. Although Milošević's speech in Kragujevac in December 1986 contained more elements of the new rhetoric of optimism and firmness, it was the Kosovo Polje speech that marked the beginning of the permanent link between the leadership and the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins.

Milošević's speech had elements taken from three sources: (1) old Communist ideological rhetoric; (2) notions of (direct) democracy; and (3) patriotic/nationalist programmes, including some of

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<sup>77</sup> In later interpretations, it has often been emphasised that the demonstrators assumed the majority of the police were ethnic Albanians. It is, however, very much an open question if this was true, and - if true - how important this element was.



those developed in recently published literature and promoted by the 'critical intelligentsia'. He combined claims for 'brotherhood and unity' (reviving Tito's - after 1974 somewhat forgotten - catch-phrase) with invitations to the Kosovo Serbs not to abandon their 'fields and yards', since their ancestors would be ashamed and their descendants disappointed. He reminded the Serbs that 'it has never been a characteristic of the spirit of the Serbian and Montenegrin people to demobilise when they must fight, to become demoralised when the situation is difficult' and he promised Serbian and Federal support to the population in Kosovo. But he also reminded the demonstrators that things had significantly improved over the last few years, and that Kosovo was not the only problem of Yugoslavia. Milošević criticised the state for being bureaucratic, since it had not secured the implementation of laws in the Province. But he also warned the Serbs and Montenegrins that a 'state of lawlessness' could help no one: neither Albanians nor Serbs in Kosovo. He defended the right of demonstrators to express their opinion and rejected political accusations that their meetings were gatherings of nationalists.<sup>78</sup> But, he left no doubt that the Serbs 'should not allow the troubles of the people to be misused by nationalists, against whom every honest man has to stand'. Instead of divisions on ethnic grounds, Milošević proposed unity based on the common interests of Albanians and Serbs to develop the Province in both an economic and a cultural sense. The working class, with its 'united' interests, was the 'bearer of the spirit of brotherhood and unity, justice and progress'. The working class and its Party were the only force that could successfully halt 'counter-revolution' which demanded that the Province should become a republic, a step which would lead to 'the break-up of Serbian and Yugoslav territorial unity' (1987:143).

In terms much stronger than any of his predecessors, Milošević warned that the migrations of Serbs and Montenegrins were 'probably the last tragic exoduses of the European population',<sup>79</sup> one that could be compared only with those seen in the Middle Ages (1987:142). At this moment, Milošević admitted, it was impossible to re-create the ethnic structure in Kosovo as it was before, but it must be possible to launch a campaign for the return of those who had left the Province. 'No price should be considered too high to reach this goal' (1987:145).

Although the speech itself left open the possibility of being interpreted in a nationalistic way too, Milošević's messages were still clearly Titoist and anti-nationalist.

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<sup>78</sup> Here he only repeated Stambolić's conclusion after his Kosovo Polje visit in April 1986.

<sup>79</sup> According to official data, presented by the Secretary of the Serbian LC CC Zoran Sokolović at a joint session of the Serbian state and party presidencies on 2 November 1988, 31,000 Serbs and Montenegrins moved out of Kosovo after 1981. Out of 3,000 households that moved out of Kosovo, about 2,000 sold out all their properties in the province. Out of 1,445 territorial units in Kosovo, about 700 were already 'ethnically pure - Albanian', while in about 300 the number of Serbs and Montenegrins fell below 50. Between 1983 and 1987, about 6,500 (i.e., 224 households) Croats, Muslims, Romanians and Turks left Kosovo as well (IB CKSKS, 10/1988: 6).

'We must preserve brotherhood and unity like the apple of our eye... We neither wish to, neither can we divide people into Serbs and Albanians. But we must make a distinction between those who are honest and progressive, who fight for the brotherhood and unity and for national equality [on the one hand] and the counter-revolutionaries and nationalists on the other'.

In terms that left no doubt, Milošević attacked Albanian nationalism, which wanted an 'ethnically clean' Kosovo. 'They count on time, and - of course - time works for them. But they should know - on this soil there will be no more tyranny,' he claimed, alluding to Tirana and fears of the long-term victory of the Albanian high birth rate over the existing structure of the Kosovo population. At the same time, however, he clearly invited the Serbs to seek allies among the majority of the Albanian population in Kosovo, who were anti-nationalistic and progressive.

'The Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo will surely receive support from many Albanians, Communists and other Albanian people, among whom they count relatives and friends, and their children their pals. Because it is our common goal here to see the Province economically and culturally developed so that people, all the people, can live better and happier. It is around this goal that all working and honest people should get together: this should be basis of brotherhood and unity in Kosovo.'

People in the Province, Milošević said, 'do not address one another in their everyday life according to their nationality, in the same way that they do not discriminate according to their gender, age, social background, education and profession'. Neither Serbs nor Albanians are a 'minority' in Kosovo or in Serbia: the Serbs are a constitutive nation, and the Albanians a 'nationality' that enjoys equal rights with other nations. 'This part of the Albanian people is streaming towards Europe, towards a modern society, and one should not stop it on its way,' Milošević said, reminding his listeners that isolation and nationalism run against the interests not only of the Albanian nation but of all other nations in the modern world.

'Nationalism always means isolation from others, closure inside one's own framework, which implies lagging behind others in development: because there is no progress without the co-operation and development of further relations among Yugoslavs, nor without co-operation within the wider context. Every nation and nationality which closes itself off and isolates itself from others behaves in an irresponsible way in relation to its own development. This is why we Communists should do all we can to eliminate the consequences of the nationalist and separatist behaviour by the counter-revolutionary forces, in Kosovo and in all other parts of the country. Our aim is to finally leave hatred, intolerance and distrust behind us, so that all people in Kosovo may live well.'<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Despite this clearly anti-nationalist rhetoric, authors such as Kaplan (1993:40), today often claim that Milošević made a 'direct appeal to racial hatred' on this occasion. The wide difference between what actually happened and the retrospective interpretation of the events was the result of several methodological mistakes, such as those of the 'prolepsis' and 'coherence' hypotheses; that the texts themselves were not read; that their contexts were neglected, etc. In Kaplan's book, but also in many recent accounts of Milošević's policy (see Bishop's article in *Daily Telegraph*, 20 January 1999, or Rose's

Milošević's firmly Yugoslav/Serbian rhetoric appealed well to his listeners, who enthusiastically welcomed the new leader's determination. Once again, it was not democracy and freedom of speech that they put at the top of their demands. Just like Milošević himself, they demanded an end to 'anarchy' and 'lawlessness'. The Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins felt that 'anarchy', not lack of democracy, was endangering their rights. And they demanded swift and sharp action in a Titoist style. Milošević recognised this demand, and offered such action - this is why he had a real chance of redirecting the Kosovo Serbs from Čosić's promise of a 'revolution of burning books' to his own radical rhetoric of 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' only three years later. And finally, this is why no other rhetoric, and especially not that which would promise a more 'liberal democracy' had much chance to do so.

The dramatic context in which the speech occurred, contributed much to myths constructed immediately after the event.<sup>81</sup> To Kosovo Serbs, Milošević now increasingly looked like a 'new Tito'. He himself now attempted to repeat the Titoist formula, which included four elements: 1) linking himself directly with the demonstrators; 2) verbally supporting their demands in order to defuse their discontent; 3) using this new link between the leader and population to consolidate his own position within the elite by eliminating his opponents; and 4) using the newly established unity of the purged Party to eliminate opposition to the regime.<sup>82</sup> And, indeed, he immediately started acting as 'a new Tito'.

### 6.5.2. The 'Student' Case: 'Differentiation' Within the Elite

When Milošević returned to Belgrade from Kosovo Polje, Ivan Stambolić described his arrival as that of 'a new man'. Just like Stambolić a year before, he was worried about the gravity of situation in Kosovo, but also encouraged by public the support he received both from Serbs and Montenegrins in the province and in the media. And he felt obliged to deliver what he promised. In the five months between April and September 1987, Milošević introduced an 'iron discipline' within the Party leadership. He cut out the lengthy meetings and weekly informal 'consultations' between the leaders of the Serbian institutions. Entirely unlike the previous practice of 'collective

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1998 book, for example) the ideological dimension of Milošević's motives was neglected, while 'ethnic hatred' was promoted as the explanation of his actions. As I argue here, this is entirely inadequate.

<sup>81</sup> Already three days after the event, *Književne novine* published on its cover page a poem 'Hymn in the Fields' by Radoslav Zlatanović: 'But, a young and handsome speaker arrived/ The Falling Sun cuddles his hair/ I will talk to my people even in the fields, he says/ In School yards and Gardens' (Gojković, 1996:373).

<sup>82</sup> These four elements, as described in Chapter Three, were the essence of Tito's personal political technique, which he implemented most successfully after the 1968 student demonstrations.

leadership' within the Party, he now issued orders without asking for advice. It was 'anarchism' he fought against, knowing that – just like Tito – he would be more likely to obtain popular support by showing that he was in full control and determined to make changes, than by appealing to others to act. The time for empty talk had gone, he claimed to his colleagues in the Party leadership. 'Opportunistic' behaviour for the sake of false unity should be abandoned for good. In a word, Milošević introduced an 'emergency situation' within the Party leadership.<sup>83</sup>

Milošević now asked his Party colleagues to be permanently on the alert when it came to opposition. The 'positive programme' of changes should be accompanied with an 'offensive' against all forms of nationalism and anti-socialist activities. It was in this context that on 2 May 1987 Student, the semi-independent newspapers published by the Belgrade University Youth Organisation, printed on its cover page an illustration of 'a Vampire' with the title 'The Dance of the Vampires'. Alert to any opposition, Milošević's ally Dušan Mitević, the ideologue of the Belgrade Party Organisation, now immediately recognised in this illustration an 'attack on Tito' and allusion to the traditional mass-celebration of Tito's birthday in a stadium three weeks later. What would in other circumstances have been considered as a minor provocation for the regime (compared with much more serious articles and books published at the time), now caused a sharp reaction from Milošević's allies in the Party leadership who urged immediate party action, not only against the publisher and editor of Student but more broadly – against similar 'attacks on Tito'. However, Dragiša Pavlović, the President of the Presidency, remained committed to the previous policy of keeping a low profile when it came to opposition and simply said that 'there are much more important issues to discuss'.

Following the unusual exchange between Pavlović and Mitević at the meeting of the Belgrade Party Presidency, in the next couple of days the media published 35 commentaries, 34 of which either doubted Mitević's interpretation of the Student cover page, or even openly rejected his method of analysis as inappropriate to the 'new times'. In what was an unprecedented show of disagreement amongst the leading Serbian politicians, the Serbian Minister of Culture Branislav Milošević publicly attacked 'dogmatist forces' – and above all Mitević – for their 'reading' of the

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<sup>83</sup> Milošević's rule was one of a 'state of emergency', said his critics. Stambolić even hints that 'somebody' 'made sure' that at the very moment when Serbia finally agreed with the other republics about the necessity of Constitutional change, the SANU Memorandum appeared as a draft in the newspapers with the highest circulation in Serbia; and that the 8<sup>th</sup> Session occurred when Serbia was about to change its Constitution, correcting the mistakes of the 1974 solution. 'Well, you know what... Such coincidences, and there are many more, could not occur by chance... Whoever is capable of reading politically, could see clearly: to the changes in the federal Constitution one replied with the Memorandum; to the proposal for changes in the Serbian Constitution, the immediate shot was the 8<sup>th</sup> Session; and then you would see clearly the very essence of the global political conflict and who was on which side' (Stambolić, 1995:176). Stambolić recalls the old Bolsheviks' logic: 'the worse - the better', calling these tactics 'a strategy of chaos'. One should, of course, take Stambolić's words cautiously, but immediate parallels with Tito's technique of solving political conflicts in the 1967-72 cannot be avoided. Was Ljubičić (KOS, the Army Intelligence, etc.) the connection between the two?

Student cover page. The conflict between Mitević and B. Milošević came to the forefront of public debate.

On 8 June 1987 Slobodan Milošević used a half-informal but highly influential political institution of 'political co-ordination' to say:

'We are confronted with an offensive of the opposition, and we must strike back forcefully. The opposition has already taken over many associations, and we are now waging a struggle for the press... Wherever differentiation has not been carried out, our offensive is weak... These are not 'children's games'. We are slipping into anarchy' (Milošević, quoted in Djukić, 1994:63).

A party commission was set up in the Belgrade Party Committee to investigate all the circumstances of the Student case. But at the same meeting, Milošević for the first time faced criticism from Ivan Stambolić. Stambolić (now President of the Serbian state Presidency) said that the case caused 'a repressive atmosphere, an impression of a permanent conflict'. He noticed that Milošević thought it unnecessary to say anything about the SANU Memorandum and that the public tension raised in the Student case was much higher than that produced after the Memorandum. Stambolić warned that several statements by the Party Presidency of LC Serbia only 'added fuel to the fire'.

But Stambolić did not find much support for his views even in the most inner circle of Serbian politics. Nikola Ljubičić, the Serbian representative in the federal Presidency, concluded that 'we have hesitated too much', and that 'our side was on the defensive, while the opposition was on the attack'. Listing examples from the press, Ljubičić (the former Federal Secretary of Defence) said that 'our people' were under much heavier attack than the anti-Communists, and that the Memorandum in fact created a new party against the regime. 'We should break with this in good time,' Ljubičić said.

Although the conflict over the interpretation of what Student really meant and how important it was, and, consequently, what actions should be taken in response to it, did not result in any immediate resolution, it was one of the main events preceding the final clash which brought Milošević to full power in Serbia when its political leaders reconvened after the summer break, in September 1987.

### 6.5.3. *The Paraćin Case* and its Interpretation

On 3 September 1987 a 20-year old soldier from Kosovo Aziz Kelmendi killed four of his soldier-colleagues and wounded six more in a barracks in Serbian city of Paraćin. Among those killed two were ethnic Muslims (Hazim Džananović and Safet Dudaković), one was a Croat (Goran Begić) while the fourth, Srdjan Simić from Belgrade declared himself a 'Yugoslav'. Among the wounded soldiers, one was from Montenegro, three from Bosnia-Herzegovina, one from Kosovo and one from Slovenia.<sup>84</sup> Without waiting for any report by investigators, the event was interpreted by the media as yet another action of Albanian separatism against Yugoslavia and its nations.<sup>85</sup> Kelmendi's individual crime was now taken as a demonstration of 'what could be the price of further tension and of the neglect of such a delicate and serious problem as counter-revolution in Kosovo.' The Serbian press did not fail to use the tragedy as yet another occasion to say once again: the Albanians are not to be trusted, regardless of where they are and how they act.<sup>86</sup> The message was understood throughout Serbia. In Valjevo, Paraćin, Subotica and in various other places kiosks and shops owned by local Albanians were smashed up. The members of Kelmendi's family were all arrested and interrogated in Prizren prison. His sister Melihata (aged 16) was expelled from school. The Partisan organisation in Kelmendi's village Dušanovo asked all the people there to isolate his family.<sup>87</sup> Aziz Kelmendi's high school tutor Agish Kastrati was expelled from the LCY, while five of his teachers got a 'final warning' for failing to make a record of Kelmendi's absence from school three years ago, between 2 and 17 April 1984. Kelmendi spent these 13 days in prison after being caught attempting to 'flee to Albania'.<sup>88</sup> The atmosphere of emergency spread from Milošević's actions and his speeches all over Serbia and - perhaps for the first time - to the whole of Yugoslavia.<sup>89</sup> The apocalypse described in novels and plays by leading Serbian writers now started

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<sup>84</sup> *Borba*, 4 September 1987.

<sup>85</sup> See Tanjug's commentary in *Borba* of 4 September 1987: 'Pucnji u Jugoslaviju' ('Shots at Yugoslavia').

<sup>86</sup> In his book (1992) Slavoljub Djukić quotes from an authorised statement of an unnamed journalist of *Politika* about the immediate reaction of Živorad Minović, the director of *Politika* to the events in Paraćin: 'Minović was lively and excited when he talked about the Paraćin assassination in which 'four Serbian soldiers were killed, which was - as he said - 'as Manna from Heaven' in the situation as it was... A few minutes later, he shocked me again, when he phoned and told us - now clearly disappointed - that 'although not all four of those killed were Serbs, we should give great publicity to this event' (Djukić, 1992:150).

<sup>87</sup> *Borba*, 10 September 1987.

<sup>88</sup> Interestingly enough, the Serbian Writers' Association was among the very few organisations protesting against such ostracism. In a public demarche, they called these proposals 'barbaric' and described their authors as being 'deaf to any respect for law and human rights'. However, one cannot avoid the impression that the main reason for their protests was to emphasise that the attack on the Kelmendis would be a heavy burden on the 'dignity of Serbia and of Yugoslavia' and might well be used by Albanian nationalists to 'ante-date' events, so that 'an assassin of innocent soldiers would now become a protector of his mother and sister'.

<sup>89</sup> I quote here from my personal diary on 7 September 1987: 'In Zagreb, even those people who were so far defending the Albanians and were strongly against the Serbian nationalist approach to Kosovo, are now ready to boycott Albanian shops

unfolding before people's eyes. A pall of fear and uncertainty for the first time began to fall upon Kosovo, Serbia and Yugoslavia.

On 6 September 1987, the funeral of Srdjan Simić took place in Belgrade, which thousands of people attended. 'Better grave than slave',<sup>90</sup> 'We want freedom',<sup>91</sup> 'Kosovo is Serbia', 'We shall not give Kosovo away', 'Enough of resolutions',<sup>92</sup> they shouted.<sup>93</sup> The situation became so tense that Simić's father personally asked them to stop violating the dignity of the funeral, but in vain. After the funeral, 20,000 participants visited Aleksandar Ranković's grave in the same cemetery, singing the Yugoslav national anthem.<sup>94</sup>

The Party leadership were now facing their most dangerous challenge since Tito's death. Assassination in a barracks, stones thrown at kiosks, inflamed language in the press and mounting worries throughout Yugoslavia about the situation in Serbia<sup>95</sup> simply forced them to respond. But how?

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in Zagreb. No one trusts them any longer.' On 18 September 1987 I recorded my conversation with Stipe Orešković, a friend of mine who was then the closest political associate of Stipe Šušteršič. 'Stipe [Orešković] argues that both Milošević and Stambolić are nationalists, but Milošević is better because his policy leads to a civil war in Kosovo immediately, while Stambolić would bring us there in a year or so. He says that if it has to be, let it be now, rather than later, because the Party is rapidly weakening, and the whole system is falling apart. Strange! He is now obsessed with a possibility of a war breaking out. In fact, he speaks as if there is no other option at all!'. Orešković, at that time a member of the Federal Youth Organisation Presidency, was well informed about events within the leadership.

<sup>90</sup> This was the most famous slogan of the 27 March 1941 Belgrade demonstrations which overthrew the Yugoslav Government two days after signing the Tripartite Pact with Germany. A symbol of resistance not only to the world powers, but also to domestic governments co-operating with them. The other famous slogan of 27 March 1941 was: 'Better War than Pact' ('Bolje Rat Nego Pakt'). Both re-appeared among Bosnian Serbs in the 1990s and in Serbia during the NATO attack on Yugoslavia in Spring 1999.

<sup>91</sup> Various Communist institutions debated for months before September 1987 on whether this expression was 'nationalistic' or not, if expressed by Serbs and Montenegrins only, and in Kosovo. Freedom for whom and from whom? Was freedom not secured in 1945 once and for all?

<sup>92</sup> In this context, 'resolutions' mean party conclusions which have not been implemented, but remained 'a dead letter'.

<sup>93</sup> Borba, 7 September 1987.

<sup>94</sup> It happened that I was in Belgrade at the time of the events, working briefly as a journalist in Borba. This information I heard from a reporter that attended the funeral and recorded it in my personal diary (7 September 1987).

<sup>95</sup> In a commentary published in the Zagreb daily Vjesnik, Ivkica Bačić asked: 'Have we really come to the point that to the madness in Paraćin we react with revenge towards juveniles and entire families?' She warned about ideas of 'collective guilt', and 'badly thought out' actions under sponsorship of the political bodies' which could well 'bring us even deeper and lower... to a point without any hope' (Vjesnik, 12 September 1987).

## 6.6. Institutionalists vs. Revolutionists - Towards the Last 'Palace Putsch' in Yugoslavia

In answering this question, the Serbian political elite split into 'institutionalists' and 'revolutionists'. As in previous cases of intra-elite conflicts (for example, in 1967-1972, or in 1981 in the Minić-Marković case) this one was also an intra-Serbian division on the issue of reacting to opposition activities. But it involved much broader issues, such as: how to approach the Kosovo crisis, whether all nationalisms were equally dangerous, what were the internal party principles for the resolution of the conflicts (including the meaning of 'democratic centralism'), to what extent should the public be involved in political decision-making, how should the achievements of previous Serbian leaders be assessed, how should one rate the Kosovo issue in comparison with economic problems, etc. Here we map out the main arguments of both sides.

### 6.6.1. The Institutionalists

An open conflict between the two groups began only eight days after the Paraćin case (11 September 1987), when Dragiša Pavlović, the leader of the Belgrade Communists, held a meeting with the directors, editors and heads of Communist organisations in the Belgrade media. Obviously worried about the possibility of the situation moving out of control, he attacked them for spreading panic and promoting Serbian nationalism after the Paraćin case.

'The overall situation in Kosovo, which is indeed not improving with the necessary, desirable, or, even less with the lightly promised 'urgency', is creating a dangerous atmosphere in which it seems as if every single word against Serbian nationalism is understood as tolerance of Albanian separatist nationalism... The question we are now facing is not only whether we, united in the struggle against Albanian nationalism and separatism, should neither pause nor hesitate; it is also a question of whether we all believe that this struggle should be conducted only within the policy laid down in the Programme and the Statutes of the LCY, through the existing institutions of the system and on the principles of democratic socialism...'

Insisting that the leadership should not accept, still less organise populist politics, Pavlović said:

'Unbalanced words only create a hysterical mood, which makes things worse, without resolving any problem. The space for a resolution of the Kosovo problem is now so limited that even the smallest mistake - whatever the intentions of those who made it may be - could only be tragic for the Serbs and for Montenegrins in Kosovo, for the Serbian people and for overall stability in Yugoslavia. To argue that one can do anything one pleases because of the situation in Kosovo - even make mistakes, which might be corrected later on - is the classic logic of pragmatic and bureaucratic politics on the basis of which we would move from applause today to great troubles as early as tomorrow. The hands of applauding Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo are now starting to form into fists, and this is the boundary over which every further step could be drawing us into a tragic



development of events. Who today needs blood for our 'solutions'?... What might happen before we understand that the trigger on a gun is also pulled by unbalanced, hysterical words in the public arena, sometimes even by one single line in a newspaper?' (Pavlović, 1988:94-9).

Pavlović then went on to explain what he saw as official Serbian policy towards Kosovo, saying that 'the struggle against Albanian nationalism today is a task which should be performed without any wavering or hesitations.' However,

'Accompanied by intolerance and hatred against the Albanian nation, which is the case in some media, this struggle is becoming more and more distanced from socialist principles and closer and closer to nationalism. The editorial boards and journalists in the media who do not want to understand that today's struggle against Albanian nationalism means permanent struggle against Serbian nationalism, in effect promote the kindling of nationalist passions as their main policy' (*Borba*, 1987:2).<sup>96</sup>

The idea of Communists fighting nationalism in their respective nations and leaving other Yugoslav Communists to do the same with 'their' respective nationalists was widely accepted by all previous Serbian leaders, regardless of their other significant differences (Perović, 1991, and Marković, 1988). Only when and if Serbian Communists fought Serbian nationalists could Albanian Communists in Kosovo be successful in defying Albanian nationalism.<sup>97</sup> To Pavlović, these were two 'halves of the same coin' - there could be no success on only one 'front line'.

In his speech at the session of the Presidency of the LC City Committee of Belgrade on 17 September 1987 Pavlović interpreted his words in the following way:

'Arguing in favour of the toughest action against the Albanian separatists, I advocated also Communist resistance to Serbian nationalism and everything that could cause and encourage it. In certain articles in the media as well as in some public speeches, I have seen such encouragement. I underlined how important constant action against Serbian nationalism was... Every day there are new statements, even among some Communists, [in which it is argued] that Serbian nationalism is only reactive, and that therefore it is less dangerous, and will vanish from the scene once the reasons that generated it vanish as well. What these statements neglect is that the most successful way of preventing

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<sup>96</sup> This and many further quotations about the case are taken from the special edition of *Borba* on 28 September 1987 (here and after referred as *Borba*, 1987:pg).

<sup>97</sup> An example of this could be found in speeches by Stambolić and Vllasi, leading politicians of Serbia and Kosovo respectively, in Kosovo Polje in May 1986. Stambolić (a Serb) told a crowd: 'Do not let a handful of Serbian nationalists acting from Belgrade manipulate you - they do not do this because of us. Their slogan is: 'worse is better' - better of course for them' (Stambolić, *Vjesnik*, 06 April 1986). Vllasi said the same but about the Albanian nationalists: 'They pursued a policy of 'the worse for you - the better [for us]... This is the reason why they permanently seek support from nationalists everywhere in order to set us against other Yugoslav nations, above all against Serbs and Montenegrins. We must always remember Tito's words, that separated and divided we will be no one and nobody... And this is what the nationalists want: to confront us each against the others, to divide us, to destroy Yugoslavia and to open the doors to a tragic future for each of our nations and nationalities.' (Vllasi, *Vjesnik*, 31 May 1986).

nationalism in Yugoslavia is to prevent it in one's own environment, in one's own nation, and that the clash of one nationalism with another, regardless of their alleged provocation, leads to fratricidal hatred, even to fratricidal war. Finally, one may ask: is it possible to provoke nationalism in someone who is not ready to accept nor waiting to express such nationalism?' (Borba, 1987:2).

However, Pavlović soon found that the old formulas had lost some of their previous appeal not only amongst the people and in the media, but within the political elite as well. This became clear when the day following Pavlović's meeting with party chiefs and the media a commentary on Pavlović's meeting with the press appeared in the Belgrade daily Politika Ekspres under the title 'Dragiša Pavlović's Shallow Opinions'.<sup>98</sup> The text accused Pavlović of using 'complicated sentences, full of allusions, warnings and unnamed accusations', and of 'using unbalanced words such as 'arousing passions', 'heated words', 'hysterical words' and 'hysterical atmosphere'... 'inappropriate words which pull the trigger on the gun' (perhaps in the Paraćin barracks?!), etc.<sup>99</sup> But, more importantly, Pavlović was asked - 'to whom he directed' his criticism of the media: to Serbian nationalists or to the legitimate Serbian Communist leadership? 'Who 'lightly' promised a rapid change of the situation in Kosovo?', asked Politika Ekspres. For the commentator(s) it was clear that such promises were given 'not by Serbian nationalists but by the Central Committee of the League of Communists, which was supported by the whole people.' Pavlović's attack was, therefore, an attack on Serbian communists, not on nationalists.

The difference in these two interpretations was indeed important. It was legitimate to criticise nationalists, but not to imply that the leadership was 'soft' on nationalism. Milošević's words from December 1986 expressed the beliefs of the Party majority in Serbia:

'If we have been determined and united in anything from the Liberation until now in the Serbian leadership, then it is in the struggle against our own nationalism. When nationalism has been on the agenda, we have been neither weak nor selective, we have shown no weaknesses not even to the most distinguished people in science, the arts, politics and society in general. Neither shall we be selective, as far as the struggle against

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<sup>98</sup> Politika Ekspres, 14 September 1987: 'Olake ocene Dragiše Pavlovića'. Slavoljub Djukić in his biography of Slobodan Milošević reveals that the text was only signed by Milanović, while it was written in the Miloševićs' flat the night before. Interestingly enough, Pavlović himself, being the president of the Belgrade Party Organisation, used to write polemical articles under a pseudonym. In 1991 Borisav Jović, then President of the Yugoslav Presidency did the same. In his article (under a false name) he attacked the federal Prime Minister, Ante Marković, using details from private talks and meetings he had had with him (Jović, 2 August 1990; 1995:173).

<sup>99</sup> One needs to stress here that the whole debate between them concerned what Pavlović meant when he said what he did. The debate was much more like a 'philological seminar' than a normal party meeting (Bogdanović, 1988). The three most important party institutions in Serbia (the Presidency of the Central Committee, the Central Committee itself and the Presidency of the City Committee of Belgrade) debated for more than five days (between 17 - 24 September 1987) about the 'true' meaning and consequences of Pavlović's words. Paradoxically, in a situation in which the main Serbian intellectuals openly attacked the regime in thousands of 'heated words', three words by the Belgrade Party Secretary had ultimately brought the Party to an open crisis. But, the real power still lay in the party. And, both sides in this conflict firmly believed that the Party was the key to the solution of the Yugoslav crisis.

nationalism is concerned, in the future, whether with institutions or individuals' (Milošević, 1989:127).

To accuse the Serbian leaders now of being 'weak' on nationalism meant supporting those who saddled Serbian communists with a 'complex of Greater Serbian nationalism'. Serbia wanted to make a final break with this complex.<sup>100</sup>

Furthermore, if Pavlović criticised the 'legitimate party leadership' his action amounted to undermining 'party unity'. Since Pavlović was President of the Belgrade party organisation (230,000 members), and was supported by the majority of its leadership, his action could restore 'factionalism'. As factionalism was not tolerated by Tito, therefore it could not be tolerated by his successors. Pavlović's 'attacks on the Serbian party leadership' were therefore an anti-Titoist act, which endangered Party unity. It was not only that unity was at the very heart of Milošević's political rhetoric, but this all happened in what was seen as a dramatic moment of economic and political crisis, above all for Kosovo.

What was more, bearing in mind Milošević's passionate appeals for the unity of the LCY and his promises given to the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo Polje five months earlier, Pavlović's criticism seemed to be directed precisely at Milošević and the loyalists. This was a clear violation of the 'democratic centralism' that Milošević wanted to restore in the Party.

The whole affair became even more serious when Pavlović (now firmly backed by Stambolić, the President of the Serbian State Presidency) decided to convene a session of the Belgrade Party leadership in order to secure support. What started as a conflict over 'heated words' and their interpretation, was now clearly shown as a deep split in the interpretation of Serbian political reality. The Eighth Session of the Serbian Central Committee, convened by Milošević to discuss the 'case of Dragiša Pavlović' was the last 'palace putsch' in socialist Yugoslavia, to 'borrow' this phrase from Vaclav Havel.<sup>101</sup> Its long-term consequences were so important that many would see them

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<sup>100</sup> As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, Serbian leaders always felt uncomfortable with accusations of the 'Greater Serbian complex'. This was one of the main factors in their acceptance of the 1974 constitutive concept.

<sup>101</sup> In Havel's words, big social conflicts could not remain forever ignored by the elite. Regardless of the veil the elite drew over them, they continued in the 'hidden sphere', growing somewhere under cover to the point where they burst forth onto the political scene. At such moments 'life vents itself where it can - in the secret corridors of power, where it can insist on secret discussion and ultimately on secret competition'. But, the authorities, being unprepared for any recognition of the reality of life, start panicking. 'Whereas before every man in authority had spoken the same language, used the same clichés, applauded the successful fulfillment of the same targets, now suddenly the monolith of power breaks down into distinguishable persons, still speaking the same language, but using it to make personal attacks on one another. And we learn with astonishment that some of them - those, that is, who lost in the secret struggle for power - had never taken their targets seriously and never successfully fulfilled them - far from it - whereas others - the winners - had really meant what they said and are alone capable of achieving their aims' (Havel, 1975/1991:76-7). The whole political history of post-war Yugoslavia was full of 'palace putsches', such as were, for example, the Djilas case (1954), the Ranković case (1966), the

today as the 'beginning of the end' of Yugoslavia - a sufficient reason to follow the debate further in this chapter.

### 6.6.2. The Eighth Session of the LCS Central Committee (24-25 September 1987): Victory for the Revolutionists

The Eighth Session of the Serbian Central Committee was characterised by a clash between revolutionists and institutionalists within the Serbian leadership. The revolutionary character of Milošević's supporters was best expressed by Radoš Smiljković, Political Science Professor from Belgrade, who duly replaced Dragiša Pavlović as the new President of the Belgrade Party organisation. In his speech at the Eighth Session, Smiljković opposed Pavlović's appeal for patience and 'cool heads' when debating Kosovo. 'What does it mean to invite us to be patient, to wait, to keep cool heads in a situation in which there is blood and when corpses of sleeping soldiers and bodies of raped girls and women (including old women), are rolling on the ground?', asked Radoš Smiljković, situating Pavlović's words in what he saw as their context. This context was characterised by the Paraćin case.

'Comrade Pavlović said that 'unbalanced' words pulled the trigger, or that they could pull the trigger, with regard to his assessment of the press. The trigger has been pulled in Paraćin...<sup>102</sup> The League of Yugoslav Communists adopted the political stand that there was a counter-revolution in Kosovo, and the crime in Paraćin convinced us once again that the LC conclusions are correct. What does it mean in this context when one emphasises primarily non-revolutionary ways of struggle?'<sup>103</sup> (*Borba*, 1987:6).

Using metaphors which had not been heard in Yugoslav politics since the war time, Smiljković warned that 'in war there were situations when brothers stood against each other, and we shot people for minor mistakes'. He reminded Pavlović of an old popular saying: 'Vicious herbs for a

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'Croatian Spring' (1971), the removal of the 'liberals' in Serbia (1972), the 'Marković case' (1982), the 'Šuvar - Špiljak conflict' (1984-1986), etc. This was only the last.

<sup>102</sup> Now it is clear why Ivan Stambolić thinks that 'Paraćin was the crucial moment in Milošević's march to power' (1995:181). 'Up until then, we managed somehow to 'lean' on the media not to stoop to revenge ... [But now]... in *Politika* a really hysterical obsession appeared... Even if Milošević himself planned a more convenient motive and moment for a turning point, he could not have thought of anything better than the Paraćin incident. Now he had the Serbian nationalists at his service. Milošević accepted the hand which was offered by Greater Serbian nationalism. His road to unlimited power, after this incident, was wide open.' (Stambolić, 1995:189). The 'Paraćin case' also made the Army - especially those factions within it influenced by the former defence secretary Nikola Ljubičić, who was now Milošević's sponsor, much more inclined towards Milošević. For the role of *Politika* in these years, see Nenadović (1996).

<sup>103</sup> Smiljković used the dichotomy 'revolution' - 'counter-revolution' to express the irreconcilable difference between 'us' and 'them'. If the difference is really unbridgeable, any 'relativisation' is unacceptable. It is not even important whether the action was taken in a legal way, according to the party statute or not, as Smiljković emphasised later in discussions. In his words, it was better to make a mistake than to fail to act and be a victim of counter-revolution.

vicious wound', suggesting that such should be a reaction to 'counter-revolution'.<sup>104</sup> A non-revolutionary speech, the revolutionists like Smiljković argued, helps counter-revolution and defies Party action. This is how Smiljković (and as will be shown at the end of this debate - the majority of members of the Serbian Central Committee) understood the consequences and meaning of Pavlović's words. A political speech, Smiljković argued, 'is not about what is said', but 'about what the speech itself produces' (1987:6). Once the 'woven form' of Pavlović's words (Sokolović, in his opening speech, 1987:9) was analysed - it was 'clear' that Pavlović 'expressed resistance to the course of the League of Communists' (*Borba*, 1987:9).

It was on this occasion that the old language of Stalinism suddenly re-appeared, indicating that the time of show-trials and 'unanimous' condemnations of leaders that were accused of wrong-doing had not been left entirely in the dark past.<sup>105</sup> Using another (very Stalinist) metaphor, a member of the Central Committee Radivoje Marinković, said:

'As this debate continues, it seems that the masks are gradually falling away and that the true faces are appearing in front of us. And in fact, the dropping of these masks, at least to me, illuminates and reveals what was the real aim of Comrade Pavlović's performance in front of the editors-in-chief and party secretaries and the press' (*Borba*, 1987:29).

And then, of course, another question arose: was Pavlović 'one' or 'two' personalities, one with a mask and another behind it? What Pavlović wanted to say was not the same as what 'went out to the public', said one of the pro- Milošević members (Predrag Živanović). His words might have been comprehensible for Pavlović, but his 'allusions... were obvious and they provoked confusion and anger' (Sokolović, 1987:9). And, of course, asked Marinković:

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<sup>104</sup> In an interview I conducted with him for *Polet* (later reprinted in *Politika*) on 6 March 1989, Smiljković (then already President of the Belgrade Party Organisation) said: 'Many people simply do not want to take into account a very simple fact: that it was as early as in 1981 that the supreme leadership of this country declared that a counter-revolution had occurred in Kosovo. Could the counter-revolution be suffocated by a cross and flowers? It could not. Then, of course, people react saying: 'Well, give us weapons then! We are ready to fight against the counter-revolution!' So, one should not condemn people- workers, students...'

<sup>105</sup> The language of the Eighth Session was analysed by one of the CC LCS members, the former Mayor of Belgrade - Bogdan Bogdanović. In a letter he sent to the CC members after the session, Bogdanović warned that Milošević's fraction demonstrated 'an almost unbelievable fear, real panic of polysemia, of the pluralist meaning of words and speeches, even in describing obviously pluralist events' (1988:20). This was, Bogdanović said, nothing else but an 'obsessive intention to reduce reality itself to *clear* and unilinear occurrences' (1988:20). In Stalinism there were no doubts and no complex situations. Monolithism is the ultimate value. There is no clear line between myth and reality, between death and life, between past and future, he said. Bogdanović concluded that 'the cleansing of language precedes effective cleansing' (1988:23), since 'oppressive speech' needs to be directed against the other. However, in attacking the other, one heads towards 'auto-destruction'. Serbia, Bogdanović concluded in his letter (later published in his 1988 book 'The Death Knots - the Mental Traps of Stalinism'), was facing 'a crisis of its political consciousness, and maybe even, a crisis of consciousness in general' (1988:30). Bogdanović's letter caused an outrage in Milošević's camp, not only because it was the first case of a member of a Central Committee rejecting the authority of the CC in 'linguistic issues'. After failing to attend sessions of the CC for a whole year, Bogdanović was excluded from its membership in June 1988 as 'inactive'.

'Did Comrade Dragiša Pavlović really act on his own conviction, on his own behalf, or was he, perhaps, only a spokesman, who only said what had already been agreed upon elsewhere, who was there only to perform a task given to him. It seems to me that he was there in this latter role' (Borba, 1987:39).

In revealing Pavlović's 'true face', that was 'hidden' by his 'mask' in his 'allusions', the Party justified its existence. It was there to be 'awake' and 'awake' it was.

But, how did they know that Pavlović was criticising his Party and not nationalists? Was Pavlović not, as Shefchet Mustafa (member of the CC from Kosovo) said, still alive, sitting amongst them? Why did they not take Mustafa's advice: 'talk to him, see what he thinks, and not interpret him as we wish' (Borba, 1987:23).

The answer to this question should again, I argue, be found in ideology. The party knew what Pavlović meant because it was, by definition, able to understand what Pavlović was really saying better than Pavlović himself. The party was invited to reveal the 'real meaning' because the Party saw further and knew better than any of its members. Perhaps the best description of this thinking is given by the one who was now accused: Ivan Stambolić, the President of Serbian Presidency. Eight years after the 8<sup>th</sup> Session he said that even then, back in 1987, for all communists of his generation, 'a conflict with the Party was heresy, hugely so' (1995:247). The supreme ability of the Party to define the project of a perfect world was never to be challenged:

'I only know that, as a party official, I was driven by a firm belief that the world would become better when we, Communists, gave life to our ideological project of *making people happy*. And the world, alas, was still organised wrongly only because it happened that we hadn't yet managed to make it to the end. I had not the slightest doubts that - despite the world's imperfection - we might not be able to essentially improve the world and man, that we could - on the contrary - maybe even make it worse' (Stambolić, 1995:38).<sup>106</sup>

But although all communists accepted that the party had the right to define its 'line', many argued that some degree of internal pluralism within the Party should be allowed. Kardelj's notion of 'non-party pluralism' was used to legitimise this position. On the other hand, the revolutionists now argued that there was only one 'true' meaning while others were false interpretations (revisionism). Smiljković (and, of course, Milošević) believed that they knew what Pavlović really

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<sup>106</sup> Stambolić said that his decision not to launch any action in his state function (as the President of the Serbian Presidency) against the Party which denounced him was motivated by his still firm belief that it was simply impossible to oppose the Party. He also saw real obstacles to this in his understanding that the state was more about the economy, while the Party was about ideology. Formulating ideology and interpreting it, as I argue in this dissertation, was the main political activity in ideological societies. The state - as an institution projected to wither away - was of subordinate importance to the Party. This explains why both sides in this conflict saw the Party as the main battlefield, and not - for example - parliament or the state presidency. It also explains why Milošević wanted to control the Yugoslav party rather than the state institutions in the first place. Until 1989 he was only a party president, not a state official.

meant, since the concepts were clearly comprehensible, even when covered by metaphors and allusions.

As a good Communist (indeed one of their most prominent leaders) Pavlović himself accepted - at least initially - that the Party had the final say over what he really meant. Like so many Communists before him, he in fact accepted the rule that any member could be wrong, but the Party itself was always right.<sup>107</sup> This is why this debate between Pavlović and the others was in fact still an intra-party affair, which did not introduce any methodically new situation in the Yugoslav political space. It was a debate about who was the 'true' interpreter of Party policy and not only about who was the 'true' interpreter of Pavlović's words. Pavlović argued that his interpretation of Party policy was right and that the media bosses were deviating from the party line. He was not attacking the Party, but - on his understanding - was implementing its policy of rejecting [Serbian] nationalism. He portrayed himself as a true defender of Titoism:

'I attempted and will continue to engage all my efforts in the realisation of the programmatic goals of the League of the Yugoslav Communists, on the clear road of Tito's revolutionary and realistic policy' (*Borba*, 1987:15).

But his opponents said the same about themselves. It was they who understood what Titoism was, while Pavlović had failed to implement the Party line in defending Tito. He had failed to act against *Student* and its 'Vampire Dance' cover page, and therefore he 'blocked the political action which was launched by the Presidency of the Central Committee' (Sokolović, 1987:9). This in fact meant that although in words he might have been a true Titoist, in action he was showing opportunism. And the essence of Titoism, they argued, was that words were inseparable from action. For a true Marxist and a revolutionary - such as Tito was - it was not about interpreting the world, but changing it. Words were weapons only when they came into people's 'possession'. Anyone who did not understand this message, was not a Titoist.<sup>108</sup> Thus, not only was Pavlović not a true defender of Titoism, but he was one of the main obstacles in this struggle.

These two conflicting interpretations of the meaning both of Tito's work and of Pavlović's words made their actors incapable of finding a compromise, even of understanding each other. Stambolić today recalls the situation at and immediately after the 8<sup>th</sup> Session:

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<sup>107</sup> Even Khrushchev's interpretation of Stalinism was based on this notion: Stalin might have been wrong, but not the Party as such. The notion of self-criticism originates here: self-criticism is confirmation of the Party's supreme role. True believers in Communism, such as - for example - Bukharin in the purges of the 1930s, Slansky in 1952, or Djilas in 1954 all accepted self-criticism even when it was clear that it would not 'save' them from exclusion or even death at the hands of the Party.

<sup>108</sup> Milošević insisted on this message in almost all of his 1984-1987 speeches. For him, it was clear that words without action had no importance. On the contrary, they might have only negative effects, since they weakened trust in the Party leadership (Milošević, 1989:91-4).

'There was simply no communication any longer. They would have either not understood, or ignored it' (Stambolić, 1995:248).<sup>109</sup>

This is how comrades came to the point of a 'dialogue of the deaf', in a debate in which they were talking different languages. And it was not surprising that at one moment it looked much more like a talk between 'us' and 'enemies' than between 'us' and 'our comrades'. Only the enemy speaks a 'different language'. He does not understand 'us' and even less does he attempt to do so. No dialogue can occur between 'them' and 'us'. His words do not mean anything to us, since we do not understand them.<sup>110</sup>

'Do not translate (sic) this speech as if it were smuggled in here by the enemy, or as if it were written in a foreign language. And [do not] infer from this translation allegations that political forums were attacked, or that some leaders [were attacked]', said one of the participants in the debate (Mitrović, *Borba*, 1987: 21).

They were talking 'different languages' because they simply did not share the same meanings regarding the same words. Since words should be inseparable from actions, one needed to achieve 'unity of understanding' first in order to achieve 'unity of action'. Since ideas became weapons once they were accepted by the masses, it was the struggle for the formulation of the right set of ideas that politics was really about. This was why it was so important to win in a battle over the 'true' meaning of words. This is also why it was so important that in a monolithic society no alternative explanation of reality was allowed.<sup>111</sup>

To undermine 'unity' means to undermine the whole community, because community is not much more than a 'communicative unity'. Being central to his understanding of politics, the notion of unity was placed above all others in Milošević's programme. But, in defending the principle that there was only one true explanation of Pavlović's words (and that this did not necessarily need to be his own) Milošević did in fact not only renew the monist principle within the Communist part of society but spoke a language many others in society understood as theirs. His message about

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<sup>109</sup> As an example, Stambolić described his talk with General Gračanin who replaced him as President of the Serbian Presidency in December 1987. When Stambolić asked him if he did not see that Chetniks were gaining strength in the media, Gračanin replied: 'For God sake, Ivan, didn't we destroy them 50 years ago?' (Stambolić, 1995:248).

<sup>110</sup> On the importance of words in what he calls 'post-totalitarian systems' see Havel's essay 'A Word About Words' (1989/1991:377-89), and his 'Power of the Powerless' (1978/1991:125-214).

<sup>111</sup> As Havel wrote in his essay 'A Word About Words' (1989): 'Yes, I do inhabit a system in which words are capable of shaking the entire structure of government, where words can prove mightier than ten military divisions, where Solzhenitsyn's words of truth were regarded as something so dangerous that their author had to be bundled into an airplane and shipped out.' (1989/1991:380). This was possible, he argues in 'The Power of the Powerless' because in 'post-totalitarian' societies the ideology forms the glue of the whole political structure. I share this view.



unity was, therefore, heard and accepted well beyond the party itself, and principally by the nationalist and traditionalist ranks of the Serbian nation which shared the monist understanding of reality too. It was also well received by the egalitarian lower ranks of society, which now protested against injustice and inequality. From this to the full unity of the nation - without respect to their various political affiliations - was just one step.

### 6.6.3. Milošević's Interpretation of Titoism: Return of the Third Yugoslavia (1945-1966)

In promoting the concept of 'unity' and 'revolution', Milošević in fact presented himself as a real Titoist. As we explained in Chapter Three, the concept of 'brotherhood and unity' was successfully marginalised only when Yugoslavia entered her fourth (Kardelj's) constitutional phase. Unlike Kardelj, Tito remained committed to 'brotherhood and unity' and Yugoslavism, which he mentioned on several occasions throughout the 1970s. But, constitutionally and in practical politics, neither the phrase, nor the policy of 'brotherhood and unity' was preserved. Milošević now offered to 'bring Tito back in', in order to 'replace' Kardelj.<sup>112</sup>

Milošević offered his interpretation of Titoism at a 'memorial (Seventh) session' of the CC LCS which celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tito's succession to the post of Secretary General of the CPY in 1937. It happened (certainly not as a coincidence) that Milošević convened that session at the same time as the Eight Session itself. The heated debate at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session was, therefore, interrupted early in the evening, to allow Milošević to install himself as the true interpreter of Titoism not only within the party leadership but in the eyes of the general public in Serbia.

In his speech Milošević first said that Tito's opus 'did not belong to the past',<sup>113</sup> and that he 'carried in himself a deep and forceful sense of energy, confidence and optimism'.<sup>114</sup>

'He did not fear battles, conflicts, enemies, risks. He was not afraid to lose - although he entered every battle to win - perhaps because he was inside deeply convinced that he was

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<sup>112</sup> The others in Yugoslavia saw this as 'bringing Ranković back in'. As we have already demonstrated here, both many members of the public and the dissidents now regarded Ranković as a positive, rather than negative historical figure. By emphasising the pitfalls of the post-1974 era, Milošević earned respect from Dobrica Ćosić. As explained in Chapter Three, back in 1967 Ćosić opposed Kardelj's concept and argued in favour of the third constitutive concept of Yugoslavia. Milošević now offered a direct link with this period. His wife Mira Marković, as well as the Yugoslav Defence Secretary Gen Kadjević later openly stated that the Yugoslav problems began in the 1962-1966 period. By this 'silent' rehabilitation of Ranković, Milošević certainly earned support among many Serbs.

<sup>113</sup> Quotes are taken from text of the speech as published in Milošević's book *Godine raspleta* (1989) under the title: 'Nevertheless, the future will be beautiful and it is not far away' (1989:165-9).

<sup>114</sup> As already explained, the word 'optimism' was one of those most frequently used in his vocabulary at that time.

fighting for a right, great thing, for the greatest idea of his time<sup>115</sup> and that this idea would win with him or with someone else later, but win without any doubt... These characteristics of Tito, which were manifested at the worst historical moments of our revolution, must today forge the hearts of a generation which does not live at ease, but which needs to know that life and the future belong to honest and brave people,<sup>116</sup> and that for their ideals they must fight resolutely and without compromise' (1989:166).

An example of such bravery, to which he summoned the new (post-Titoist) generation of Yugoslavs, Milošević found in Tito's 'refusal to kneel in front of fascism or to bow down before Hitler's terrible Army'.

'His dignified and resolute no to humiliation, injustice, to all that was not in the interest of his people, Tito voiced again,<sup>117</sup> to be remembered forever by his people and by the whole world.'<sup>118</sup>

Milošević then said that Tito showed that 'theoretical blueprints and spiritual dogmatism' were foreign to him.

'As a man who had the courage to be free on all occasions,<sup>119</sup> Tito managed to develop socialist practice and to enrich Marxist theory by bringing new ideas and new solutions at a time when the Marxist idea was exposed to pressure from the dogmatic spirit on one side and from revisionism on the other.'

However, the main key to the successes of Tito's Yugoslavia was in the unity of her nations, which Tito promoted his whole life:

'At this moment of Yugoslav reality, unity is the condition for freedom and for peace, the unity which made us winners of battles, which has entered textbooks, history, and the collective memories of the people. The sufferings in fascist prisons, the slaughter by the Chetniks and Ustashas, the Hell of Sutjeska, the almost insane bravery in the battle for the wounded at the Neretva, the apocalyptic killings in Kozara, the cleansing of every single human being who was not an occupier or a traitor in Srem - we survived all this, because

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<sup>115</sup> Meaning - socialism. Milošević explicitly defined socialism as the 'most beautiful and the most progressive idea of our time' in his speech in Valjevo in September 1986 (1989:102-3) and in his toast to Gorbachev in March 1988 (1989:198-200).

<sup>116</sup> References to 'bravery' in past historical battles also very often occurred in Milošević's speeches.

<sup>117</sup> This is an obvious reference to Tito's refusal to accept Stalin's criticism in 1948. The event is widely known as 'Tito's historical no' and for a Serbo-Croat speaker needs no explicit explanation.

<sup>118</sup> This interpretation of Tito by Milošević needs to be remembered if one wants to understand why Milošević argued the same regarding international sanctions against the FR Yugoslavia in 1993, and again on the occasion of the NATO bombardment in 1999, and why he was successful in securing support for his policy of 'refusal to kneel' in front of the world powers.

<sup>119</sup> The idea that one should be courageous to be free should also be remembered. It would have been well understood by a Serbian audience, 'bombarded' by novels, plays and documentaries on the First World War bravery of Serbian soldiers.

we were united.<sup>120</sup> The whole horror of the four-year war bears in itself one large, eternal and imperishable light: the war was survived and brought to a victorious end by the combatants and the whole people, because they were united and unanimous... In this part of the revolution which we are now making [sic!], there are new battles waiting for us. To end them victoriously, we need to be together and united as we were then. This is the meaning of Tito's work, this is the essence of the Yugoslav revolution, this is the condition for a future which will nevertheless be beautiful and which is not that far away.'

It was by this speech and his subsequent actions that Milošević was recognised as the new Tito by the Kosovo Serbs and many others, who now added his poster to that of Tito's throughout the Province, only to remove Tito's three years later.<sup>121</sup> However, the complex sub-text which underlined Milošević's assessment of Tito, allowed for an alternative interpretation: that he was, as Dobrica Ćosić said, the most deserving Serb for the task of the destruction of the Titoist legacy. He was understood in the same way by many other Yugoslav leaders, who were sharply divided when debating his rhetoric and actions in the years to come. These divisions within the elite led to the break-up of the elite consensus and resulted – in the 1991 – in the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

However, before we come to this point, a question needs to be answered: why did so many of his colleagues in Serbia but also in the Yugoslav leadership support his actions? This will be discussed in the next section of this Chapter.

### 6.7. Why Did the Others Support Milošević?

At the end of the 50th anniversary session which marked Tito's elevation to the party throne, the members of the Serbian Central Committee continued their Eighth Session. However, the stage was set: Milošević's victory was clear. In fact, the vote showed that only eight members of the Central Committee still opposed the proposal of the Presidency that Dragiša Pavlović should be expelled from the Presidency. Eighteen others, most of whom came from Kosovo and Vojvodina, abstained from the vote for reasons which will be explained. Milošević's appeal for unity had worked. But, Milošević said in his concluding speech at the Eighth Session, this did not mean that

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<sup>120</sup> All the listed examples are from the Partisan struggle in WWII. Three notes about them: 1) Milošević continues Tito's and Kardelj's matrix of the Partisan struggle as the basis for Yugoslav unity; 2) as a good Serbian Communist, he mentioned Chetniks first, Ustashas second; 3) the examples are, however, places where the Serbs suffered most - with the exception of Jasenovac, which was not a battlefield but a concentration camp in the Independent State of Croatia. Therefore, to many Serbs these places were not just empty Partisan symbols, but bore a heavy emotional reminiscence of the days of bravery and martyrdom that resulted in 'victory in wars but defeats in peace'. By using this matrix, Milošević in fact did the same as Danko Popović in his *Book About Milutin*, only using cases from the Second World War, rather than from the Great War. This difference is, however, important: Serbian nationalists exploit the myths of a once strong and independent Serbian state, while Communists show a preference for Yugoslav Partisan myths.

<sup>121</sup> Already in 1988, a song was heard: 'This time the people are asked/ who would replaced Tito for Us?/ We know who is the New Tito/ Slobodan of the Name of Pride.' Yugoslav leaders on many occasions demanded that Milošević oppose this 'replacement', and he indeed publicly asked the population to stop it, but in vain.

there would be any unity with Serbian nationalists. In one of the most explicit criticisms of Serbian nationalism in his career, Milošević said:

'Serbian nationalism today is not only intolerance and hatred of another nation or other nations; it is indeed a snake in the bosom of the Serbian nation, which has always in its history tended to be united with other Southern Slav nations, and whose most progressive force, the working class, has been the bearer of the spirit of brotherhood and unity, solidarity and equality with all nations and nationalities on Yugoslav soil - before, during and after the war. Moving away from this, Serbian nationalists would create the greatest damage for the Serbian nation by what they offered as allegedly their best: isolating it in reality from others to whom we would become intolerant and suspicious. Economically, politically, socially and culturally - how could the small Serbian nation live alone and on its own and free when even bigger nations cannot do so in this world in which nations and people are more and more inter-linked and more and more cannot be free with regard to each other when alone and on their own?' (1987/1989:171-2).

This was, in Milošević's opinion, Pavlović's main misunderstanding. The latter could not distinguish between the intentions of the Serbian leadership to 'solve the problems in Kosovo in the interests of all the people who lived there: Albanians, Serbs, Montenegrins; in the name of their equality, their unity, the unity of Serbia and the unity of Yugoslavia' (*Borba*, 1987:40), and, of course, Serbian nationalism. It is in his plea for unity before the divided Serbian Central Committee that one must start looking for the reasons for Milošević's success. To many, he sounded like a saviour. By defending Tito, Milošević's speech sounded very seductive to the older generation of Serbian partisans and to the Army officers, many of whom were Serbs or Montenegrins, as Milošević was himself.<sup>122</sup>

'He reminded them (the oldest generation in the Party) of a time when they were young, firm and resolute. They liked his energy, sharpness, the easily recognisable style of a revolutionary,' explains Stambolić.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Milošević's parents were from Montenegro, but he was born in Požarevac (a city south-east of Belgrade, in Serbia). His brother Borislav (a diplomat with a distinguished career as Head of the Non-Aligned Countries Unit in the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry in the last years of Tito's life, while Josip Vrhovec was the Foreign Secretary; since 1998 FRY ambassador to Russia) considered himself a Montenegrin, unlike Slobodan Milošević who is a Serb. His Montenegrin origins played a role in inspiring and realising closer links between the two republics for which he once (in January 1989) said that they were 'two eyes in one head' (1989:324). Milošević does not deny the existence of a separate Montenegrin nation. He even objected when the protests of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo were criticised as 'uni-national': 'One needs to ask the question: to which of these two nations do the critics deny nationhood, by claiming these were uni-national rallies?' (1988/1989:260). At a joint session of the Serbian state and Party Presidencies on 5 September 1988, Milošević used the example of the rallies in Vojvodina to conclude they were not uni-national. 'If anything is uninational', Milošević claimed, 'then it is counter-revolution in Kosovo' (*IB CKSKS*, 8/88: 15). In October 1988, at its 13<sup>th</sup> Session the CC LCS issued a Statement which clearly classified denial of the existence of Montenegrin nation as 'reactionary' and as an 'act of an enemy' (*IB CKSKS* 9/88:16).

<sup>123</sup> Stambolić also said that Milošević was very polite and kind to the generation of revolutionaries. 'He remembered, for example, birthdays, and he attended celebrations, of course, with gifts... When he stood for the presidency of the Party, they were all massively with him' (Stambolić, 1995:147). A direct link with the 1941-45 period was also something they might have liked, since many of them felt that their ideals had been betrayed and that the state was ever more bureaucratic. Some of them were displeased with the tiny minority of 'successful' comrades who - as they saw it - exploited their four war years in order to keep power for the next 40. The 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' which swept them away was, therefore, very much welcomed by the 'genuine revolutionaries', even in other Yugoslav republics, such as (for example) Svetozar Vukmanović Tempo (Montenegro) and Jakov Blažević (Croatia). For Tempo's position see *Nin*, 15 January 1989.

Moreover, by his resolute and somewhat radical rhetoric, which was in obvious and sharp opposition to the phrases everyone had got used to during the post-Titoist period, Milošević could have quite easily been seen as the hope for Serbs with higher education. To the younger generation he offered immense optimism, a 'future which will be beautiful and is not far away'.<sup>124</sup> To the workers who organised 75 strikes with 13,000 participants in Belgrade just in the nine months preceding the Eighth Session, Milošević brought hope of a resolute break with 'bureaucracy'.<sup>125</sup> To those who were tired of listening to the same phrases and endless description of the situation, he offered a new rhetoric of short and simple sentences.

By opposing 'bureaucracy' (in his anti-bureaucratic revolution), Milošević became 'the People's Prince',<sup>126</sup> putting himself at the head of the popular discontent. It was not only because of his strong language against the 'counter-revolution' but also because of his opposition to bureaucracy that he mobilised not only the Kosovo Serbs but Serbs in general. The point was explained by a Kosovo Serb interviewed by a Slovene researcher in 1989:

'I watch these members of the League of Communists in my commune, for example the President of the Municipality who has two houses and many more, while I ride my bike to go shopping every day. It is like this everywhere else. But, now, with the arrival of Milošević, it has become possible for me to overthrow this president of the municipality with his two houses, to question whether his property was legally acquired or not. Hence, we have more human rights than ever before, since Milošević came to power. This is what is happening in other cities as well, and this is why the people like him' (Gaber and Kuzmanić, 1989:251).

A sense of inequality mobilised many.<sup>127</sup> This motive for social action survived even when the ideology of Communism had already collapsed elsewhere in Eastern Europe. In October 1990, 30.3% of the Serbian population agreed with a typical egalitarian understanding of justice: 'the

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<sup>124</sup> One needs to notice here that the socialist idea, as presented by Milošević, was still attractive to many in 1987, and indeed in the next couple of years. While the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe were anti-socialist and directed against the elites, the Serbian 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' was supportive of Milošević's socialist rhetoric, and directed against the 'bureaucrats', not against the Party or socialism as such.

<sup>125</sup> According to Šušvar's report at the Seventh CC LCY Session in April 1987, in 1986 there were 927 industrial actions (strikes) with 93,794 participants in Yugoslavia (1988:129).

<sup>126</sup> To use James Gow's description of Tito (1997:35-60).

<sup>127</sup> More about economic, political and ethnic inequality, especially among Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, has already been said in previous chapters. One needs to notice that the LCY hesitated to promote equality, and openly argued against 'uravnilovka' (radical equality in society). As Vesna Pešić points out in her 1988 research on equality, the very term 'equality' was mentioned only once in the LCY Programme, and not even once in the Resolutions of the Fifth (1948), Seventh (1958), Eighth (1964), Eleventh (1978) and Twelfth (1982) Congresses of the LCY. Only once was the term mentioned in the Resolutions of the Sixth (1952) and Ninth (1969) Congresses, and three times at the 1974 Tenth LCY Congress (Sekelj, 1990:120). This was in sharp contrast to the high acceptance of egalitarian values among the population and also with Tito's frequent use of egalitarian rhetoric in the whole post-war period.

state ought to make sure that everyone in society has about the same and lives in a more or less equal way' (Obradović, 1996:495). At the same time, only half of this number (18.3%) believed in a libertarian understanding of social justice: that 'the state ought not to limit wealth, but should allow anyone to have as much as he/she is capable of producing and earning'. Almost half of the population (49.8%), however, felt 'betrayed and cheated', since reality was entirely different from what was promised, and 52.2% believed that personal links, and not personal qualities, were the main means for success in society. If these were the results of a survey in 1990, one could safely assume that in 1987, at the time when Milošević launched his 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' people felt even more inclined to an egalitarian and less to a libertarian understanding of social justice, and felt even more 'helpless' than after three years of his rhetoric of optimism.

To the Serbs in Kosovo, Milošević's sharp action against 'the bureaucrats' demonstrated that their complaints did not fall on deaf ears. To them, Milošević was the first who understood and accepted the sense of the urgency of change, that they had been trying to convey to political leaders in the last two decades. Milošević was talking for them when he said in October 1988:

'Almost everyone who speaks about Kosovo accepts that the situation is difficult. But then they immediately warn us that such a situation cannot be resolved overnight. I have been listening to this phrase for at least the last six years. And I ask: should we invite here Yugoslav and world geographers, meteorologists and astronomers to explain to us how one night can last for six years? The longest night scientists know of is of six-months duration and is confined to the Polar areas' (1988/1989:270).

For young politicians in the lower ranks of the party leadership, Milošević's opposition to 'the Stambolićs',<sup>128</sup> whose influence in Serbian politics had lasted more than 40 years, was a good chance for promotion. For some Serbian politicians, however, the conflict between Stambolić and Milošević was the last chance to extend their political lives.<sup>129</sup> For those Belgrade intellectuals who opposed the 1974 Constitution (such as Mihajlo Djurić), for the Praxis Professors (such as Mihailo Marković,<sup>130</sup> Ljubomir Tadić, etc.), and even for Milovan Djilas, Milošević was a new chance. In his

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<sup>128</sup> The term refers to Petar Stambolić, a Partisan leader in Serbia who became one of the most influential postwar politicians, and his nephew Ivan, but it symbolically goes beyond the two and includes the whole generation of post-1972 Serbian leaders. The same meaning in the new post-Eighth-Session Serbian vocabulary is given to the term 'dražijanstvo' (origins in Draža, the nickname of Dragoslav Marković), invented by a young Serbian revolutionist - Zoran Todorović Kundak- just before the 8<sup>th</sup> session.

<sup>129</sup> The whole generation of old politicians - such as Dobrivoje Vidić, Dušan Čkrebić, Nikola Ljubičić - feared an inevitable retirement. By supporting Milošević, they secured a few more years in politics: especially Čkrebić in the Federal Party Presidency (until the end of the LCY in January 1990) and Ljubičić in the Yugoslav Federal State Presidency (until May 1989).

<sup>130</sup> Mihailo Marković soon joined the Socialist Party as Vice-President and chief ideologue. However, following the SPS's close links with Mira Marković's neo-communists in the Yugoslav United Left, and the ousting of Čosić in 1993, Marković withdrew from politics. For Marković's Praxis engagement and his philosophy, see Crooker, 1982.

'anti-bureaucratic revolution' they saw the realisation of their long-standing claims that Yugoslav society had formed 'a new class' of bureaucratic rulers and practically abandoned the Marxist vision of a self-managing society. Although he remained critical of his politics, Milovan Djilas later admitted he was 'soft on Milošević'; it was under the latter's government that he was allowed to speak in public for the first time since his ousting from office in 1954.

Finally, although they disliked what they saw as yet another Stalinist intra-party conflict, the Serbian nationalist intelligentsia welcomed the removal of Stambolić and Pavlović, whose attacks on the Memorandum a year before were seen as a betrayal of national interests.<sup>131</sup> Although Serbian nationalists really could not know what to expect from Milošević (for whom nationalism was 'a snake in the bosom of the Serbian people') they certainly welcomed his promises to resolve the Albanian discontent in Kosovo and his appeals for unity. Moreover, Milošević made every effort to convince the Academicians that Stambolić met open opposition when he wanted to draw Serbian Communists into an ideological (and even legal) fight with them. His aides simply quoted all those speeches in which Milošević opposed 'ideological struggles', while 'hiding' his proposals to the Party Presidency earlier in 1987. The opponents of the regime, most of whom had participated in the 1941-1945 revolution, now finally became allies in the new, 'anti-bureaucratic' revolution which was to annul all the mistakes of the post-Ranković period when they themselves were marginalised and criticised.

The provinces within Serbia and the other Yugoslav republics did not oppose Milošević either. From the position of the provinces, Stambolić's constant attempts to change the Serbian constitution were seen as no less dangerous than Milošević's 'Titoist' rhetoric. Stambolić was, as one of the leading Vojvodina Communists, Živan Berisavljević said,<sup>132</sup> a prominent participant in post-1981 Serbian politics, which was 'centralistic and nationalistic' all the way through. Also, they treated the conflict as an 'internal' Serbian matter, in which they should not be involved since they wanted the same autonomy in their internal matters. 'Many topics on the agenda were mostly or

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<sup>131</sup> When I asked him in April 1996 to recall the reactions of the Serbian intellectuals in the SANU after the Eighth Session, Antonije Isaković said: 'Milošević shared our belief that it was no longer possible to accept the situation as it was; he was equally determined to end the period of Serbian inequality in Yugoslavia. I cannot say whether his thoughts at that time were exactly the same as ours, nor to what extent they were the same. But, to be perfectly clear: the Croats and Slovenes conceptualised the Constitution in this way because they saw it as the only way of keeping control over the Serbs once Tito had gone. The Serbs needed a very long time to break with this policy. The main responsibility for this lay with the Serbian traitorous politicians. Therefore, of course, we had every reason to be happy seeing someone who was committed to breaking with this practice.'

<sup>132</sup> Berisavljević (1997): <http://www.rferl.org/bd/ss/8.html/> pg. 5 of 11.

entirely about Belgrade,' explained Boško Krunić, a Vojvodina politician who was the then President of the Yugoslav Party Presidency.<sup>133</sup>

The Kosovo Communist representatives on the Serbian Central Committee also abstained from taking sides in this conflict. Azem Vllasi, who was then President of the Kosovo Provincial LCY Committee recalls:

'We in Kosovo differed from the Serbian leadership about the situation in Kosovo a long time before the Eighth Session. Therefore, we did not feel invited to help Stambolić's faction. And even if we had wanted to help him, this would have only speeded up his defeat, since the extremists would have taken this as an argument against Stambolić and Pavlović to accuse them additionally.'

Vllasi believes that even if Stambolić had won at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session, 'the whole thing would have been only delayed for a month or two, for some other occasion, but the penetration of nationalism, chauvinism and Stalinism into the political leadership of Serbia could not have been stopped.' Vllasi also says that - as Albanians - they were simply not a factor in the power struggle in Serbia, and that in this respect, Vojvodina was to be blamed more. 'In the end, they were Serbs themselves.'<sup>134</sup>

The same applied to the other Yugoslav republics. The main Croatian daily, for example, wrote that 'the public can hardly see any essential political difference between those who remain in the Serbian leadership and those have left'.<sup>135</sup> When Ivan Stambolić was replaced by the Titoist General Petar Gračanin as President of Serbia, Vjesnik wrote:

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<sup>133</sup> Krunić was a political victim of Milošević's 'anti-bureaucratic' revolution in October 1988. In his account of the events given to Radio Free Europe in October 1997, he said that Vojvodina 'refused to accept the methods of 8<sup>th</sup> Session... but abstained from voting since everything was finished anyway... and their vote would not have changed anything.' As president of the federal Party Presidency, Krunić allegedly phoned Milošević and told him that 'the Presidency was worried and disturbed' about the Eighth Session, asking him 'to stop it'. 'Of course, they rejected it, both he and Ljubičić and asked us to leave them alone...' (Krunić, 1997: <http://www.rferl.org/bd/ss/8.html>; p 8 of 11). However, when asked, Stipe Šuvar, a member of the same Presidency, said he knew nothing about Krunić's alleged phone call. Šuvar said Krunić was certainly not authorised by the Presidency to intervene in such a way (interview with Šuvar, January 1998).

<sup>134</sup> Vllasi, in his interview to Radio Free Europe in September 1997. Vllasi's comment indicates that for the first time he felt that the ethnic affiliation of members played a significant role. It was certainly true that the public mood in Serbia (as described above) was such that the Kosovo Communists had no other choice but to agree with whatever the majority of Serbian CC decided or to face a 'Ceausescu scenario'. In fact, the crowd almost stormed the building of the Vojvodina Provincial Committee during the 'Yoghurt Revolution' on 8 October 1988. It was only after they had resigned, that the leaders were allowed to leave building, being stoned by the crowd. To a large extent this was what some members of the federal leadership had in mind when they suggested that the CC should convene in other places, rather than in Belgrade. They knew that the revolutionist Milošević, unlike them, could mobilise the population in his support.

<sup>135</sup> Pleše, Vjesnik, 16. December 1987. As Josip Vrhovec explained in interview with me, Croatian leaders believed that Serbian nationalism was a permanent characteristic of Serbian leaders.



'His reputation as a man who has been Tito's soldier all his life, who could have clearly accepted the Titoist vision of the humane socialist society, his experience as a revolutionary and a long-term party worker, will without any doubt contribute to the stabilisation of the situation in Serbia. And, without a peaceful and stable Serbia there will be no strong Yugoslavia'.<sup>136</sup>

Not only did politicians in other Yugoslav republics refuse to intervene in Serbian politics (the Kardeljist concept suited everyone)<sup>137</sup> but some of them saw change as positive. Stipe Šušvar, a Croat member of the Yugoslav Party Presidency in charge of the Serbian Party at the time of the Eighth Session, saw it as 'a promising awakening of a new generation of leaders, who were claiming they were Titoists'. Šušvar - who would only a year later become the leading opponent of Milošević's anti-bureaucratic revolution - thought that even if open Serbian nationalism increased as a consequence of the 8th Session, this would still be better than 'Stambolić's latent nationalism for which he could not be criticised or opposed in the federal leadership', as he said in an interview conducted in October 1997.<sup>138</sup> Šušvar also believed that Kosovo really was the crucial Yugoslav problem, which could 'blow up not only Serbia but Yugoslavia as well.' He shared Milošević's belief (which was also the official party line) about the 'counter-revolution' and the secessionist intentions of many among the Kosovo illegal groups. Šušvar also liked Milošević's opposition to attacks on Tito, and saw him as a 'Communist who would fight Serbian nationalists'.

'I thought that the only way to save Yugoslavia after the Memorandum was to leave it up to the Serbian Communists to clear them up. And in Milošević's Titoism I saw such an intention.'

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<sup>136</sup> The leading article in *Vjesnik*, written by an author who was also the highest party official in the *Vjesnik* publishing house, indicated that this was 'the semi-official' view of the Croatian party leadership.

<sup>137</sup> Boško Krunić said that 'some members of the Presidency of the CC LCY believed that we had no right to interfere in the work of any republican Central Committee; that we would not be doing the same in any other case and thus why should we intervene this time, why should we put ourselves on one or another side. [They also believed] that we must leave the Central Committee of Serbia to be responsible to its membership and not to the LCY Presidency' (Krunić, 1997: <http://www.rferl.org/bd/ss/8.html>; 8).

<sup>138</sup> Although many today assume that Milošević's victory at the 8<sup>th</sup> session meant victory for a nationalist, Stambolić himself spoke against such a conclusion: 'One should not forget that he (Milošević) was at the beginning of his career, and also at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session, not a nationalist. He still was in his ascent to power (...) he defended Tito from us 'liberals' and 'nationalists', and this was how the provinces treated us, and how - for example - the Bosnian leadership saw us. So, should they then have supported us and not Milošević, after his speech on Tito?', asked Stambolić rhetorically (1995:229). One should also remember that despite nationalist action taken by many participants in politics, not even in 1990 was nationalism the favourite ideology amongst the Serbian population, as 1990 research demonstrates. As Obradović points out (1996:494), despite a long and aggressive campaign, only 18.5% of the population expressed *explicit* nationalist views, while the majority remained committed to 'brotherhood and unity'. This is why later many Serbs simply could not understand accusations of them being ethnic nationalists. Milošević was again speaking for them, when (in an interview to the BBC on 25 September in 1995) he said: 'We wanted to stay in Yugoslavia. It was absurd that in view of such developments, we here were subsequently accused of being nationalists. It turned out that those who had seceded from Yugoslavia forcibly, with a view to establishing their national, or putting it better, nationalist states, were given support by the international community and treated like democrats, while we - who were striving for the preservation of the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, and who have preserved the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia and remained to live in the country we lived in before - were accused of being nationalists. These two things can in no way go together. That is so obvious... What happened was that those who had seceded from Yugoslavia forcibly were rewarded, while those who had decided to stay in Yugoslavia and preserve it, were punished.'

In another interview conducted in January 1998, Šuvar said:

'My stand on Milošević was also very close to that of the two Montenegrin members of the Presidency: Žarković<sup>139</sup> and Orlandić<sup>140</sup>, who later had to withdraw before Milošević's attacks. We concluded that Milošević might really become tough and 'rough', but that he would not attack Tito and would oppose a wave of Serbian nationalism.'

In addition, he saw in Milošević a potential ally in the event of the Croatian intra-party conflict in which he was fighting against Stambolić's Croatian counterpart Mika Špiljak. Stambolić and Špiljak, Šuvar says, created a 'daily alliance' against him.

'After the White Book, the Serbian opposition accused me of Croatian nationalism and Stalinism. The Serbian nationalists and their media launched a campaign against me. It was all under the protection of Ivan Stambolić, while Mika Špiljak found a common language with him, not with me.'

Šuvar was convinced that the Stambolić-Špiljak alliance tried to undermine his election to the federal Party Presidency at the 13<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress in 1986.<sup>141</sup> Among the political reasons, Šuvar listed Stambolić's interview with Nin in 1987.

'He suggested that the president of the Yugoslav Presidency - or even the president of Yugoslavia - should be elected for a four or five year term of office.<sup>142</sup> To me, and to many others in Croatia, it sounded as if he already saw himself in that position. And I did not like it because I thought that in such a situation, when the Serbian nationalists evidently had become the main promoters of de-Titoisation, a president of Yugoslavia on a four- or five-year term should not be a Serb from Serbia. Stambolić's idea came as a surprise to everyone. At that time we were all against any attempted emergence of 'new Titos'. When I analyse this from today's perspective [in January 1998], this was certainly stupid. Today I think that the five year term mandate might have been a good idea, but only if the person elected had not been a Serb, Croat or Slovene. For example, I would have endorsed a Macedonian president elected for a five-year term. But, this was entirely impossible, since

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<sup>139</sup> Vidoje Žarković, Montenegrin top politician between the late 1960s and 1989. He 'survived' Tito's massive attacks on republican leaders in the early 1970s. He was the Montenegrin representative in the Yugoslav state and in the party presidency 1974-1984, then President and member of the Yugoslav party presidency. He resigned in 1989 since he opposed Milošević's revolutionist supporters (Momir Bulatović and Milo Djukanović) in Montenegro, being closer to (Croatian) Šuvar than to them and to Milošević. For Žarković's assessment of the events, see his interview with RFE/RL, 19 October 1997.

<sup>140</sup> Marko Orlandić, member of the LCY Presidency from Montenegro. He also stood close to Šuvar until he was forced to resign after the January 1989 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' in Montenegro, together with Žarković and the whole Montenegrin leadership.

<sup>141</sup> In what was in fact an unsuccessful attempt to repeat 'the Marković case' with another target, Špiljak's supporters in the Croatian delegation and Stambolić's in the Serbian voted against Šuvar.

<sup>142</sup> This idea of Stambolić was much commented in the press, see Borba, 13 May 1987.

in Yugoslavia the three main nations were dominant - especially in the army, in the police and even in the party. So, who then would elect a Macedonian?'.<sup>143</sup>

But perhaps the most important factor in Milošević's victory at the Eighth Session was the Army, symbolically present in the former Yugoslav Defence Secretary (1970-1982) Nikola Ljubičić.<sup>144</sup> Milošević treated him at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session as only Tito would have been treated.<sup>145</sup> This is what Ljubičić wanted.<sup>146</sup> Ljubičić was very experienced in 'secret and conspirational action' (Stambolić, 1995:163) and his control over the Military Intelligence had never ceased. Being in disagreement with many members of the Army (including with his successor in the post of Defence Secretary, Admiral Mamula,<sup>147</sup> who was suspected of being pro- Stambolić<sup>148</sup>), Ljubičić saw the perfect chance to renew his strength. Apart from controlling Military Intelligence, Ljubičić had an overwhelming influence over the Serbian state security apparatus.

'Ljubičić was safely drawing on instruments of power which he had built up over decades. They proved to be very efficient and decisive for the realisation of a state Putsch,'<sup>149</sup> says Stambolić.

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<sup>143</sup> Interview with Šuvar, April 1998.

<sup>144</sup> After serving three terms as Federal Secretary of Defence, Ljubičić in 1982 became President of the Serbian state Presidency, and in 1984 (until 1989) the Serbian representative in the Federal State Presidency. The Ljubičić- Milošević victory - at least for a short time - cemented Ljubičić's influence in Serbia. His comrade-in-arms Gen. Petar Gračanin was elected President of the Serbian Presidency after Stambolić. In 1989 Gračanin became the Yugoslav Interior Secretary in Ante Marković's government. Despite his original plan to be re-elected to the Federal Presidency in 1989, Ljubičić retired in 1989.

<sup>145</sup> Ljubičić was the first speaker in the debate. Milošević took up his defence when Pavlović said something against him. Stambolić also quoted from Ljubičić when expressing his views.

<sup>146</sup> In Šuvar's view Ljubičić was so convinced that he would be a new Tito, that he even imitated Tito in his gestures and construction of sentences. Slavoljub Djukić, a biographer of Milošević, mentions one episode: 'When he once entered a meeting, and no one clapped to support him, he stood in front of the first row and start clapping himself until they responded' (Djukić, 1992:49).

<sup>147</sup> On the conflict between Mamula and Ljubičić see Stambolić (1995). In an interview for this thesis Šuvar and Vrhovec also confirmed that Mamula and Ljubičić disliked each other and that they had different concepts of defence. Mamula was elected Defence Secretary in 1982 with strong support from Slovenia and Croatia. 'This was support against our principles, since in fact Mamula wanted to abandon the Titoist concept of *people's self-defence* and introduce a centralised Army. But we played on his conflict with Ljubičić and supported him, only because it suited us to get rid of Ljubičić,' said Josip Vrhovec in an interview on 10 January 1998. The Slovenian leadership, media and public entered into an open conflict with Mamula in 1986, forcing him out of the government in 1988. Gen. Kadjević, Mamula's successor as Defence Secretary (1988-1992) intended to realise his plan, but it was already too late.

<sup>148</sup> After Stambolić's removal Mamula met him in secret and guaranteed his personal safety, offering him protection by Army Intelligence. He also showed 'signs that he supported' Stambolić, but Stambolić said: 'I could not have ever accepted such support for any - let's say - counter-attack. To be on one side in an armed conflict with my own people? No way!' (Stambolić, 1995:244). The duality between pro- Milošević (pro- Ljubičić) and anti- Milošević (pro-Mamula) military staff lasted right up until the end of Yugoslavia, though it was deeply hidden from the public.

<sup>149</sup> One may notice here that both sides used the word 'Putsch' to describe the events. The Milošević supporters said that Stambolić's letter to the Party Presidency in support of Pavlović was an attempted Putsch, while Stambolić - as state President - thought that the Party action against him looked like a Putsch. Since communist reasoning places the party before the state, Milošević's interpretation of 'Putsch' is more accurate. A 'Putsch' is an overthrow of a real, rather than symbolic power.

Ljubičić's decision to support the 'revolutionist' and 'Titoist' Milošević and not the 'liberal' Stambolić came at a moment when his opponents (Mamula and others) were speechless - after the 'Paraćin' case. Being worried about the possibility of his removal after Paraćin, Mamula sharpened his position in a speech to the Conference of Communists in the Army, which was published on the day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Session. His speech had a significant influence on the overall atmosphere that day. Politika, now firmly in the control of Milošević, made sure it was published under the title: 'Today's Crisis has Endangered the State's Integrity and Its Social System.' In their sub-title, the main Serbian newspapers quoted Mamula as saying that 216 illegal terrorist groups with 1,435 members - all Albanians - had been discovered within the Army between 1981 and 1987. Mamula was talking about 'water poisoning', 'assassination of officers' and 'diversions', only as an introduction to a description of the context in which all this was happening. This context was one of nationalism, whose main target was Yugoslavia and its army. It was also a context of political crisis which had not been dealt with properly. He pleaded for resoluteness: 'Whatever is feeding our youth with nationalist hatred must be cut out at its root,' said Mamula, voicing his views on Yugoslavism.

'Only in a nationalist, deviant and bureaucratic consciousness do Yugoslavia and Yugoslavism today appear<sup>150</sup> under the guise of unitarism beneath which nationalism is hidden'.<sup>151</sup>

Mamula then pledged to ensure 'order and implementation of the law' in Kosovo. Otherwise, he said, the conflict in Kosovo would put a question mark over the security of the whole country. Unusually openly for an army leader, Mamula accused the Kosovo administration of failing to provide relevant data on the 3,792 Albanian soldiers, including Aziz Kelmendi, the assassin of the Paraćin soldiers. 'The Army cannot allow itself to sit on such a mine and to fear another Kelmendi setting it off.' So, Mamula said, something should be done, but it could not be done without the resolute action of 'others in society'. In order to be successful and safe, the Army needed political allies in Yugoslavia. This is when Mamula almost openly supported Milošević's arguments:

'A resolute break with existing practice is unavoidable and urgent... It is a moment for everyone in their own place to show determination and criticism in re-examining their own responsibility. The cadres placed in the main positions bear a double responsibility: for what they have done and for what they haven't but should have done. The only alternative

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<sup>150</sup> Mamula used the Croatian/Serbian word 'prividjati' which is usually used for ghosts - 'to appear'.

<sup>151</sup> Here he refers obviously to the identification of Yugoslavism with Greater-Serbianism. In his defence of Yugoslavism, Mamula was speaking Milošević's and not Kardelj's language. At this time, Milošević was very clearly advocating Yugoslavism, which was his probably most visible difference from the 'old' Kardeljist vocabulary.

to this would be continuing the situation as it is: which means sinking into an ever deeper crisis with entirely unknown consequences... I am convinced that the LCY is the only instrument by which we can find the whole chain of solutions we need.'

And these changes were not only 'a break with existing practice' but also changes in the 'social system, which in order to be successful, must be based on what is realistic and not what is a desirable state of consciousness in society.'<sup>152</sup>

After concluding that the LCY 'is on the margins of society and [its] role is ignored' Mamula offered a solution:

'The LCY must put itself in the vanguard of democratic energy which is today expressed by the masses everywhere around us, and it must not allow this energy to be diverted in a destructive direction.'

In saying this, Mamula in fact explained why the Army supported Milošević's action. He saw Milošević as the person capable of controlling and directing the masses, sufficiently strong in his beliefs not to allow them to be 'misused' for 'destructive' purposes, such as nationalism. Milošević, a Yugoslav and a proponent of Yugoslav unity, a strong communist who sought changes in the system, a forceful critic of Albanian and Serbian nationalism and Kosovo's and Serbia's inefficient administration was a logical choice to implement this programme.<sup>153</sup>

In the end, it is not surprising that the federal Yugoslav leadership silently and without a single word 'sanctioned' Milošević's victory at the 8<sup>th</sup> Session. Not only did the Yugoslav leaders not have any real means to stop him, but they actually either agreed with him or ignored what happened. A few days after the Eighth Session of the LC CC Serbia, the Slovenian party president Milan Kučan asked Milošević to inform the Federal Party Presidency of the results of the Session when it ended (under the last item on the agenda: 'Current Questions'). 'There is some uneasiness in certain party organisations in Slovenia about this Session,' said Kučan, justifying his question to Milošević. Milošević replied that there was no need for it, and continued:

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<sup>152</sup> This was an important statement in which Mamula basically asked for a new Constitution and an entirely new approach - a much more realistic one - in Yugoslav politics. One may, of course, ask what he meant by this. Did he mean that the ideological society should come to the end? Did he plead for 'representation of what is' instead of 'what ought to be'?

<sup>153</sup> Stambolić now says that the army itself was developed as an ideological creation: 'In the minds of the army, Yugoslavia was cemented as an ideological creation above all, and - ideologically speaking - Milošević was an orthodox Communist... For the defence of Yugoslavia as an ideological state, Milošević recommended himself as leader' (Stambolić, 1995:30). Again, this explains much about the army staying with Milošević to the end. In Borisav Jović's memoirs one can find elements to support Stambolić's conclusion on the ideological elements of the army. The problems appeared when Jović and Milošević proved to be less ideological than the army expected. Still, a different interpretation is also possible: Mamula demanded more realism and fewer ideological dreams in his speech of September 1987.

'First, a huge step has been made in accordance with LCY policy. As the majority of participants concluded, this was a fierce battle with our own opportunism, which was making the LC incapable of leading an energetic campaign for the implementation of its own policy. Second, the fears that the LC Serbia would split up proved to be unfounded. We have seen that our Central Committee is united and that it shares the views of the people. Thirdly, it has been shown that this was not a question of personal conflict, or conflict between two groups, but about some individuals' deviations from LC policy. Fourthly, the crucial characteristic of this session was its clear and resolute attitude towards Serbian nationalism. In general, I think that this session, together with that of the Committee of the LCY in YPA, and especially Comrade Mamula's speech, strengthened the League of Communists' policy in a public and in a democratic way' (Djukić, 1994:89).

In a reply to Milošević's explanation, the chairman of the Yugoslav Party Presidency Boško Krunic said only:

'Thank you, Comrade Milošević. Are there any questions, or any suggestions? There aren't. Well, then OK, let us finish' (Djukić, 1994:89).

## 6.8. The Aftermath: Towards the 'Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution'

The victory of the revolutionists at the Eighth Session was followed by consolidation of the Party in order to secure its unity. The leading 'revolutionist' - Radoš Smiljković - replaced Dragiša Pavlović as Belgrade Party President, while Ivan Stambolić resigned his post of President of the Serbian state Presidency in December 1987. Throughout the Serbian Party and other political organisations, the 'institutionalists' had been removed and replaced by 'revolutionists'.

But, the unity of the Party was only a first (necessary but not sufficient) step towards the final objective: the unity of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Milošević's vision of Yugoslavia included its re-integration on grounds which were similar to the pre-1974 (the 'third', as I call it in this thesis) constitutive concept of Yugoslavia. The same determination he displayed in fighting for the unity of the Party, he would soon demonstrate in his actions towards achieving this goal. Between September 1987 and June 1988, a new - 'anti-bureaucratic' revolution - was conceptualised and prepared. In December 1987, the Belgrade Committee summed up the long debates within the Party membership at the Eighth Session: 'The Members think that we have reached a 'turning point' (*preokret*) with regard to our political life and behaviour and that this is a chance for mobilisation which should not be missed.'<sup>154</sup> Borisav Jović, who became Milošević's main aide, claimed that party members had to 'show revolutionary determination' when fighting

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<sup>154</sup> Politika, 7 December 1987.

inefficiency.<sup>155</sup> This mobilisation, they concluded, would not only solve the economic and political crisis, eliminate the Kosovo problem and democratise political life in Serbia, but would also change the status of Serbia in Yugoslavia. 'Serbia should not be constitutionally un-defined... It should be in the same position as other republics. Some individuals do not see, or do not want to see this,' said Slobodanka Gruden, a leading Belgrade Communist.

In a series of speeches, the new leaders of Serbia were optimistically promising fast and radical change as a result of the newly achieved unity. At the same time, their sharp action against 'the opportunists' and 'bureaucrats' introduced an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, contrasting sharply with the 'anarchic' situation in which the Yugoslavs had lived not only in the early 1980s, but also during the last decade of Tito's lifetime (Doder, 1978).<sup>156</sup> Living in the culture of apocalypse, feeling the sense of historical injustice presented by the leading members of the 'opposition' movement, being pessimistic about the economic and political crises that were becoming deeper and deeper, the (Serbian) population now became vulnerable to the action proposed by Milošević. To the fears he himself spread, he proposed hopes for a new, brighter future. This combination - fears and hopes - became the main building block of his politics, not only in 1987 but for longer afterwards.<sup>157</sup> Even to those who feared the new 'revolution', Milošević was now the only alternative to even worse and more radical change: to open Serbian ethnic nationalism.

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<sup>155</sup> Although he became critical of Milošević's policy and retired in 1995 (after publishing his revealing diaries in a book, 1995), Jović persists in maintaining that the Eighth session was 'an escalation of democratism in the Party': 'In 1987 we did not talk about Milošević, Jović, Peter or Paul - we talked about the interest of the Serbs... I do not know what else we should have done... At the Eighth Session we started the process of uniting Serbia, we clearly said that we in Serbia wanted to decide about Serbia, and that no one outside it would decide on it' (Jović, 1997).

<sup>156</sup> The depth of the change is nowhere described better than in Richard West's book on Tito (1994). West, himself a frequent visitor to Belgrade since 1945, writes: 'For the first time since I had known Belgrade [so, since 1945!], I was warned by friends against careless talk in public places, and still more on the telephone. People were keeping their voices down in the café of the Moskva Hotel. Outside the hotel, one of the dissidents selling the student magazines said he had twice been arrested and was now out of a job. This man, who was in his forties, said he was thinking of leaving Serbia for one of the more enlightened republics, and eighteen months later I met him again in Zagreb, selling his dissident magazines in the tunnel beneath the railway station. When I asked him what were his politics, he once more replied: simply 'communist'. Friends I had known for thirty years were talking of going to Slovenia or even to the United States to escape what they called a 'Fascist Regime'' (West, 1994:345). The loyal supporters of the 1974 Constitutional compromise felt especially threatened by the new revolutionary rhetoric of pre-1966 socialist Yugoslavism and ethnic nationalist rhetoric that spread throughout the media. The Eighth Session marked the beginning of the final defeat for the supporters of the Constitutional compromise in Serbia - in less than a year they would lose their political position and - sunk in fear - cease to be a significant political factor.

<sup>157</sup> It is here that one needs to start looking for the background of violence, which to those who committed it looked like pure self-defence. And it is precisely here that one must begin the journey towards understanding contemporary Serbia (and FR Yugoslavia): the migrations of its anti-nationalist youth, as well as the almost insane obsession with 'global conspiracies', which are believed by too many people in Serbia to be the main reason for their personal and state's tragedy. In October 1990, only 3.1% of Serbian population did not feel 'worry' or 'fear' for their personal future and that of their families, while 66.4% had a 'Messianic attitude' described in a sentence: 'I am afraid, but I think we can find a way out, if we are united'. This attitude is exactly what authoritarian leaders prefer to hear (Obradović, 1996:494). About the role of fears in Serbian politics under Milošević, see A. Djilas (1993).

Belgrade, once the stronghold of the critical intelligentsia, was now becoming something else, the capital of a new, anti-bureaucratic, revolution whose first victims had already appeared. The fears forged by this revolution spread fast first throughout Serbia, then all over Yugoslavia. Already in 1988, physical force by demonstrators (openly supported by the new Serbian leadership) overthrew the political leadership in Vojvodina. When the emergency situation was introduced to Kosovo (following a new wave of protests in Autumn and Winter of 1988/1989), the unity of Serbia was finally achieved. In March 1989 the Serbian Constitution was finally changed, making Serbia 'equal to other republics in Yugoslavia'. Any opposition to these changes, and especially to that expressed by Kosovo Albanians in the Winter of 1988/1989, was crushed by the brutal force of not only the Serbian but the Federal state. Although he lost a lot of his supporters in other republics, Milošević's actions were still tolerated, as long as they remained confined to Serbia and its provinces.

However, in October 1988 Milošević declared that Serbia 'did not achieve this victory only to sleep on the wreath of glory'. The unity of the Serbian leadership was not achieved so that the leaders could spend their term in office 'in harmony and privileges' (IB CK SKS 7/1988:15). On the contrary, as Milošević explained in April 1989, a month after the new Serbian Constitution was accepted:

'Those who expect that now, when she has finally become a Republic, Serbia would join the defenders of the status quo and oppose changes to the 1974 Constitution, are deluding themselves. They will soon have a chance to see how wrong they are. Serbia did not become a state to sleep on the wreath of glory, but - now strong and open towards others - to forcefully initiate democratic changes in order to make Yugoslavia a strong community of equal nations and nationalities, able to break with the crises, poverty and humiliation in which she lives now. Of course, those who do not care for Yugoslavia claim that our intentions and plans are 'unitarist' and 'hegemonistic'. But, they should have no illusions that we would - only because of what they say and because they do not agree with us - give up Yugoslavia and socialism, and democratic processes which no one can stop any longer.<sup>158</sup> We have no time to elaborate our policy to every single person, and especially not to those who are malevolent towards us. The results of our actions will speak for themselves. We can promise them that' (IB CK SKS, 4/1989:10-1).

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<sup>158</sup> When I interviewed Radoš Smiljković on 6 March 1989 for *Polet*, he told me: 'We are not criticised by the workers in 'Koncar' nor by those in 'Crvena Zastava'. We have been criticised by the Slovenian and Croatian leaders, and such criticism we shall not take into account...' He was as bitter at the Slovenian and Croatian leadership as Milošević: 'I do not want to say that this was the Slovenian or Croatian leadership, but somebody needed the tragedy of the Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo...' Then he proceeded: 'We must want Yugoslavia. If we do not want it, let us then stop pretending that we do. In this case, one should clearly say: *We do not want Yugoslavia any more; we Slovenes or we Croats want to live alone!* All right, Comrades! All right! Do only we, Serbs, need Yugoslavia, damn it!? But, we think that there is no other option for us than Yugoslavia.' When I asked him whether he was not possibly exaggerating the anti-Yugoslav feelings of others only because they criticised the Serbian leadership, he resolutely replied: 'Oh, no, no, not at all! It is not that all of us want Yugoslavia. The forces which would like to destroy Yugoslavia are very strong. They are maybe not dominant in the country, although they are not weak either. But, the forces which Yugoslavia does not suit are strong abroad. And if we are disunited from within, in our economic and political system... then a great danger is threatening us.'



It was the unity of Yugoslavia that Milošević now declared as his goal. Seeing little difference between being a Yugoslav and a Serb, Milošević simply attempted to transpose the means of achieving Serbian unity to Yugoslavia. He demanded unity within the Party in order to change the Constitution, defeat 'bureaucracy' and remove 'separatists' from all public posts throughout Yugoslavia. It was at this moment that he confronted the others in Yugoslavia. The 'defenders of the Constitution', among whom Slovenia had the most prominent position, forcefully opposed such an attempt.

The clash between the two groups (often classified, not sufficiently precisely, as a conflict between Slovenia and Serbia) characterised the final phase of the Yugoslav drama. Unlike the main political conflicts in the Fourth Yugoslavia, the new political conflicts were no longer confined to the political elites, but they involved the masses, and even (formerly) 'dissident' segments of population. Instead of the anti-state rhetoric of 'self-managing socialism', Milošević now promoted a statist program which had elements of both the pre-war 'national unity' and of the pre-Brioni conceptions. The state was to be de-bureaucratized (i.e., cleansed of the old bureaucrats and re-ideologised) but also re-established on new grounds. The idea of the 'withering away of the state', the main notion of the Kardelj concept, now vanished from the official rhetoric of the Party. On the contrary, changes were introduced so that Serbia would become a state 'equal to all the others'. This 'strong Serbia' would be the main pillar of a new 'strong Yugoslavia'. Instead of the notion of the 'completed nation', Milošević now insisted on the unity of Yugoslavia, which would, effectively, create a Yugoslav nation. Milošević's rhetoric was now openly anti-Kardeljist. His attack on 'bureaucracy' was in fact an attack on the institutional structure of Kardelj's Yugoslavia, defended by the 'Defenders of the Constitution'. While his predecessors in office, Draža Marković and Ivan Stambolić, had tried to 'interpret' and 'implement' the Constitution in a way which suited interests of Serbia (as perceived by them), Milošević inspired a revolutionary and populist wave of 'extra-institutional pressure'. As he explained at the 13<sup>th</sup> CCLCS Session in October 1988, 'institutions should function in accordance with the interests of the people'. For the people of Serbia, he said, there was no greater interest than to live united in Serbia and Yugoslavia. This should be changed - 'within the institutions and outside them; by the masses of population or by individuals; with anger or without anger; amongst the leadership and amongst the people - but unity [will/should be achieved] - that's for sure!' (IB, 9/1988:11).

This shift signified the effective end not only of the Fourth, but - as it would become obvious only three years after the Eighth Session - of any Yugoslavia. In the last chapter of this thesis, we analyse the conflict between the 'Defenders of the Constitution' (in Slovenia and Croatia) and the

revolutionists in the new Serbian (and later: Montenegrin) leadership in the last two years before the break-up of the Yugoslav state.

## Chapter Seven:

# Slovenia and Serbia: the Final Years of Yugoslavia (1988-1990)

'Those who expect that now, when she has finally become a Republic, Serbia would join the defenders of the status quo and oppose changes to the 1974 Constitution, are deluding themselves. They will soon have a chance to see how wrong they are. Serbia did not become a state to sleep on the wreath of glory, but - now strong and open towards others - to forcefully initiate democratic changes in order to make Yugoslavia a strong community of equal nations and nationalities, able to break with the crises, poverty and humiliation in which she lives now. Of course, those who do not care for Yugoslavia claim that our intentions and plans are 'unitarist' and 'hegemonistic'. But, they should have no illusions that we would - only because of what they say and because they do not agree with us - give up Yugoslavia and socialism, and democratic processes which no one can stop any longer. We have no time to elaborate our policy to every single person, and especially not to those who are malevolent towards us. The results of our actions will speak for themselves. We can promise them that' (IB CK SKS, 4/1989:10-1).

Slobodan Milošević  
April 1989.

'When we think about the idea that a majority vote should be introduced in a multi-ethnic federation, we ask: is this anything else but a denial of the equality of the peoples, a denial of their sovereignty and of their right to self-determination as an inalienable human right... Yugoslavia is our common state, which we created voluntarily, through a democratic agreement with other nations. Nobody accepted us into it, and nobody can discharge us from it. And we shall not give up our right to it... [However] we do not want to live in a country in which we would be subjugated to political and national supra-power, to economic exploitation, or forms of political, economic and cultural and other dictates.'

Milan Kučan  
Speaking in Tacen, 17 June 1989.

### 7.1. Constitutional Changes and the 'Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution' (1988-1989)

After consolidating his control over the Central Committee in September 1987, Slobodan Milošević declared constitutional changes (both in Serbia and in Yugoslavia) to be his main goal. Already in January 1987 (hence, to a large extent as a result of a decade of Ivan Stambolić's efforts) the Federal Presidency agreed to open a public debate about constitutional changes. In February 1987, the Party

Presidency approved a debate on 130 amendments to the 406 articles of the 1974 Constitution. But the beginning of the debate only revealed deep differences between the republics and provinces, especially over the central issue of Serbia and its two provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo.<sup>1</sup> It was Milošević's first goal to silence the opposition to his proposals, which originated in the two Serbian provinces, especially in Vojvodina. As has been demonstrated earlier in this thesis (Chapters Four and Five), Vojvodina's leaders opposed any attempts to centralise Serbia and Yugoslavia, launching a strong campaign against Serbian 'nationalism' and 'unitarism'. The opposition only continued after the Eighth Session, and even intensified in the first half of 1988. Milošević and his main aides on several occasions clearly stated their opposition to Serbian nationalism,<sup>2</sup> and repeated their guarantees that no substantive rights would be denied to either Vojvodina or Kosovo. However, they warned both Provinces that the time for empty talk had expired now when the Serbian Central Committee had achieved unity and was supported by 'the people'. 'Bureaucratism and dogmatism are today the main obstacles to changes in society and in the League of Communists,' said Dušan Ilić, member of the Serbian Party Presidency. The leaders of Vojvodina and Kosovo, as well as the others who opposed the radical changes proposed by the Serbian Party, were these 'bureaucrats'.

Milošević's criticism of bureaucracy corresponded well to the demand of the rallies of Kosovo Serbs, but also to those of the dissatisfied public in Vojvodina and throughout Serbia. Following the conclusion that 'bureaucracy in the Provinces' was the main obstacle to the resolution of the Kosovo problem, the Kosovo Serbs organised a series of rallies in Vojvodina and elsewhere in Serbia, trying to 'wake up' the local population and organise it against the local 'bureaucrats'. Just as before, when they went to Belgrade to 'raise awareness' of the Kosovo problem, now they went to Novi Sad and other cities in Vojvodina. The leaders of the Province, however, considered their demonstrations nationalistic and anti-socialist and tried to prevent them by all means. They also accused the Serbian leadership of organising and directing the public protests.<sup>3</sup> In turn, this

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<sup>1</sup> The titles of the reports on this decision in the various republican dailies illustrate these differences. 'Vjesnik' (Croatia): 'The proof of the continuity of the revolution'; 'Nova Makedonija' (Macedonia): 'Changes in favour of labour'; 'Rilindja' (Kosovo): 'The basic principles not to be touched'; 'Politika' (Serbia): 'Relations should be resolved resolutely and in a principled manner'; 'Dnevnik' (Vojvodina): 'The serious work is only beginning'. These titles (all published on the same day - 20 March 1987 - and quoted by Borba) revealed how different were the expectations of the republics and provinces regarding the outcome of the constitutional reform. Croatia and Macedonia were concerned with the preservation of the ideological basis of the system. Serbia insisted on changing 'relations within Serbia', to which both provinces were opposed. Finally, Vojvodina openly announced its intention to obstruct any significant change in the Constitution.

<sup>2</sup> Andjelković IB CK SKS 9/1987:12-15; Ilić, 5/1988:5-10, Milošević, 7/1988:14-5.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, the new Serbian leadership originally tried to prevent the Kosovo Serbs from demonstrating in Vojvodina, but unsuccessfully. When the leaders of the Kosovo Serbs told Milomir Minić, the Executive Secretary of the Serbian Central Committee, that they would demonstrate regardless of the Party recommendations, the leaders took a neutral stand: they neither prevented nor publicly supported the march (Kerčov, 1989:228). This was a demonstration of how much the situation had changed - the leaders could no longer control events at their own will, but had to accommodate themselves to them. Marko Orlandić, the highly popular Montenegrin leader who failed to support the rallies, was immediately put on the 'black list' of the demonstrators and was finally ousted together with other Montenegrin leaders in January 1989.

outraged large segments of the local population, who joined demonstrations against less than popular local political figures. Further encouragement came from the Belgrade media, by then already firmly under the control of Milošević loyalists, who portrayed these events as demonstrations of the people against the bureaucratised leadership of Vojvodina.

In the three and a half months between 9 July and 21 October 1988, the rallies of support for the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins turned into demonstrations against the Vojvodinian leaders and a most powerful support for Milošević's new course. It was estimated that 578,000 people participated in 28 rallies in the Province. In a survey of participants at some of these rallies, 72% of demonstrators said they were motivated by desire to change the 'untouchable bureaucracy', while 78% assessed the Vojvodina Party organisation as 'highly bureaucratised'. On the other hand, only 9.3% thought the same of the new Serbian Party leadership. They also expressed their dissatisfaction with the Federal Party leadership (led by Stipe Šuvar), which 59% thought was 'highly bureaucratised' (Kerčov, 1990:100-1). For 69% of participants, the protests were the way to 'express a general revolt against the situation in the country'; 62% came to 'fight against the bureaucracy in Vojvodina'; while only 7% demonstrated primarily against the economic situation in the country. Significantly, it was an even smaller percentage who demonstrated against the current state of inter-ethnic relations in the country.

The demonstrations in Vojvodina divided the Yugoslav Party leadership along republican lines. Vojvodina's representatives demanded condemnation of the 'pressure of the street'. The Slovenian leadership warned Milošević that Vojvodina and Kosovo were not only parts of Serbia, but also constitutive elements of Yugoslav federalism, and that therefore his action undermined the federal character of Yugoslavia. The leaders of Kosovo insisted that demonstrations of Serbs should be treated in the same way as demonstrations of Albanians, and therefore should be declared 'counter-revolution' and stopped, if necessary by force. The Croatian and Bosnian leaders feared they would worsen inter-ethnic relations in their republics and cause a new wave of 'anarchy' to which the only response could be a 'firm hand' by 'Stalinist' and 'centralising' forces. For all these reasons, the Party Presidency of Yugoslavia, in which Serbs were again becoming isolated, demanded that all Party leaderships in the republics should act against the demonstrations.

Milošević, however, rejected this demand, and in September 1988 finally publicly endorsed the protests as an expression of democracy at work. They were, he said at the joint session of the Serbian state and party presidencies (5 September 1988), not only an expression of solidarity with those who were being terrorised in Kosovo, but they marked an end of people's patience with the inefficiency of the state and their own representatives. They were also 'a democratic, honest and

expected reaction' to years of inactivity when it came to Kosovo. They were also, at least, a realisation of many proclamations about 'self-management' and 'people's rule'. Everything that the leadership in many declarations had claimed it represented, Milošević said, was now here: 'the people, democracy, freedom of expression and the public! Yet, all of a sudden, this is labeled as an undesirable and dangerous thing, to which we should put an end' (Milošević, IB 8/88:14). Milošević denied the criticism that the people's protests were in fact destroying the institutional structure of Yugoslavia: people wanted these institutions to work and would stop protesting when the institutions started working properly. He also denied that the protests were uni-national.<sup>4</sup>

'People can gather only on those grounds on which they feel attacked and endangered. They are attacked as Serbs and Montenegrins, they are leaving their homes as Serbs and Montenegrins, and therefore they defend themselves as Serbs and Montenegrins. They cannot defend or gather as Dutch or as Protestants, or as cotton plantation workers, since none of them is threatened for being any of these', Milošević argued at the joint session of the Serbian state and Party Presidencies in September 1988 (IB, 8/88:14).

The Communists could not and should not distance themselves from the people - that would be their end.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, they should always be with the people if they wanted to re-gain their trust.

By opposing the demand of the Federal Party Presidency, the Serbian leadership put itself in the unique position of being both an opposition (to the 'bureaucrats' at the local and federal levels) and the government (of Serbia). This ambiguity only helped Milošević to establish himself as a powerful alternative to institutions that were losing public support. It was Milošević's League of Communists that now seemed convincing when talking about the 'Party's separation from power' and its being a true representative of 'the people'. Milošević now became both the promoter of a strong and efficient state and an advocate of 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' by the masses. While he was pledging strong action against 'anarchism', at the same time he supported mass rallies, which were - he claimed - a spontaneous action of the people. Being on both sides at the same time, Milošević in fact offered a platform to many others, both within the political elite and amongst the population. Members of the elite now followed his example, becoming - almost overnight - 'representatives of the people'. On the other hand, by putting himself at the head of the protests,

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<sup>4</sup> This was the main criticism by the other Yugoslav republics. There was no doubt that most of the demonstrators really were Serbs: as Kerčov argues (1989:83) Serbs were 62%, and Montenegrins 14% of demonstrators, while together they were 56.5% of the total population of Vojvodina. Among the speakers in these rallies, 75.2% were Serbs and Montenegrins from Vojvodina, 11.7% Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo, while 5.6% were Hungarians. Hungarians made up 18.9% of the population of the Province, but only 3% of demonstrators. Still, the fact that one of the leaders of the public discontent was Mihail Kertes, an ethnic Hungarian secretary of the LCY Committee in Stara Pazova, was much used to display the 'multi-ethnic' character of the protests.

<sup>5</sup> 'The place of Serbian Communists is to be with the people,' the leadership of Serbia claimed in September 1988. And there they were.

Milošević enabled many of the disappointed but not anti-communist members of the public to join the protests.

On 8 October 1988, a crowd of about 100,000 demonstrators surrounded the Vojvodina Party headquarters demanding the resignations of the whole leadership of the Provincial Committee. The leadership resisted the 'pressure from the street' for the whole day, only to finally resign under the combined pressure of stones and yoghurts and Milošević's public support for the demonstrators. The 'Yogurt revolution' removed the main opponents of many initiatives by Serbia's leaders, from the 'Blue Book' of 1977 onwards. Radical change now made Vojvodina the most stubborn supporter of Belgrade, changing the balance of power in the Yugoslav federation. The message Milošević sent to the others was clear:

'The refusal of certain leaders and some individuals to respect the voice of the people, so clear and powerful, not only reveals their bureaucratic and undemocratic habits, but it also feeds anger, an escalation of which could result in endangering the safety of all people in the country' (Milošević, Speech at the 13<sup>th</sup> CC LCY Session, IB 9/88:10).

When it came to 'wars between the people and some leaders', it was not important whether the change of politics came through institutions or in an extra-institutional manner: what was important was the unity of the people and its leadership.

It was unity, not institutions that Milošević wanted to 'save'. The old communist slogan, that the place of the party was among the people, while the state was 'withering away', now came back in his revolutionary actions, which linked populism with socialism. It inspired both those who demanded radical changes and those who were not excited by them; those who wanted to see communist leaders finally overthrown and those not ready to abandon socialism yet disappointed by existing 'bureaucratic' politics.

A few days after the 'Yoghurt revolution', similar protests occurred in Montenegro, with the same demands for the republican leadership to resign as being 'bureaucratic'. In October 1988 the leadership managed to defend itself by using police force against the demonstrators, but the protests - supported by the media in Belgrade - continued until January 1989, when they finally succeeded in ousting the whole Montenegrin leadership.

The October protests in Montenegro, however, met with a powerful reaction from the Slovenian Central Committee, which accused Serbia of organising protests in the other Yugoslav republics. Slovenia's protests were a reaction to Milošević's straying outside of Serbia's borders. As long as it

was confined to Serbia (Vojvodina and Kosovo included), the other Yugoslav republics did not actively oppose the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution'. But Montenegro was a sovereign republic within Yugoslavia. The precedent followed in one case could be used in another, and why not in Slovenia?<sup>6</sup>

The Federal Party leadership also supported the Montenegrin leaders, but this only extended the list of 'bureaucrats' whose resignations were demanded by the demonstrators in Serbia and Montenegro. On the other hand, the Serbian Party Presidency declared its public support for the 'justified demands of the workers and citizens of Montenegro... their socialist character and orientation to brotherhood-and-unity' (IB 9/1988:16). The Serbian Party Presidency demanded investigation of the Slovenian claim that Serbia had organised protests in another republic. They denied that Serbia had any territorial claims on Montenegro, or that it questioned the existence of the Montenegrin nation or republic. But, at the same time, it pointed out that the history of the two nations was full of examples of co-operation and 'common will'. The Slovenian attempt to accuse Serbia of organising protests against the Montenegrin leadership, Milošević said, was yet another attempt to create inter-ethnic problems and destabilise Yugoslavia. In its declaration of 11 October 1988, the Serbian Party Presidency warned Slovenia's leaders that they in fact were accepting the rhetoric of anti-socialist and anti-Yugoslav groups and that Serbia's population would not seek approval for their rallies from Slovenia's bureaucratic leaders. In a clear message to Slovenia's population, the Serbian leadership emphasised the difference between 'the brotherly Slovenian people' and its bureaucratized leaders. It was, however, at the same time an indirect invitation to Slovenes to replace their 'bureaucrats' with real representatives of the people. In other words - to organise an 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' themselves.

## 7.2. Slovenia and Serbia: Divisions Between the Intellectual Elites

Milošević's criticism of the Slovenian political leadership in the last quarter of 1988 followed a long-lasting public dispute between Slovenian and Serbian intellectuals over the future of Yugoslavia. Since the beginning of the 1980s, Ljubljana and Belgrade had been the two centres of anti-regime actions, but they had failed to create a united, all-Yugoslav opposition. Despite fairly developed personal links between the Slovene and Serbian intellectuals, and the high regard that they had for

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<sup>6</sup> Slovenian 'dissident' intellectuals, such as Spomenka Hribar (*Nova Revija*, 80/1988:1992-8) showed more sympathy for the Montenegrin protests than Slovenian political leaders. Hribar accused the Slovene Party of supporting the 'Stalinist' leadership of Montenegro, instead of siding with the 'legitimate claims of the people'. 'To be perfectly clear - the demands of the demonstrators in Titograd were entirely legitimate,' said Hribar.



each other,<sup>7</sup> several initiatives by Serbian dissidents (the most famous of which was the meeting between representatives of Ćosić's Committee for the Protection of the Freedom of Artistic Expression and the editors of the Ljubljana-based journal 'Nova Revija' in November 1985) ended in failure.<sup>8</sup> Private letters exchanged between several Slovenian and Serbian intellectuals contributed little to their mutual understanding.<sup>9</sup> Public debate between them, also in the form of letters, had an even more negative effect.<sup>10</sup>

It was in this context that another episode showed how deep the disagreements were between Yugoslav intellectuals. In 1986, a Serbian candidate was to be elected to the one-year rotating post of the President of the Yugoslav Writers' Association. The Serbian Writers' Association (UKS) proposed Miodrag Bulatović, but his candidacy was rejected by the Slovenian, Kosovan,

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<sup>7</sup> Since the early 1980s, many Slovenian intellectuals had joined the Serbs in signing various petitions and publishing articles and interviews in the liberalised Belgrade media. Ljubljana's 'Nova Revija' (founded in 1982, at the time when 'Javnost' was blocked by the Belgrade politicians), published Serbian authors. This was in sharp contrast to the coldness that opposition activities met with among Zagreb intellectuals, whom both Belgraders and Ljubljaners suspected of 'nationalism' and with support for the 1984 'White Book'. The 'special relations' between Serbia and Slovenia were, Dobrica Ćosić argued, forged by 'the sameness of our national destinies [in WW II] and our brotherhood in suffering and struggle, which did not occur to the same extent with other South Slav peoples' (Ćosić, 5-6 Oct 1987; Književne Novine, 15 November 1987:17). It was the historical suffering and common 'anti-German' sentiments that made the Slovenes a potentially close ally in the eyes of the Serbian intelligentsia. These 'special links' were to some extent acknowledged by Milošević himself. In May 1987, speaking to Slovene painters, he said that the Slovenes and Serbs were divided by their historical destiny, but had created bridges between themselves, forming an example of brotherhood-and-unity at work. 'The past has already entered the national memories of both nations' to be passed from generation to generation and 'never to be forgotten' (1987/1989:151). The fact that Milan Kučan began his life as a refugee in Serbia made him rather popular in Serbia. But, it also deepened the sense of 'betrayal' once Slovenia went independent.

<sup>8</sup> The sense of disappointment was described by Dobrica Ćosić (Djukić, 1989:268). From Ćosić's later recollections of the meeting, it appeared that the main conclusion of the Slovene intellectuals was that 'the Slovenes have nothing to expect from Yugoslavia' (Ćosić, 1992:71), and that one should 'once and for all reject any internationalism and universalism' (1992:72). They also argued that 'the Slovenes have always compared [themselves] with Europe, never with Yugoslavia' (1992:72). The Serbs, on the other hand, argued that the failure of the Party ideology should not necessarily be the end of the Yugoslav idea, pointing out that the Serbian national question would be widely re-opened if Yugoslavia ceased to exist.

<sup>9</sup> Following the meeting in 'Mrak', Dobrica Ćosić exchanged several letters with the Slovene writers Niko Grafenauer, Taras Kermauner and Spomenka Hribar. In the letter to Grafenauer, Ćosić complained that the Slovenian intellectuals 'failed to recognise... the enormous development of Slovenia which was possible only in Yugoslavia'. They also underestimated 'the anti-Bosnian, which means anti-Serbian atmosphere in Slovenia'. But worst of all was the indifference towards 'the humiliating position of the Serbian nation in the existing, Brioni Yugoslavia', and especially in Kosovo. 'I am saddened by seeing how uninformed you are about the Albanian genocide of the Serb population in Kosovo and Metohija, and how little you care about this, much less than we cared for the Slovenian Coast and Carinthia [after WWII]' (Ćosić, 23 November 1985/1992:76-9).

<sup>10</sup> 'Letter to a Serbian friend' by Taras Kermauner was published first in the Serbian literary magazine 'Književnost' in 1986, then in 'Borba' on 24-26 June 1987. Kermauner accused the Serbs of being anti-Albanian and anti-Slovenian and led by 'a blind anger... against anything that is different, anyone who tried to think and behave as he/she liked, against anybody who was not willing to subject themselves to a model of brotherhood-and-terror'. Raising for the first time the issue of separation, Kermauner asked: 'Why would it be of any concern to you if I (we) wanted to secede? Civilised behaviour is one of the main conditions of civil society. If the partners in a marriage are no longer interested in living together, they can divorce. There is no personal freedom without the possibility of divorce,' said Kermauner. He reminded the Serbs that if they felt exploited by the Slovenes (as they had argued in the Memorandum) they should not object to a separation. Kermauner concluded that the Kosovo Serbs, unfortunately, did not demand more democracy and lawfulness, but the renewal of the brotherhood-and-unity policy. This is why the Slovenes could not support them (Borba, 24-26 June 1987). Commenting on the effect of Kermauner's letter, Dobrica Ćosić said: 'This letter, by its Slovenian bias, provoked huge discontent and disappointment in cultural circles in Belgrade and Serbia... It was from Taras Kermauner that the Serbian public realised what Slovenia thought of the Serbs and Serbia, and what were Slovenian intentions: in one word - secessionism' (1992:73).

Montenegrin and Croatian organisations, who claimed that Bulatović's views were hostile to other Yugoslav nations. The four constitutive members of the YWA managed to block the Serbian appointee, causing a stalemate from which the Association would never recover. Serbia saw 'the Bulatović case' not only as a sign of the strong links between these four organisations and their respective Party elites, but also as an example of another humiliation and intervention in its internal affairs. As Dobrica Ćosić explained:

'The national key principle is respected in every case and for everyone, except for the Serbs. Every national donkey can be the Yugoslav President, except the Serbian donkey!'

In an open letter that followed the 'Bulatović case', the UKS accused the Slovenian Writers of 'agitating openly and militantly' against the Serbs.

'Slovenian writers must know that Serbian writers will never accept any Diktat... and will reject with contempt a language of provincial maliciousness, which does not respect their partners... They should know that Serbian history, both ancient and recent, provides... a holy writ and a reminder, that the Serbian nation has preserved its national identity and integrity only by resisting aggression.'<sup>11</sup>

The Serbian Writers also expressed their determination to prevent the Yugoslav Writers' Association from becoming 'an instrument by which militant and aggressive minorities might impose their selfish will, which originates in... their nationalist schizophrenia, on the others'.

'On this issue [of the election of Bulatović], there will be no compromise, even if the price is the break-up of the YWA.... A community of any type can only exist if principles of equality in rights and in duties are respected, and if everyone obeys the rules previously agreed upon. Otherwise - its existence is not necessary' (Nova Revija, 1986:811).

The Bulatović case, like the 1982 'case of Draža Marković' within the LCY (described in Chapter Five) demonstrated that the Serbs - just like all the others - were unwilling to accept defeat, even if this was the result of the procedure that they had previously agreed upon. The confederalist principle of 'appointment', not of 'election', suited them in order to introduce the candidate they preferred, regardless of how acceptable he was to the others. But, once others rejected it, they simply did not recognise the legitimacy of the procedure.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Nova Revija, 1986:811.

<sup>12</sup> In fact, the Yugoslav Writers' Association never fully recovered from the stalemate caused by the 'Bulatović case', becoming the first Yugoslav institution to effectively disintegrate under the pressure of divisions within Yugoslavia. The official break-up of all links between the two associations (Slovenian and Serbian) happened on 28 February 1989, as a consequence of the Slovenian Writers' Association's participation in a pro-Albanian meeting in Ljubljana (Belić and Bilbija, 1989:6). The break-up was uni-lateral. In its letter to the UKS, the Slovenian Writers' Association said that they 'absolutely and in no way' wanted to break relations with the UKS (Borba, 2 March 1989).

The collapse of the Yugoslav Writers' Association (whose acronym in Serbo-Croatian is the same as that of the League of the Communists of Yugoslavia – SKJ) preceded by four years the dissolution of the Party. Taking into account how much the writers' associations were already influenced by both their local political elites and by ethnic nationalism, this could hardly be surprising. The event, however, had grave consequences, since it in fact demonstrated that not only the institutions of the state and the Party were disunited, but that it was difficult to expect an emergence of an all-Yugoslav opposition movement. The republican/ethnic fragmentation of the opposition, at the same time that the LCY was rapidly disintegrating on the same lines, left little space for the democratic transformation of Yugoslavia. It also indicated that the further democratisation of the country would in fact go hand in hand with its fragmentation into republican/ethnic components. A democratic and united Yugoslavia was becoming as improbable as a Communist-led united Yugoslavia.<sup>13</sup> As Dobrica Ćosić noticed, 'the case of Miodrag Bulatović was... only a new metastasis of the Yugoslav cancer, which had only one possible outcome' (Ćosić, 1986/1992:80-3).

### 7.3. The Slovene National Programme (1986-1987)

It is today often argued that the Serbs were the ones who started the circle of ethnic nationalism, of which the SANU Memorandum was normally taken as the main example. In most of the existing literature, however, the role of Slovene nationalism in the disintegration of the Yugoslav Communist ideology is significantly underestimated.<sup>14</sup> Here I argue that the nationalist idea, similar to those developed in Serbia, had at the same time emerged among Slovenian intellectuals. It is in the interaction between the two nationalist movements rather than in one of them exclusively that one needs to look for the roots of the final phase of the Yugoslav conflicts.

The Slovenian opposition scene in the 1980s had two pillars: (1) the 'civil society' concept, promoted by the Association of the Socialist Youth of Slovenia (ZSMS) and its magazine 'Mladina', and (2) the Slovene national programme, created by the Slovene intellectuals assembled in the literary review 'Nova Revija'. While the first concept insisted on the de-militarisation of society,

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<sup>13</sup> Not many, however, realised this until very late. For example, as the last US Ambassador to Yugoslavia (1988-1992 Warren Zimmermann writes, the US Government believed that 'unity and democracy were the Siamese twins of Yugoslavia's fate... the loss of one meant that the other would die' (1995:6). The same was argued by the Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković, the most liberal member of the Yugoslav political elite. However, both Marković's term in office and American policy towards the Yugoslav crisis ended in failure precisely because they attempted to explain actions from a different ideological context than the one in which the events really happened.

<sup>14</sup> An exception being Susan Woodward's 'Balkan Tragedy' (1995), and to a certain extent James Gow (1992) and Aleksandar Pavković (1996).

establishing various NGOs linked to the ZSMS, the latter attempted to formulate the main Slovenian national interests. In 1988 they moved close to each other, seeing the national question and the democratic transformation of Slovenia as conditional upon the destruction of the Yugoslav Communist state.

Within the concept of 'civil society', the national question was treated simply as a part of the 'democratic question' and within the context of the de-militarisation of society. It was first raised by Janez Janša, the leading figure of the 'civil society' concept (formerly a member of the ZSMS Presidency, resigning after criticising the Army in 1984) who called on the Army to make no exception to other federal institutions when it came to equality of the three official languages in Yugoslavia. In a paper written in 1986, Janša reminded the Army of the fact that the Slovene Partisan units during the WW II spoke the Slovenian language, and that Tito himself promised Slovenes that they would never again be forced to speak a foreign language in their military force.<sup>15</sup> Janša argued that the Yugoslav Army in fact was violating the federal Constitution. In reality, it had never wanted to accommodate to the political trends of de-centralisation which started after the fall of Ranković in 1966. The main reason for this was its 'paternalistic distrust' for certain Yugoslav nations, as a result of which it also rejected any idea of having ethnically homogeneous (i.e., Slovene, Serb, Croat, etc.) military units. Janša argued that the Army had never abandoned its ambition to play the role of the 'educator of Yugoslavism', and that it had never really accepted the existence of republics as states (Janša, 1986:263). For most of the 'civil society' authors (such as Gregor Tomc, Tomaž Mastnak, etc.) the national question was, therefore, treated not as a separate issue - it was an inalienable part of the general democratisation of the country.<sup>16</sup>

Somewhat different was the approach of those Slovene intellectuals, who (in 1981) established the literary monthly journal 'Nova Revija'. In 1985, at the same time as the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts started preparing its 'Memorandum', the editors of the Nova Revija (Niko Grafenauer and Dimitrij Rupel) invited contributions to a special issue on the Slovene national question. In Autumn 1986 the issue was ready to be published. But, when the Memorandum met with a strong reaction

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<sup>15</sup> By the Federal Constitution, three languages - Serbo-Croat, Slovene and Macedonian were official on the whole territory of Yugoslavia, while the languages of minorities, such as Albanian, Hungarian, Italian, etc. were made spoken in official use in areas with a significant presence of these ethnic groups. Federal documents were issued in all three languages, but Serbo-Croat (spoken by about 16 out of 23 million Yugoslavs) was widely used as the lingua-franca in oral communication. In the Army, Serbo-Croat was declared 'the language of command', being, therefore, singled out as the official spoken language. Although the regulations provided for other languages to be used in the reserve forces of the Army (composed of the local population), this rarely materialised. Until 1988, even in Slovenia, for example, the names of the barracks were written only in Serbo-Croat, while Slovene officers and Slovene soldiers were using Serbo-Croat in official communication. Serving my military service in Slovenia (1986-1987), under the command of a Slovenian officer, I have personal experience of how damaging this was for the relations between soldiers and the local population.

<sup>16</sup> For more on this concept, see Mastnak (1986) and (1990), Fink Hafner (1992), Arzenšek (1986), Jenšterle (1987) and Tomc (1986).

in Serbian and Yugoslav politics, they decided to postpone publication of the issue to January 1987.<sup>17</sup>

The 57<sup>th</sup> issue of 'Nova Revija' was the first publication that debated ways and methods of changing Slovenian public opinion in order to win support for Slovenian independence. Slovenia was at a crossroads, facing the most important issues of her identity in the new ('informational and cybernetic') era. As one of the authors (Tine Hribar) explained, there were three ways ahead, and Slovenia had to make a clear choice between them. First: she could disappear as an autonomous political subject, defeated by 'Yugoslavism' or 'Yugoslavianism',<sup>18</sup> of either a Communist or a democratic character. Either of these two 'Yugoslavisms' would make Slovenians only a minority within a unitary state. This choice was clearly unacceptable. The real choice was, therefore, between the two following options: either Slovenia would preserve its status of a sovereign nation within the modernised Yugoslav federation (which would recognise her sovereignty not only in words but in practice); or she should declare full state independence, separating from Yugoslavia.

Debating this dilemma, most of the authors of 'Nova Revija' argued in favour of full independence.<sup>19</sup> However, they were aware that not only international political reality but also Slovene public opinion was not yet ready to accept such a radical solution. True, the public opinion survey in 1987 (SJM, 1987) demonstrated that the Slovene population had begun to think that the state independence of Slovenia was not entirely undesirable. 53% of the respondents in a survey conducted by the University of Ljubljana claimed that outside Yugoslavia, as an independent state, 'Slovenia would increase its chances to develop' (in an economic sense), while only 18.9% said Slovenia would 'have no chance to develop' in such a case (SJM, 1987:58). More respondents than ever before (43.2%) claimed that Slovenian politics was 'not sufficiently independent', while an additional 7% said 'it was not independent at all' (SJM, 1987:58). A large majority of Slovenes (65.5%) claimed the Slovenian language was endangered (SJM, 1987:59). 59.1% said that the

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<sup>17</sup> It is now widely believed that the 'Contributions' were only a reaction to the Memorandum, which was leaked to newspapers in September 1986. This is, however, incorrect. Spomenka Hribar, one of the editors of Nova Revija said that the special issue was initiated a year and a half before it was actually published. The Slovene and Serbian national programmes appeared independently of each other and at the same time. The Serbian writers, such as Čosić, today accept that they started thinking of formulating a national programme only after the meeting in 'Mrak' in November 1985. If this is true, one can conclude that the Memorandum was in fact a reaction to an already existing (though unwritten) Slovenian national programme, not vice versa. Čosić says that he was impressed on seeing how well thought out the Slovene concept was.

<sup>18</sup> In Hribar's use of these two terms (in Slovenian: 'jugoslovanstvo' and 'jugoslavijanstvo'), they are not synonymous. Yugoslavism is used to describe ethnic, while Yugoslavianism - political (civic) affiliation. For Hribar, both are equally unacceptable.

<sup>19</sup> Viktor Meier's conclusion (1999: 58) that 'in this programme, the existence of Yugoslavia was nowhere called into question' was perhaps more a product of his overt sympathies with the Slovenian position, for which he (at that time as correspondent for Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung) was criticised in an official Statement by Serbian LC CC at its 13<sup>th</sup> Session, 11 October 1988 (IB 9/88:16) than of his reading of 'Nova Revija'.

republics and provinces should be 'more independent than they are', and only 8.9% were in favour of the 're-centralisation' of Yugoslavia.

At the same time, however, none of these findings was sufficient to initiate any great dissatisfaction with Slovenia's political leadership, which was 'fully supported' by 37.8% of the population, while an additional 42.0% said that they 'in principle' trusted them. Nor did they undermine the socialist orientation of the majority of population. In 1987, 42% of Slovenes believed in the prospect of socialism in the world. True, fewer than ever before said that LCY politics 'entirely' or 'generally' reflected the interests of the majority, but it was still a high percentage (57.2%) who said so (in 1971: 76.2%; in 1976: 66.4%; in 1980: 72.0%; in 1984: 68.5%, etc.). The survey, hence, confirmed that the Slovenes really faced a crossroads: they did not any longer rule out the possibility of being independent, yet they had not lost confidence in the Communist leadership either. They opposed the re-centralisation of Yugoslavia, but they were not yet ready to support anything else but a programme that would somehow preserve socialism, while increasing at the same time Slovene national independence. They were less than ever knocking on the doors of the LCY to become members. Yet certainly they did not really believe that developed socialism, a democratic Yugoslavia and a highly autonomous Slovenia were incompatible objectives.

In this context, the authors of 'Nova Revija' understood their role as one of convincing the Slovenian public that a Slovenian state was a viable option, and should be the primary aim, ranked higher than either socialism or Yugoslavia. They had to break the 'Slovene paradox', which the Slovene philosopher Tine Hribar described as the Slovene lack of desire to have an independent state. '[Slovenes] are afraid of their unconditional sovereignty', and of statehood, 'since they are afraid of the very image of a state', he said in his article in Nova Revija 57.

'Since we have so far had only the experience of living in foreign states, those that were not ours, we have built a perception that a state is [merely] an instrument of coercion.<sup>20</sup> We do not think of a state as a legal state (*Rechtstaat*), which would be a guardian of the space of liberty and protector of human rights, but as an enforcer of duties and obligations, an instrument of intrusion and even as terminator of our rights' (Hribar, 1987:25).

It was, therefore, the notion of the state that had to be changed first.<sup>21</sup> Hribar argued that the democratisation of the state was a pre-condition for Slovenes to begin thinking of their own, Slovenian state. Furthermore, he argued that the democratisation of Yugoslavia would necessarily

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<sup>20</sup> One could perhaps add this explanation to the list of motives for Kardelj's (himself a Slovene) anti-statist notion, based also on the concept of the 'withering away of the state'.

<sup>21</sup> In this respect, the Slovenian national program was 'statist' too.

lead to an independent Slovenia. The main target of democratisation was the 'ideology of violence in the name of the [communist] Idea'. Without changing the ideology on which the state was created, the expression of preferences would not be possible. But, as soon as this ideology was defeated, the very essence of Yugoslav state came under question.

For the Slovene intellectuals around Nova Revija (almost all of whom later played a leading role in DEMOS, the coalition of anti-communist parties in the 1990 elections), the democratisation of Yugoslavia was not an aim in itself, but the independence of Slovenia was. They understood the democratisation of Yugoslavia as a means to this end. While Serbian nationalists remained divided between their 'Yugoslav' and '(Greater-)Serbian' options, the Slovenes now (as early as 1986) established the clear aim of full independence.

However, the Slovene intellectuals were also aware of political reality. Even if the whole project of Slovenian independence did not succeed, Hribar argued, even if the Slovenes freely decided to remain part of Yugoslavia, there was still a bottom line that they should never cross: they should never agree to be treated as a minority, regardless of how small their share of the Yugoslav population was. The Slovenes were a sovereign nation, and as a sovereign nation they had an absolute right to decide about the form of state in which they should live. The existing 1974 Constitution guaranteed this 'bottom line' and it was, therefore, absolutely unacceptable to change it for anything but full independence.<sup>22</sup> If the Slovenes, therefore, decided to secede from Yugoslavia, Peter Jambreč argued in his article in the 57<sup>th</sup> issue of Nova Revija, this would be perfectly legal. The potential conflict that might follow such a decision would not be between a sovereign state (Yugoslavia) and its secessionist part (Slovenia), but between two independent and sovereign states. In such a case the right of self-determination would certainly support the Slovene side.<sup>23</sup>

In a series of articles published in Slovenian academic journals and the media, the legitimacy of the Yugoslav state was questioned.<sup>24</sup> 'From a strictly legalistic point of view,' the Slovene lawyer France Bučar argued, 'the Slovene nation was brought into a political system about which it has

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<sup>22</sup> The Constitution guaranteed the right to self-determination ('including secession', as the Slovene intellectuals often emphasised) by the first article of its Basic Principles, which declared Yugoslavia to be a federal republic of free peoples equal in rights' whose decision to associate was based on 'the right of every nation to self-determination, including also the right to secession' (Jambreč, 1987:166).

<sup>23</sup> This argument is still used by Slovenia when issues such as succession of the property and rights of the SFRY are debated. While Serbia (FR Yugoslavia) insists that Slovenia and other republics seceded from Yugoslavia, the Slovenes argue it was partition of the federation, not secession.

<sup>24</sup> Kardelj's anti-statist concept, which recognised republics as states, and Yugoslavia as a 'community' of state-republics, was now also used to support this argument.

never had a chance to express its opinion freely' (1987:154). The Slovenes had never had a referendum on Yugoslavia, but were 'guided' by the policy of the uncontrollable Communist Party. Only by exercising their right to decide freely on possible links with the other (Yugoslav) nations, could the Slovenes legitimise the state they lived in. As the next step of their political activism the Slovene intellectuals would, therefore, propose a referendum on self-determination.

Many articles in 'Nova Revija' pointed out that Slovenia's independence was neither unrealistic nor impossible. Apart from its historical development<sup>25</sup> which made Slovenia much stronger and self-confident than it had been ever before, the geopolitical position and ethnic structure of its population were (still) favourable to this option. Not only did almost all Slovenes live within the borders of Slovenia, but the borders also separated Slovenes from other Yugoslavs in linguistic, cultural and historical terms. Economic arguments were also used to support the prospects for independence. Slovenia, whose population made up 8% of the Yugoslav total, contributed 15-17% of the total funds for under-developed Yugoslav regions, produced about 15% of total Yugoslav production, while its share of Yugoslav exports had reached 20% by the mid-1980s. Quoting these figures, the Slovene intellectuals concluded that the 'ideology of egalitarianism' (so popular in other parts of Yugoslavia) was certainly not in the interest of Slovenia.

Subsequently to Hribar's demand that the ideological paradigm of the Yugoslav society should be destroyed, several authors in the 57<sup>th</sup> issue of Nova Revija openly criticised the ideological use of concepts, such as, for example, nationalism. In an article which the political elite subsequently criticised more than any other, the Slovene philosopher Ivan Urbančič promoted a Slovene 'positive nationalism', which would take the nation out of 'entropy, apathy and fears', developed not only by recent crisis, but throughout their history.<sup>26</sup> Without its own nationalism, the Slovene nation was 'sentenced to disappearance' because even those who promoted 'internationalism' (like Yugoslav unitarists) were in fact only 'Yugoslav nationalists' themselves.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 'One should not underestimate the positive national and psychological effects of the recognition of the possibility to secede and become an independent state [provided] by the 1974 Constitution itself' (Urbančič, 1987:44).

<sup>26</sup> As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, rarely did any other term have a more negative meaning in the rhetoric of the regime than nationalism. Nationalism was what the Communists fought against, not only in the Partisan War, but also throughout the entire period of their 35 years in power. The label 'nationalist' would bring on those so labeled a total ban on public appearances, political purges and, in the most drastic cases, imprisonment. The concept of 'brotherhood and unity' was invented as the antipode of (separatist) nationalism and formed one of the main elements of the regime's legitimacy. It was in Urbančič's article that this pillar was undermined.

<sup>27</sup> Almost all 'Nova Revija' authors shared this conclusion. For instance, Aleš Debeljak (1986) claimed that Yugoslavism was an 'outdated' nationalist concept and, as France Bučar said, belonged to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1987).



Although Urbančič accepted that certain positive changes had been introduced immediately before the 1974 Constitution,<sup>28</sup> it was still the case that the League of Yugoslav Communists, by the very fact of being the real sovereign of Yugoslavia, remained the main promoter of unitarism. The fact that no mechanisms for conflict resolution between republics and provinces were provided illustrates that conflicts had not been expected, since they should have always been prevented by the Party in advance. The Yugoslav 'federation' was nothing more than the 'objectivisation' of LCY rule.<sup>29</sup>

'Regardless of the federal character of Yugoslavia and despite rhetorical claims that the 1974 Constitution recognised and even created the statehood of the republics, the federal state still preserves its supremacy in homogenising society in a political sense' (1987:36).<sup>30</sup>

Ideological and political homogenisation under the LCY had produced a de facto unitary state. The Army's refusal to promote languages other than Serbo-Croat was only an illustration of this. But, the use of the 'Serbian'<sup>31</sup> language in the Army and state apparatus did not mean, Urbančič said, that the Serbs (as Serbs) really dominated in Yugoslavia. The federal administration was nationless; it was an ideologised instrument of imaginary class interests, not a representative of any, including of the Serbian, nation. The Slovenes, Urbančič said, should never confuse Serbian nationalism with Yugoslav unitarism. While Serbian nationalism was a legitimate political doctrine, Yugoslav unitarism was not. Not only Urbančič, but also many other Slovenian writers expressed this conclusion. For example, Spomenka Hribar (1988b) also concluded that Yugoslavia was not dominated by the Serbs but by Proletarian Revolutionaries.

'The Yugoslav army is not a national army, which means - not Serbian either. Even if all its members, to the last one, were Serbs, this would still be primarily an Army of the Party. It is a political, 'class' army, which a priori disregards nationalities and peoples as nations. This is why the Army is convinced that it is logical that its Commander in an area does not belong to the nation that has a majority in this area. It is not only logical, but also necessary for Bolsheviks, since the national feelings of the Commander should not coincide with the

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<sup>28</sup> Urbančič analyses in details these positive changes in his 1989 text in *Nova Revija* (1989:789-817).

<sup>29</sup> Spomenka Hribar pointed out the difference between reality and formal constitutionality in the Yugoslav case in her inspiring article in *Nova Revija* 57 (1987). Paraphrasing her terminology, one could conclude that Yugoslavia was in reality a LCY-ruled unitary state, while in form it was a federation of republics. The difference between rituals and reality in socialist states is described in Vaclav Havel's essay: 'Power of the Powerless' (1978).

<sup>30</sup> In his article in the 57<sup>th</sup> issue of *Nova Revija* (1987) France Bučar argued that federation was still only a form of unitary state - and that every unitary state develops a state language, state ethnicity and state identity. As examples, Bučar used the USA and Germany. After the first democratic elections in 1990, Bučar became president of the Slovene Parliament.

<sup>31</sup> Serbian writers noticed that the Slovene nationalists deliberately avoided the fact that the Croatian variant of the Serbo-Croat language was also treated as 'official', not only the Serbian. This was true. Both Tito and the Defence Secretary at the time Admiral Mamula spoke the Croatian, rather than the Serbian variant of the Serbo-Croatian language. Even Gen. Ljubičić, Mamula's predecessor, used many Croatian words, imitating Tito's gestures and speech.

feelings of the population. Of course, it is the same with ordinary recruits, which should be sent to other areas, like – in our Slovenian case – Kosovo.’

Finally, on these grounds the Slovene intellectuals showed more understanding for the Serbian nationalists than, for example, the Serbian Communists. In 1989, at the height of the conflict between the Serbian and Slovenian leadership, France Bučar wrote:

‘The Serbs have a right to their national state... In the ‘AVNOJ Yugoslavia’, this right was denied to Serbs, as it was to the other nations. The Republic of Serbia was not shaped as a state of the Serbs, and certainly not by a procedure in which they could participate; a large proportion of Serbs remained outside their nation-state. By the 1974 Constitution, the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo were practically outside Serbian jurisdiction, having – at the same time – sufficient prerogatives to block any law in Serbia. This impossible and irrational situation was unsustainable’ (1989:1497).

Not without a sense of solidarity with Serbian demands, Bučar admitted that they had lost Kosovo because of the high birth rate of the Albanians and real-socialist policy of urbanisation, which moved them (the Serbs) from Kosovo to the cities – mostly to Belgrade.

‘The result of all this was a general national frustration: [the Serbs] are losing their national territories, their living standards are decreasing; the economy is more or less bankrupt; and their real power is much below the power of their total numbers. The Serbs are perhaps the biggest victim of real-socialism in Yugoslavia’ (1989:1497).

But, while the ‘*Nova Revija*’ authors did not in general object to Serbian nationalism, they demanded that their Serb counterparts should clearly dissociate themselves from any trace of Yugoslav unitarism. The complex relationship between the two strongest opposition groups in Yugoslavia (as will be demonstrated later in this chapter) was determined by this demand. The SANU Memorandum was, Urbančič concluded, in this respect still a confusing mixture of Serbian nationalism and Yugoslav unitarism, but was nevertheless a positive step forward towards an open discussion (1987:39). On the other hand, it is almost needless to say that Milošević’s Yugoslavism was entirely unacceptable to the Slovene intellectuals. The new Serbian leader was indeed the embodiment of everything they criticised.<sup>32</sup>

The Slovene nationalist opposition had less consideration for other Yugoslav nations, with the exception of the Croats. As Urbančič explained in his article in the 57<sup>th</sup> issue of ‘*Nova Revija*’, the Yugoslav federation consisted of three types of nations. The Serbs, Croats and Slovenes belonged to the first category of ‘old nations’. Although they were too weak to remain independent, and thus

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<sup>32</sup> It is perhaps here that one needs to notice that – in this respect – in the brief military conflict in summer 1991, the opposing sides were not Serbs and Slovenes: it was Yugoslavia that Slovenes fought against. And it was the vote of the Serbian representatives in the federal Presidency that in fact brought about Slovenia’s independence.

decided to create a common state in 1918, the 'old nations' existed before Yugoslavia. In Yugoslavia they had 'grown up' to the point at which they had become mature enough to create their own states. On the other hand, the Bosnian Muslims, Montenegrins and Macedonians were 'new nations', whose separate identity was recognised only after 1945 (in case of the Bosnian Muslims even later - in the 1960s):

'These nations were created by the national state-creating force, which was the Communist Party, at the expense of those nations that emerged in its own historical national movement, and were therefore also capable of their federal self-sustainability' (Urbančič, 1987).

The third category had only one member - the Kosovo Albanians, who had not been recognised as a nation (but as a 'nationality') although they had formed a genuine national movement and a strong sense of identity (Urbančič, 1987:45-6). In Yugoslavia, all nations - old and new alike - had strengthened their identity and increased their chances of survival as independent states.<sup>33</sup> Yugoslavia should simply recognise this change, and allow everyone to express a demand for full independence if they wished to do so.

As Urbančič argued, the problem of Yugoslavia was not that the nations wanted to be independent, but that some of them were not confident enough of their ability to sustain themselves. This lack of self-confidence was manifested in the Yugoslavism of the 'new nations'. The newly created nations (and not the Serbs, Slovenes, or Croats) were therefore a pillar of Yugoslav unitarism. They were the main allies of the federal state, which found its main *raison d'être* in favouring the least developed at the expense of the most-developed nations in Yugoslavia. This was also why even in the 40 years of 're-distribution' the differences between 'strong' and 'weak' nations in Yugoslavia had not disappeared: it was not in the interest of the Yugoslav Communist elite. In Urbančič's interpretation, if anyone was to be blamed for unitarism, then this should be the 'new' nations, rather than the Serbs. Not only did they make Slovenia less developed than it should have been, but they kept the Yugoslav state functioning.

The existence of such a federal state, in which the weakest nations did not improve their economic situation, created an additional problem for Slovenia: the wave of emigration of ethnic Slovenes from Slovenia to the West, and a large immigration to Slovenia from the other, predominantly from 'new' Yugoslav nations. Urbančič claimed that 200,000 'members of other Yugoslav nations' had

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<sup>33</sup> Urbančič compared the new nations with the former colonies: 'When one gives a form of statehood to somebody, regardless of how this statehood came to be created, it would necessarily lead to nationalist forms of behaviour when it comes to the national question, and it would create a nation, even if no trace of any genuine national movement existed in this place ever before' (1987:47).

moved to Slovenia since 1945, mostly for economic reasons, while (for the same reason) 600,000 Slovenes had left their country in the last hundred years and had never returned.

'This means that the population of Slovenia had not decreased in its size, but only if we neglect the 'unimportant' fact that the (ethnically) Slovene population is declining' (Urbančič, 1987:55).

The change in the ethnic structure of the Slovenian population is a 'time-bomb that is ticking in our lands' (Urbančič, 1987:55).<sup>34</sup> Among other threats to Slovene national identity, Urbančič included the increasing number of ethnic 'Yugoslavs' in the 1981 census, the notion of Slovenia being a 'multi-ethnic society', bi-lingualism ('which would make Slovenes a national minority in Yugoslavia'), and – again – disrespect for the Slovenian language in the Army.<sup>35</sup>

'It must be very clearly stated: we, the Slovenes, did not associate with other Yugoslav nations in the common state to lose our autonomy and national identity, but to preserve it.<sup>36</sup> Therefore we reject all those elements of our common federal state, which would, sooner or later, lead to or support unitarism. And it is up to us, the Slovenes, to autonomously decide what these elements are' (Urbančič, 1987:52).

Two years later, Urbančič would conclude that his expectations that the Yugoslav state would democratise in this direction had been naïve.

'Yugoslavia as a state is a historical accident; it is without any indigenous must, without an idea of itself. Yugoslavia cannot exist, because she does not have any interior necessity... Yugoslavia as a unitary and centralised nation-state is – as has been demonstrated in practice – impossible.' (1989:814).

It was impossible because it did not follow 'the demands of the epoch'. For the Slovenes, the authors in 'Nova Revija' argued, there was only one way out: an independent Slovenia.

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<sup>34</sup> One can here hardly fail to notice that Urbančič's fear of a 'time bomb' was very similar to the fear of the Serbian nationalist intelligentsia for the fate of the Serbs in Kosovo. The higher birth rate of Albanians in Kosovo was paralleled by the higher birth rate of the Bosnian Muslims, the largest group of immigrants in Slovenia. For the Slovenes' fears of 'the Bosnians' see Meznaric, 1986.

<sup>35</sup> 'There is no military or defence justification for Slovenes to join the Army in a foreign environment and under foreign command, as was the case in earlier periods of our non-independence, or for the fact that on their territory there are stationed troops which do not obey Slovenian orders' (Urbančič, 1987:56).

<sup>36</sup> This argument was heard at the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the LC CC Serbia in May 1968, when Petar Stambolić argued that Dobrica Ćosić and Jovan Marjanović misunderstood the meaning of Yugoslavism for the other Yugoslav nations. For this debate, see Chapter Three.

#### 7.4. Reaction of the Slovene Political Elite

The 57<sup>th</sup> issue of 'Nova Revija' posed a similar challenge to the Slovenian political leadership, as the Memorandum did to the Serbian. Although the new Slovenian party leadership (since 1986 led by Milan Kučan) engaged in open criticism of the Slovene National Programme,<sup>37</sup> they – following the same pattern as Stambolić and Milošević – saw potential benefit in a reconciliation with its main authors. Like Milošević, in the criticisms of the Nova Revija and Mladina (the youth magazine that since had 1982 promoted liberal views, opening its pages to many 'nationalists', 'liberals' and others excommunicated in earlier times) they saw themselves coming under pressure. But, while the Serbian opposition criticised political institutions in general (including those in Serbia), the criticism from Slovenia was directed at federal institutions, including the Army. It was not other Slovenes, but the 'dogmatist' and 'centralist' forces in the Party and state federal leadership that the Slovene elite feared most. This brought a new dimension to the whole problem.

As several opinion polls indicated in the mid-1980s, the discontent with LCY policy was stronger in Slovenia than in any other Yugoslav republic. Consequently, 38.9% of the Slovenian electorate in the 1986/1987 survey, carried out by Slovene sociologists on a sample representing the whole Yugoslav population, agreed that 'the LCY should be only one of the political parties in our society, and it should be up to each individual as to which party he/she would support'. 27.7% replied: 'do not know', which meant that less than 25% Slovenes opposed introduction of multi-party democracy. The level of acceptance of such a possibility was, therefore, higher than in any other republic (30.4% in Croatia, 28.3% in Montenegro, 25.6% in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 25.2% in Kosovo, 23.5% in Macedonia, 22.9% in Serbia Proper and 22.8% in Vojvodina) (Goati, 1989:96).

On the other hand, however, the same survey showed growing support for the 'firm hand policy' throughout the country. The proposition by which the level of authoritarian inclinations was tested was: 'A firm hand, which knows what it wants, would be of much more use to our society than any empty talk about self-management'.<sup>38</sup> Surprisingly, acceptance of this statement was again highest in Slovenia (61.1% in favour, with 19.6% neutral), while (with the exception of Kosovo) there was not much difference between the regions with regard to their level of economic development. The authoritarian statements were acceptable for about the half of the population in all the Yugoslav republics: in Serbia Proper 53.4%, Croatia 53.1%, Bosnia-Herzegovina 52.7%, Montenegro 50.3%, Macedonia 48.0%, Vojvodina 46.8%, and in Kosovo 24.7%.

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<sup>37</sup> For the official position of the Presidency of the Slovenian LC CC see document 'Current ideo-political situation in society and the LCS', unpublished, 39 pages, typescript. The document was commented on by Rupel in Nova Revija 61-62/1987.

<sup>38</sup> The authors of the survey found out that this was a typical statement by an authoritarian person at that moment.

These two possible outcomes: multi-party democracy and the 'firm hand policy' now appeared as the main alternatives to the crises of leadership. This conclusion could be well supported by a survey of party membership conducted in 1985 by the Party leadership itself. When asked the question: 'What is, in your opinion, the main value that should be promoted by our socialist society?', 41% replied: 'social equality' and 19% 'freedom and democracy'. In all the Yugoslav republics the Communists valued 'equality' more than 'freedom and democracy', and in all of them the number of those choosing 'equality' rose when compared with previous surveys: in Slovenia 39.1%, compared with 24% in 1978; in Serbia 41.6%, compared with 34% in 1978. But, while in Serbia the 'freedom and democracy' was in 1978 the choice for 13% and in 1985 for 17%, the number of Slovenian Communists who selected 'freedom and democracy' first grew more rapidly: from 16% (1978) to 28% in 1985 (Goati, 1989:69). In general, the survey showed that the Communists in the more developed regions of Yugoslavia had started shifting their emphasis from advocating 'social equality' to promoting 'freedom and democracy' while those in the least developed areas remained committed to 'social equality'.

All surveys conducted in Yugoslavia in the mid 1980s showed that the LCY was becoming a heterogeneous organisation, whose members differed much more between themselves than with non-members in their own republic/province. This was another important indicator of disintegration, and it went against any trends in other countries in crisis, for example in Poland. While in Poland the surveys showed that the gap between members and non-members of the Polish United Workers Party was rapidly widening (Wiatr, 1988:13, quoted in Goati, 1989), in Yugoslavia the gap between the Communists of different republics was growing, at the same time as the differences between Communists and non-Communists in each republic were getting smaller (Goati, 1989:82).

Another important conclusion was that the crisis of the system was deepest in Slovenia, where the support for the system among the elite was highest. It came as no surprise, therefore, that both the percentages of the Slovenes willing to join the LCY and the actual membership of the Party had sharply decreased by the mid-1980s. It was only in Slovenia that less than ten percent of the adult population were members of the Party (9.1% in 1981, while in Yugoslavia it was 13.4%).<sup>39</sup> As a consequence, the Slovenes, already under-represented in the LCY, now rapidly faced a further decrease of their share in the Party. As long as 'democratic centralism' and party unity were the

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<sup>39</sup> Details see in Burg (1987). The Slovenian LC had 126,437 members in 1982. The Slovenes made up 5.2% of the Party, less than any other constitutive nation in Yugoslavia (including the Montenegrins, four times smaller in total population). This share was now further decreasing.

dominant principles of intra-party structure, this meant that the Slovenes would need to follow decisions over which they had less and less control. Consequently, this would create a vicious circle, in which the support for the party in Slovenia could simply vanish. On the other hand, the Serbs and Montenegrins, whose share in the LCY membership was larger than their share of the population, as well as the Muslims and Albanians (whose share was growing rapidly because of, amongst other reasons, demographic trends) felt that the share of influence in the party should follow success or failure in attracting the masses in each republic to join the LCY. While the state Constitution established equal representation of republics in the federal structure, the Party was not meant to be federalised, even less confederalised. Yet, the (con)federal principles of organisational structure guaranteed an equal number of Slovenian representatives (20) in the Yugoslav Central Committee and in its Presidency (three) equal to that of much larger party organisations. The Slovenes saw no guarantees that the principle of 'one member one vote' (still implemented when it came to the selection of delegates for the Party Congresses) would not make them a small minority in the Party. There were only two ways out of this deadlock: first, to prevent 'minoritisation' by reforming the Party so as to abolish 'democratic centralism' and transform it into an 'alliance of republican Leagues of Communists'; and/or - as a minimal demand - to legalise 'factions' and promote the rights of intra-party minorities. Without either of these two changes, the Slovene Communists could well be forced to act against their own beliefs and interests of Slovenia, thereby additionally losing their influence in the region. Control over the Party mechanism would, through democratic centralism, in fact introduce firm control over the Slovenian republic. In turn, this would be the final evidence to confirm what the 'Nova Revija' authors argued: that Slovenian sovereignty in Yugoslavia was only a form, while in reality somebody else took the decisions. The rejection of the initiatives of the Slovene Youth Organisation (ZSMS, the umbrella organisation for many newly established non-governmental organisations and newspapers such as 'Mladina') at the Federal Youth Organisation Congress in June 1986 demonstrated how high were the risks of the democratisation of Yugoslavia at that particular moment.<sup>40</sup> The fear of becoming a minority both within the Yugoslav party and in Slovenia moved the Slovene leaders to start thinking of reforms, which they had so forcefully tried to prevent before 1985. This is how the Slovenes started arguing for changes in the Party: but these changes had a different and opposite direction from the one proposed by the Serbian Communists.

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<sup>40</sup> The Yugoslav Youth Organisation Congress in 1986 rejected all four Slovene proposals put forward by the ZSMS: to stop the Štafeta Mladosti manifestations, to propose alternative forms of national service, to abolish the death penalty, and to abolish Article 133 of the Criminal Law (the 'verbal delict'). Of 1,402 delegates, only 72 voted for public debate on the death penalty, while 126 votes were cast for a debate on Article 133 (Politika, 15 June 1986).

As the pressure for centralisation of the Party increased, the Slovenian Party became the main advocate of minority rights.<sup>41</sup> The same principle of minority protection in Yugoslavia made them more tolerant to political 'minorities' in Slovenia. Under the pressure of the 'Alternative' (as the Slovene critical intellectuals preferred to call themselves), and faced with the apathy and indifference of the Slovene population towards the Party, the Slovenian leaders started tolerating moderate democratic reforms in Slovenia, while firmly protecting the achieved level of Slovene autonomy in Yugoslavia.<sup>42</sup>

Several reasons facilitated the rapprochement between the Party and some groups within the 'Alternative'. Unlike their colleagues in Serbia, the Slovene leaders faced a relatively heterogeneous network of 'alternative' organisations, many of which operated under the umbrella of the official Youth Organisation. To the young Kardeljist Kučan, such a development of a broad and pluralist organisation was in fact a realisation of Kardelj's vision of the 'pluralism of self-managing socialist interests'. And the Communists, he argued, should be at its head. In addition, the Slovene leaders were not exposed to permanent 'suspicion' for their attempts to 'dominate Yugoslavia', as the Serbian leaders were. It also took some time until the others realised what was in fact developing in Slovenia under the protection of the Youth Organisation. Newspapers critical of the regime, like 'Mladina', regardless of how popular they were in Slovenia,<sup>43</sup> were still accessible only to (not more than 2 million) Slovene-speaking readers. Regardless of how strong its criticism of the system was, it could still have only a limited effect on the political situation in Yugoslavia. These reasons (some of which were purely pragmatic, while others were ideological), in fact much facilitated the new politics of tolerance between the Slovene leaders and the growing forces of 'civil society'.

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<sup>41</sup> See Kučan's position on this in 1988. The writers around 'Nova Revija', such as Dimitrij Rupel (1988), criticised Kučan's 'minority' tactics. Rupel saw four problems with this position: 1) Slovenians were not known for tolerating minorities in Slovenia (Italians, Hungarians, Bosnian Muslims, etc.); 2) it would not make Slovenia popular in the less developed regions of Yugoslavia; 3) both the Party and Slovenia were minorities - which would enable Serbs to say they were against them both; and 4) the Party formed a minority in society, especially in Slovenia. By promoting the 'rights of the minority', Kučan in fact was justifying Party rule in Slovenia. Rupel repeated Tine Hribar's argument that Slovenes should not treat themselves as a minority, but as a sovereign nation. In fact, as Hribar said, Slovenes should never accept the status of a minority in Yugoslavia (1987).

<sup>42</sup> By October 1987, as Rastko Močnik, the Deputy Rector of Ljubljana University said, the Slovene party leadership 'made a move that accommodated the Party to the demands of the time'. The Party, Močnik admitted, realised that some of the new initiatives, primarily those coming from 'civil society', were not unacceptable, since they did not come from a priori hostile groups, such as was, for example, the Catholic Church in the case of Poland. But they were still cautious and very selective when it came to various groups within the opposition. 'The new social movements and the Youth Organisations are a much more convenient and open-minded partner when it comes to the Party, than the various writers' associations and the Nova Revija,' concluded Močnik. Delo (17 October 1987, quoted from Nova Revija, 1987:1716).

<sup>43</sup> The popularity of 'Mladina' indeed grew fast between 1984 and 1988. While in 1984 it was read ('regularly', 'often', or 'occasionally') by 19.7% of the Slovenian population, four years later 49.3% of the population in Slovenia said they read it 'regularly' (12%), 'often' (11.6) or 'occasionally' (25.7%) (SJM, 1989:301). In comparison, the official Party weekly 'Komunist' was 'never read' by 79.8% of the population (SJM, 1989: 298).



However, even if the Slovene leadership tolerated the ZSMS's initiatives, it did not approve many of them. On many occasions, Kučan publicly condemned the 'extremism' of 'Mladina', while less popular and more critical student publications were even banned. The Slovene public prosecutor did not hesitate to raise charges against leading 'Mladina' columnists.<sup>44</sup> But, nothing like the trial of the Belgrade Six or the Šešelj trial in Sarajevo ever took place in Slovenia.<sup>45</sup> On the contrary, Matjaž Kmecl, a member of the Slovene Party Presidency, openly declared that the imprisonment of political opponents in other parts of Yugoslavia, such as the Croatian nationalist Vladimir Šeks and others, was something that belonged to the 'Middle-Ages', and thus 'was not acceptable in a state that is based on self-management and democracy' (Nova Revija, 1986:1530).

Furthermore, the Slovene leaders defended the right of the alternative organisations and newspapers such as 'Mladina' to broaden the scope of the public agenda by addressing issues that were previously restricted to the political elite only. They defended the Slovene Youth Organisation against attacks from 'Belgrade' and other republics. 'It does not make any sense to say that these initiatives [of the Slovene Youth Organisation] are almost an anti-state activity, and that one should not discuss them. Why would we not discuss them?', asked rhetorically the Slovenian member of the LCY Presidency, Franc Šetinc.

'Of course, it does not mean that we should immediately agree with them, or accept them. But we should have a chance first to see what it is all about, to analyse the good and bad sides, to hear the *pros* and *cons*, before we take a decision. When I read various Yugoslav newspapers, I wonder what makes people more disturbed - the actual initiative of the Youth Organisation, or the articles in which it is argued that their initiatives are an attack against the system, against the Army, that they aim to weaken our defence and to help the enemies of this country, that the peace movement arises from the ashes of the Army, etc. I believe that it is exactly these malignant interpretations of their initiatives which should upset us more.' (Šetinc, Borba 5 July 1987).

Needless to say the statements to this effect, made by leading Slovenian politicians, led the Slovene leadership into open confrontation with the Army and other republics in Yugoslavia. Subsequently, the Slovene leadership in the mid-1980s slowly but surely slipped into an isolation similar to that in which the Serbian leadership found itself, and for similar reasons. The Army and the remaining Titoists accused them of tolerating political opposition and ignoring (if not even supporting) Slovenian nationalism. Still, the fact that an official organisation of the system - such as the Slovene Youth Organisation - provided an 'umbrella' for and became in fact an organiser of the

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<sup>44</sup> Such as Tomaž Mastnak, for an article published in Mladina in which he opposed the election of Branko Mikulić, the new Yugoslav Prime Minister, in 1986, on the grounds of his ideological rigidity. However, no serious consequences occurred and Mastnak continued to publish in the Slovenian media.

<sup>45</sup> The Slovene Interior Minister Tomaž Ertl pointed out this fact in his 15 July 1986 letter to the Slovene 'Alternative' (Nova Revija, 1986:1529).

'alternative', made an open attack on the Slovenes less viable than the one on the Serbian opposition. The Army was aware that this would only add fuel to the already existing flames. Janez Janša would finally be able to demonstrate what he had already argued - that the Army was the real 'sovereign of Yugoslavia'. A direct confrontation with not only the Youth Organisation, but potentially with the Slovenian Party leadership as well, would have only increased the opposition to the regime in Slovenia.

Kučan understood this position and put himself in between the demands for more liberalisation (expressed by the Slovene 'Alternative', but also within the ZSMS and LC Slovenia) and the Army demands for an effective political action. His programme of 'socialism on a human scale' (promoted at the LC Slovenia Conference in 1988) was still arguing against 'foreign ideologies' and was in favour of self-managing socialism. But it was by now much more moderately socialist in form and moderately democratic in context. His position of a necessary mediator and protector enabled Kučan to remain in full control. But, as his close colleague Sonja Lokar said, when interviewed in 1988, it was 'back home' that the Slovene Communists 'would fall if [they] had to fall, rather than in Belgrade'.<sup>46</sup>

The federal leadership and the Army (openly attacked ever since 1986) expected Kučan to 'put an end' to the 'anti-socialist' actions of the Slovene Youth. Similarly, as in the case of the 'Belgrade Six', when the republican leadership declined to stop the 'opposition activities', the federal institutions (this time the Army itself) took direct action.

## 7.5. The 'Slovene Spring' in 1988: Army vs. Slovenia

The decisive move was taken by the Army, which on 31 May 1988 arrested the leading critic of militarism, Janez Janša, and in the next few days a columnist and the editor of Mladina: David Tasić and Franci Zavrl, and a YPA junior officer Rajko Borštner, charging them with illegal possession of classified Army documents. Prior to the arrests, Tasić and Janša had published commentaries on a heated discussion at the session of the LCY Federal Presidency on 29 March 1988. The debate followed a session of the Military Council four days earlier, at which the Army leadership had declared recent events in Slovenia to be 'counter-revolution' and 'psychological warfare' and ordered the Commander of the Ljubljana Military District, Gen. Svetozar Višnjić, to approach the Slovene leadership and seek their help in crushing the 'counter-revolution' (Grakalić,

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<sup>46</sup> I interviewed Sonja Lokar, the executive secretary of the CC LC Slovenia in September 1988 for the Croatian Youth magazine Polet.

1988:24). The General met Slovenian leaders a few days later, claiming that he had been ordered to discuss issues of security in the event of Army intervention. At a closed session of the Party Presidency, Milan Kučan sought an investigation into the whole affair, claiming that the Military Council was not authorised to 'organise a coup d'etat' in Slovenia.

'He [the General] asked [the Slovenian Minister of Home Affairs] whether or not we were able to keep under control the situation which would follow the arrests, because it was expected that people would protest on the streets and they would be defending themselves, the barracks and military personnel, but were also ready to help us. Our Comrades, the Minister and his Deputy told him they could not debate these issues without us [political leaders]. Then they found us, and we spoke to them - myself and Stane [Dolanc]. Of course, we refused to discuss these issues, since we said we knew nothing about the whole thing,' Kučan said at the session of the CC LCY Presidency (Grakalić, 1988:27).

Kučan also asked whether it was true that neither the President of the Party Presidency (Boško Krunic, Vojvodina), nor the President of the State Presidency (Lazar Mojsov, Macedonia) knew anything about the conclusion of the Military Council. The minute from the meeting, which was classified as a 'state secret', was leaked,<sup>47</sup> and Mladina wrote a comment on the whole affair. An Army officer, Borštner (himself also a Slovene), passed on copies of the Army plans related to possible unrest following the action. This is when the Army prosecutor raised charges against the author and the editors of Mladina, as well as against the military person that forwarded the classified document to them. But the real attack was directed at Kučan himself, since the Army (especially after the first 'Janša' affair in 1982) suspected the Slovenian leaders of being unreliable when it came to state secrets.

The arrest of the main critic of 'militarism' (Janša) and the editor of Mladina (Zavrl) provoked a wave of public demonstrations in front of Army barracks throughout Slovenia. The arrest of civilians by the Army intelligence services; the trial of Slovenes in Slovenia by a Serbo-Croat-speaking military court for possessing documents linked to alleged Army intervention in Slovenia: this all proved that the danger of 'unitarism' was real.<sup>48</sup> Unexpectedly, even for the 'Nova Revija'

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<sup>47</sup> In his book 'Premiki' Janša claims that one of his friends, Igor Bavčar, simply took the minute from the desk of the then President of the Slovene Socialist Alliance, Jože Smole, while visiting him on official business. Smole, who was 'a bit drunk' did not even notice it. The Army was, however, convinced that one of the three Slovene members of the LCY Presidency (perhaps even Kučan) gave the minute to 'Mladina'. One of the aims of the court case was to prove they were right when saying that the Slovene 'counter-revolution' was in fact organised by the Party leadership of Slovenia (Janša, 1993).

<sup>48</sup> The essence of the problem was summarised in the diaries of one of the 'Nova Revija' editors, Dimitrij Rupel. '1. The military court tries civilians; 2. This military court is in Ljubljana; 3. Neither the Presidency, nor the Parliament of Slovenia have any authority over this court; 4. That means that somebody else is sovereign in Slovenia, not only when military persons, but also civilians are concerned; 5. The Slovenian leadership invited people to be patient, instead of organising resistance; 6. This is all happening simultaneously with Constitutional changes, which mean more centralisation; and 7. The main documents for which Janša and others were imprisoned remain secret. This is not only a conflict between civil society and the military, but also an 'anti-Slovenian intervention' by those who do not even speak Slovene' (1988).

authors, the arrest was now a practical confirmation that Slovenia's sovereignty (in the 1974 Constitution) was no more than just a 'dead letter'. The military coup d'etat was not about marching on the streets, but about military logic having the upper hand over the political, said Spomenka Hribar (1988:1329). The Slovene leadership was now invited to react fast; in order to protect Slovenia's sovereignty, or to admit that there was no sovereignty left to her. But, at the same time as it was criticised, the Slovene leadership recorded enormous support for any evidence of its opposition to federal centralism. The Slovenian public identified with its leadership, which was not only clearly un-involved in the whole affair, but also strongly opposed federal institutions.<sup>49</sup> To a similar degree to Milošević, Kučan now styled himself as 'opposition' and 'government' at the same time.

But, unlike its Serbian counterparts, the Slovene leadership was now defending Slovenia from intervention from outside. This was in sharp contrast to the Serbian rhetoric of changing Yugoslavia by introducing the model of 'anti-bureaucratic revolution'.<sup>50</sup> By 'defending' Slovenia and opening up to the opposition, Kučan reversed the negative trends for the Party in public opinion and, by the end of 1988, secured a similar level of support to what Milošević had in Serbia. According to a survey conducted by Ljubljana University, the support of the Slovene population for Kučan increased in the six months between April and October 1988 from 26.9% to 65.5%. While in 1987 he ranked the third most popular Slovenian politician (behind the President of the Slovene Socialist Alliance, Jože Smole, and the member of the SFRY Presidency, Stane Dolanc) with only 11% of the 'votes', within 12 months he had multiplied his score almost six times. On the other hand, Dolanc, a representative of the old politics, strongly criticised by 'Mladina', was now the first choice for only 5.1% of the population (SJM 1988/1989:334). Kučan's main supporters, such as Jože Smole, the President of the Socialist Alliance, and Janez Stanovnik, the President of the Slovenian Presidency, also increased their support rates to 53.4% and 58.3% respectively. Before the arrest of Janša 26.4%, while after 57.8% of Slovenes believed that 'the present policy of the Slovenian leadership represents people's interests better than was the case before'. At the same time, the number of those who considered the Slovene leadership less concerned with the interests of the

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<sup>49</sup> On several occasions later, Janša accused Kučan of being in compliance with the Army (Meier, 1999). Kučan, in fact, applied the same strategy as Stambolić and Milošević in Serbia: he supported public protests, but also aimed at isolating the 'opposition'. Just like Milošević, he believed he could direct public protests towards his 'socialism on human scale' (the Slovenian movement against 'bureaucracy').

<sup>50</sup> The defensive character of Slovene nationalism was somehow as natural as was the expansive character of Serbian nationalism. This was the difference between the nationalism of a 'big' and that of a 'small' nation, in Yugoslav circumstances. 'While the Serb nationalists thought of everyone in Yugoslavia as Serbs, the Slovene nationalists argued that no one else was 'qualified' to be a Slovene or even similar to Slovenes', as Stipe Šušteršič, the Yugoslav Party President, now caught between the two open fires of Belgrade and Ljubljana, half-jokingly explained the difference. Kučan, who recognised in the Army action (which paralleled the 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' and the Kosovo protests of the Serbs and Montenegrins) an open 'great-statist tendency', had very little choice left but to tolerate and try to control the new coalition of the various branches of Slovenia's public, including ethnic nationalists.

people halved (from 24.2% in April 1988 to 12.6% in May 1989) (SJM 1988/1989:336). It was clear that the leadership found strong support among Slovenes.

Slovenian public opinion almost unanimously opposed the trial of Janša and the others: 68.9% said it was 'a political show-trial'; 63.3% believed it was unlawful, while 86.2% assessed the whole affair as 'limitation of the sovereignty of the Slovene people' (SJM 1988/1989:331-2). Anger was directed against the federal state, the Army and especially against the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milošević. In 1988, Milošević was singled out as the Yugoslav politician whose politics was most unacceptable to 60.7% of the Slovene respondents. No other politician reached even a tenth of his unpopularity (SJM, 1988/1989:372).

Slovene public opinion sent, however, an ambiguous message to Slovenian leaders. On the one hand, they were popular as never before. Were they to be forcibly replaced under the accusation of 'nationalism', 18.2% of Slovenes would 'oppose this regardless of the consequences', and a further 57.5% would be 'outraged, and would oppose this as much as [they] could'. At the same time, and very much unlike in Serbia, more people than ever before argued that the 'LCY has fulfilled its role and needs to exist no longer'. While in 1986 only 18% of Slovenes favoured this conclusion, in April 1988 it was 40.5% and in May 1989 53.3% of the population who shared this view. For the first time ever, in April 1988 the majority of Slovenes agreed that 'the LCY should remain as just one of many political parties, and it should be a matter of personal choice which party should be voted into office.' In fact, by May 1989 only 6.9% of Slovenes opposed this idea, while 75.1% supported it (SJM, 1988/1989:265). While the leaders themselves were popular, the Party was losing its appeal.<sup>51</sup>

Three elements that had characterised the Serbian situation in 1987-1989 now appeared in Slovenia. First, a homogenisation of the Slovenes took place to a similar extent to what had occurred in Serbia. Secondly, Kučan, the Party leader, was as popular as Milošević was in Serbia. Thirdly, a mixture of fear and hope entered people's hearts, and moved them to act together, 'as one'.<sup>52</sup> These fears were not produced by some foreign power, as was often the case in previous years. In April 1988, only 1.5% of Slovenes believed Yugoslavia was endangered from the West, and 5.9% saw danger in the East, while an additional 25.8% said the potential danger came 'from them both'. If one takes all those who saw any danger from any of these sides together, it was still the case that

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<sup>51</sup> This trend continued in the following year. In April 1990, Milan Kučan easily won the first free elections for the office of President of the Slovenian Presidency, while his party (renamed to the League of Communists - Party for Democratic Reforms) failed to secure a majority of seats in the Slovenian Parliament.

<sup>52</sup> The trial of Janša dramatically increased fears among Slovenes. While in April 1988 (before the trial), 25.4% of Slovenes said they felt 'fear and hope at the same time for the future of the country and/or themselves' and 26.1% felt 'fear and worry only', these figures rose to 33.9% and 36.2% respectively by October 1988 (after the arrest). 'Fear' was, therefore, the word which 70.1% of Slovenes used to describe their feelings on the eve of 1989 (SJM 1988/1989:132).

two thirds (66.2%) of Slovenes saw no danger at all from anywhere outside.<sup>53</sup> The source of fear was inside the country, but outside Slovenia - in Belgrade.

In order to protect the achieved level of freedom and autonomy of Slovenia, an ad hoc Committee for the Protection of Janez Janša was created in May 1988, and in June it was renamed the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights. The Committee provided a forum for various branches of the Slovene opposition, representing a new institution of 'civil society'. It was also recognised by the Socialist Alliance, and thus provided a link between the Alternative and the government. The Slovenian media - openly siding with those arrested - whipped up 'anti-Army sentiments' throughout Slovenia. Public protests were held every day in front of the Military Court in Ljubljana. Rallies of support for them were an open provocation to the Army and a sign of defiance by Slovenia's population.

Finally, the Slovene leadership, although not openly supporting the protests, carefully called for 'co-habitation' between the opposition and the Party (Rupel, 1988:1309). Sharing the same discontent with the Army intervention in 'internal Slovenian affairs', the Party played the role of mediator between 'the radical right' and the federal leadership.<sup>54</sup> It criticised 'provocations that are directed against socialist democracy', and which had an 'anti-Yugoslav and anti-socialist character'. But it praised as civilised actions by the Committee and the Youth Organisation.<sup>55</sup> Kučan's politics, said Spomenka Hribar, was a politics of equilibrium: in his actions at the federal level he was 'defending the national interests of the Slovenes'; while in Slovenia he was a guarantor that 'anti-socialist forces' would be ultimately prevented from taking over (1988a:1332).<sup>56</sup> The politics of 'equilibrium' situated Kučan at the centre of Slovenian politics. It was around him, with him at its core, that a new Slovenian pluralism was rapidly emerging.

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<sup>53</sup> As public opinion surveys repeatedly showed in the 1969-1989 period, Slovenes never really believed Yugoslavia was seriously endangered, especially not by the West. The share of those who sensed danger from the West was highest in 1976 (after the delicate negotiations with Italy over Trieste) - 6.4%, while in all other 12 surveys conducted in these 20 years it was lower than five percent. The Slovenes (like other Yugoslavs) always feared the Soviet Union more, but with the understandable exception of 1969 (25.9% in year after the invasion of Czechoslovakia) it was less than 13% of the Slovenian population that sensed exclusive danger from the USSR. In these two decades, between a quarter and a third of the Slovenian population believed Yugoslavia was endangered by 'both sides', while between 34 and 55 percent clearly said they did not see any danger at all (SJM, 1988/1989:238).

<sup>54</sup> Matjaž Kmecl, a member of the Slovene Party Presidency, told Dimitrij Rupel in June 1988 that there were three factions in Slovenian politics: 1) the radicals around Mladina and the Committee, and - of course - Nova Revija; 2) the moderate Party leadership led by Kučan; and 3) 'the monolithists' among Slovenes in the Army (General Tominc, Admiral Brovet, etc.). Kučan was the natural choice for those who wanted a compromise (Rupel, 1988:1298).

<sup>55</sup> Milan Kučan's speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Slovenian Central Committee, quoted from Delo, 23 April 1988.

<sup>56</sup> Janez Stanovnik, the President of the Presidency of Slovenia, used this argument when seeking release for the four at the session of the Federal Presidency on 31 May 1989. 'If you do not listen to us now, the next time you will find yourself speaking to separatists here,' he told members of the Presidency (Drnovšek, Nin, February 1999).

The Army sentenced the three civilians relatively mildly: one and a half years in prison for Janša and Zavrl and five months for Tasić, while the military officer Borštner was sentenced to four years. But when they came under the authority of the Slovene prisons, the political elite used all available legal means to release them, without violating the existing legal procedure. Although it in fact demonstrated that the Army was not a 'paper tiger', the whole affair ended as the first political defeat for the Yugoslav Army in one of the Yugoslav republics. The real war – in which the emerging Army of Janez Janša – who in 1990 became the Slovene minister of defence – fought the Yugoslav Army until it decided to withdraw from Slovenia three years later (July-August 1991) was only the last battle in the war between Slovenia and the Army, which started with the 'Janša Affair'.

## 7.6. The Consequences of the 'Slovene Spring' for the LCY

This turn-about of the Slovenian and Serbian Party organisations with regard to their local electorate produced the real pre-conditions for the disintegration of the LCY. The Kardelj concept was no longer a framework in which the new politics operated. No longer did the Party leaders discuss the meaning of the same concept: there were at least two rival concepts and one non-concept (that of the *Švarites*) that now competed for support. Both in terms of their content and from the methodological point of view, this was a new situation – very unlike anything that belonged to the ideological politics conducted by the LCY in previous years. The unity of the elite was now created at the republican, not the federal level. But the elite also invited others within their republics to join them. All-Slovene and all-Serbian programmes had already been formulated in 'Nova Revija' and the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts. By 1989, the two republics were highly homogenised and Kučan and Milošević were their clear leaders.

The two republics now argued against each other, claiming that the other was deviating from the socialist path by concluding pacts with the nationalist opposition. The Slovenes argued against the 'homogenisation' of Serbia, but Milošević replied that he saw nothing wrong in this 'homogenisation', since it had been created on socialist grounds. On the other hand, it was, he argued, anti-socialism and anti-Yugoslavism which motivated the 'homogenisation' in Slovenia. The year and a half between the summer 1988 and January 1990 were characterised by endless disputes between Serbian and Slovene leaders about the character of politics in these two republics. Lacking a normal parliamentary space, the two politics clashed at the sessions of the Central Committee of the LCY, which were broadcast live to the Yugoslav public. The shocking experience

of Party leaders openly fighting each other, however, only further contributed to the sense of anarchy and fear, already deeply engendered by the Serbian protests, Army arrests in Slovenia and Slovenian unilateral actions in changing the Constitution. In addition, the various segments of the Yugoslav population interpreted very differently what they saw at the sessions of the Central Committee. The Serbian leaders used them as an example of disunity and bureaucratism, of clandestine support for the Albanian 'counter-revolution', and of a forum for 'a non-principled coalition' to outvote their republic. The Slovenes saw them as evidence that no united Yugoslav Party was possible any longer, and that efforts should be made to transform the LCY into a 'League of the Leagues', a loose coalition of republican party organisations. The principle of democratic centralism should be abandoned, while minorities within the Party ought to be fully protected. To this the Serbs replied negatively, arguing that 'no factions within the LCY should be allowed.'

However, there was a third group within the Central Committee, that led by Croat Stipe Šušvar, and supported by the Army, the Bosnian leadership, and on some occasions by Albanian members from Kosovo, a large section of the Croatian members and about a half the Macedonians. This group of 'Kardeljists' attempted to eliminate both 'extremes' - Slovenes and Serbs equally - and to oppose changes either in a confederalist or in a centralist direction. But this group of members, although not insignificant in number, was not supported by public demonstrations, nor did it have its own media. It was also not internally as homogeneous as the Serbs and Slovenes. The third group (the 'Šušvarites', *Šušvarovci*) was strong enough to prevent either of the two combating groups from 'hijacking' the federal Central Committee. But, it was too weak to do much more. In fact, its action caused a permanent stalemate in the Party leadership at the moment when everyone wanted a quick and radical resolution of the conflict. The stalemate in the Party leadership, however, turned out well for both the Slovenes and the Serbs. Neither of these two groups had to fear intervention from the federal Central Committee, and both could blame it for the growing crisis in the country. Without a clear programme of their own, and without much popular support (at least visible), the Šušvarites were seen more as a problem than as a solution. However, the stalemate in the Yugoslav Central Committee, the potential vehicle of Milošević's control over the federal institutions and other republics, was acceptable to the Serbian leaders only for as long as they did not secure a clear majority within it. But, in the long term, just as he demonstrated in Serbia, Milošević needed the Party to 'unite the country'.

## 7.7. The Final Battle: Changing the Rules of the Game

In spring 1989 the Vojvodina Party organisation held its Extraordinary Conference, consolidating the power of the new leadership of the Province. In what was a precedent in Party history, the



Conference demanded a vote of confidence in Yugoslav Central Committee President Stipe Šušar and initiated an Extraordinary LCY Congress. While Šušar survived the (secret) vote of confidence at the Central Committee, it had no other possibility but to accept the proposal for an Extraordinary Congress. According to a highly confederalised Party Statute, a Congress had to be convened even if only one of the member-organisations (any republic or province) demanded it. The tool invented to prevent the domination of any group within the Party (and especially, the 'greater-statist tendencies' linked to Serbia) was now used to change the rules and to oust 'the bureaucrats' and 'separatists'.

Vojvodina's move was the crucial step in Milošević's attempt to take over the federal Party and – subsequently – the state. Unlike the Central Committee (which had the equal number of members from each republican party organisation), participants in the Congress were elected proportionally to the number of members in each republic. The Serbian Party organisation with more than 850,000 Party members<sup>57</sup> could, therefore, safely count on almost 40 percent of the votes at the Congress. Together with Montenegro's representatives (who accounted for seven percent of the membership) and with a little help from some Bosnian, Croatian, or Macedonian delegates, many of whom were Serbs, Serbia counted on an easy victory. A majority at the Congress would change the Statute of the Party, effectively eliminating any trace of the confederalised structure. The new majority would then be able to impose its decisions on all members, using the principle of 'democratic centralism'. It would also be able to control a fifth vote (in addition to its own, two of its provinces and the Montenegrin one) in the Yugoslav Federal Presidency, whose ninth (ex officio) member was the President of the Party Presidency. In fact, the majority of the Congress would then control all Yugoslav institutions, including the Army. The whole action was to be legitimised by a simple democratic argument.<sup>58</sup>

But such an argument would clearly make the Slovenian party a tiny minority in the LCY, taking away from it any possibility to veto decisions. The only way out was to propose further confederalisation of the Party. The Slovene Communists, therefore, proposed an entirely different concept of Party reform, - an 'Alliance of Republican Leagues of Communists'. According to Slovenia's proposal, the LCY would follow the state in its decentralisation, accepting the autonomy of the republican Leagues of Communists, which would be only loosely linked together under the

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<sup>57</sup> On 31 December 1988, the LC Serbia, inclusive of its two provinces, had 855,400 members (Milenko Petrović, 26 April 1989; IB 5/1989:7).

<sup>58</sup> The Serbian Party ideologue Ratomir Vico said on 12 April 1989: 'Taking decisions by majority vote in an organisation of similar-minded people, in which a balance between the whole and its parts is achieved, in which the autonomy of these parts does not endanger but strengthens the whole... this is not a domination of the strongest, but a normal procedure in democratic organisations' (IB 4/1989:6).

umbrella of the LCY. If this project could not secure support from the others, the Slovene Communists were ready to leave the organisation.

Throughout 1989 the conflict between the two programmes of reform in Yugoslavia – Slovenian and Serbian – developed both within the constitutional debate<sup>59</sup> and within the Party. It was in this context that, on 21 February 1989, 1,350 Albanian miners in Kosovo locked themselves in the largest mine in Kosovo - at Stari Trg, demanding from Serbia the abandonment of the constitutional changes they perceived as hostile to the autonomy of the Province. They also demanded the resignations of three pro- Milošević Albanian leaders: the newly elected President of the Kosovo Party Rahman Morina, the President of Priština Committee Husamedin Azemi and the Kosovo political Veteran Kole Shiroka. Six days later (27 February 1989) while the miners were still in the mine, the Federal Presidency declared 'emergency measures in Kosovo'. When Serbian leaders appeared persistent in their refusal even to talk to the miners, the Slovene Alternative organised public protests in Ljubljana's 'Cankarjev Dom' Hall of Culture on 28 February 1989. The entire political leadership of Slovenia, including Milan Kučan, joined the Slovenian opposition on this occasion, which gathered around 2,000 figures from Slovenian public life. Some speakers, including the ZSMS President Jože Školjč, compared the sufferings of the Albanian miners with the Holocaust, indirectly accusing the Serbian regime of Nazism.<sup>60</sup> The Youth Organisation introduced a badge with the Jewish national symbol (six-pointed star) and the text: 'Kosovo - My Homeland'.

'Today, the Albanians are excluded from society as 'lazy', 'violent', and 'murderers'. Yet, tomorrow this could happen to us, the Slovenes, to Croats and Montenegrins, to everyone,' said Školjč (Tanjug, 28 February 1989, in: Belić and Bilbija, 1989:24).

Milan Kučan himself pointed out that the miners in Kosovo should not be treated as 'Albanians' or 'Serbs' but as workers, 'people forced to organise Gandhi-like resistance protests to oppose injustice'.

'Yugoslavia, [which guarantees] the equal status of every republic and nation, including Slovenia, is what is now being defended in Stari Trg. This is why we all feel that the tragedy of the miners would be our defeat as well. This would be a very clear announcement that the minority nations and nationalities will first be pushed to the margins, and then out of the country, abroad or who knows where... We, Slovenes are not accidental travellers in AVNOJ Yugoslavia... [and would therefore not allow] ... a silent turn-about that would certainly change the very nature and essence of AVNOJ Yugoslavia... Slovenian communists and the LC Slovenia do not want to take part in the

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<sup>59</sup> Slovenia amended its Constitution on several occasions between 1987 and 1989, always extending the scope of rights she was taking out of federal responsibility. Serbia changed its Constitution in March 1989, despite the continuing protests of Kosovo Albanians.

<sup>60</sup> Nin, 12 March 1989.

creation of such a [new] Yugoslavia... In order to preserve the SFR Yugoslavia we should develop democracy and self-management. Because, if we lose the federative character of Yugoslavia, together with socialism, then we shall lose our history, from which we have learnt that the freedom of every nation is a condition for the freedom of us all' (Belić and Bilbija, 1989:30).

Other speakers in the Cankarjev Dom pointed out that 'the politics of greater-Serbian Yugoslavism has brought the country to the edge of civil war' (Franko Juri). Some (like Igor Bavčar) also linked Serbian attempts to change the Constitution with the events in Kosovo.

The meeting in the Cankarjev Dom outraged not only the Serbian leaders, but also the broad masses of the Serbian population. When a report on the event was shown on Belgrade Television later that day, the students of Belgrade University organised the largest ever rally in Belgrade since the liberation of the city in 1944, demanding that the Slovene leaders be treated as 'counter-revolutionaries' and 'traitors to the homeland'.<sup>61</sup> The crowd of more than 700,000 people did not respond to Yugoslav State President Raif Dizdarević's promises. It was only when Slobodan Milošević addressed them after more than 24 hours of protests that they agreed to leave for home. On this occasion, 28 February 1989, Milošević promised the arrest of Azem Vllasi 'and others who have manipulated with people's lives', and declared that Yugoslavia would never disintegrate, because 'the people would not let it disintegrate'.<sup>62</sup> The crowd responded, shouting for the first time: 'Slobo, the Serb, Serbia is with you!'

As a consequence of Slovenia's solidarity with 'counter-revolutionaries', the Belgrade media launched an unprecedented anti-Slovenian campaign. The Serbian Writers' Association immediately cut off any formal relations with their Slovene counterparts for their participation in the meeting at the Cankarjev Dom. One of the leading Serbian writers, Matija Bečković, said:

'For years and years our hand was offered to the Slovenes - only to remain in the air, untaken. We tolerated indifference, suppressed our pride, accepted that it was all only misinformation. Our best efforts produced only the worst results. We are looked down upon from their heights and shown a permanent disdain for our truths. It is not noticed how much we desire to have [the Slovenes as] friends. Instead, they do not care if they wound us; they spread Serbophobia and make jokes about Serbian saints and sufferings. Six hundred years after the Battle we must declare: Kosovo is Serbia, and this fact does not depend on the Albanian birth rate or on the Serbian mortality rate. There is so much Serbian blood in Kosovo, that even if no Serb remains there, Kosovo will still be Serbian

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<sup>61</sup> Among slogans at the Belgrade rally were: 'Slovenia is lying'; 'Slovenia is a traitor'; 'We don't want divisions'; 'Serbia is Kosovo'; 'Serbia is rising'; 'We will give up our lives, but not Kosovo'; 'Down with nationalists of all colours'; 'Yugoslav peoples are brotherly people'; 'Slobo - the Serb - Serbia is with you'; 'Down with the traitors to Yugoslavia'; 'Arrest [Azem] Vllasi!', etc.

<sup>62</sup> *Nin*, 5 March 1989.

land. Serbia, the republic that does not exist, can have no aims more important than that it becomes a republic.’<sup>63</sup>

In a formal letter to the Slovenian Writers’ Association, their Serbian counterparts accused them of ‘betraying the traditional and historic friendship between our two peoples’. At the same time, in protest at the break-down of the relationship with the Slovenes, the Albanian members left the Serbian Writers’ Association. ‘Serbian writers are not interested in democracy, but in the repression of the Albanian people, against all human norms and values,’ they claimed. The Serbian Academy of Science and Arts condemned the Cankarjev Dom meeting: ‘In its entire history, nobody has ever insulted the Serbian people so much,’ they concluded. Slovenian support for the Albanians in Kosovo is an ‘unlikely alliance between representatives of a civilised, Central-European society and representatives of oriental violence’, they said. At an emergency session of its association on 4 March 1989, the Serbian writers concluded that ‘anti-Serbism is spreading widely in Kosovo, Slovenia and Croatia,’ and that ‘the Cankarjev Dom meeting is an expression of Slovene Serbophobia that has lasted the whole decade.’ One of the speakers, Vuk Drašković, went even further, proposing the solution for ‘anti-Serbism’ in changing the borders of Serbia:

‘If the division of Yugoslavia occurs, where should be the Western borders of Serbia? Those borders were decided by Ante Pavelić; they are where the Serbian graves are. It is up to the Serbian national programme to mark them... Croats should be aware that, if Yugoslavia collapses, its borders will not remain as they were determined at AVNOJ or Brioni, and that – in such a case – Jasenovac, Jadovno<sup>64</sup> and all other graves of us Serbs, would get a right to vote. Also, all the Serbs once evicted or forced out of Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Kordun, Lika and Banija<sup>65</sup> after the War will be asked to vote as well’ (Borba, 5 March 1989).

The Slovene Writers responded with a no less strong condemnation of the Serbs:

‘The Serbian political leadership has ignited Greater-Serbian nationalism, and has by now occupied half of Yugoslavia by brutal pressure, defamation, blackmailing and using coup d’etat methods. The federal leadership has agreed on the Serbian rules of the game. Anti-Albanianism has become the official policy... We find ourselves in a most absurd situation in which the Albanians are declared ‘counter-revolutionaries’ only because they want to preserve the 1974 Constitution, especially those provisions of this Constitution that protect civic and ethnic liberties. Those who demand the overthrow of the Constitution and of all the legal institutions of the system have imposed their logic even on the Presidency of the State. It is a basic ethical duty to protect the Albanian people from the *pogrom* that is knocking on their doors!’ (Nin, 5 March 1989).

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<sup>63</sup> Bečković, Nin, 12 March 1989.

<sup>64</sup> Jasenovac and Jadovno are places of concentration camps in WWII Croatia, in which Serbs were the main victims.

<sup>65</sup> By dividing Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina for this purpose into their historical regions, Drašković in fact implied he would not respect the very existence of these two republics as political entities, at least not in their post-1945 borders.

Finally, some Serbian writers (like the pre-war surrealist and Partisan legend Oskar Davičo) asked the Serbian population to boycott all products that came from Slovenia. The media accepted this demand and soon the boycott took on significant dimensions.<sup>66</sup> The Serbian government declared a ban on 'importing' Slovenian goods into Serbia. An act that was clearly unlawful met with the approval of the Serbian population.

In March 1989 'a state of emergency' was officially declared in Kosovo, and the units of the Federal special police prevented further demonstrations by Kosovo Albanians. The Serbian Assembly was given rights of directing control over courts, police and the selection of government officials in Kosovo. Kosovo was stripped of its veto over Serbian constitutional amendments. Azem Vllasi, the Communist leader of Kosovo was expelled from the Central Committee of the LCY (by a majority of three votes more than required), arrested and put on trial for organising 'counter-revolutionary' demonstrators - the Kosovo miners.<sup>67</sup>

On 30 March 1989 the Slovenian Parliament sent an open letter to other republican parliaments, proposing a dialogue to resolve the political crisis. The existing model of socialism was in deep crisis and it should be reformed towards 'democratic political pluralism', not towards 'forced unity'. The Slovenian Assembly rejected accusations of 'Slovenian counter-revolution' and its support for 'Kosovo irredentism'.

'We do not oppose reforms in Serbia which are in accordance with the amendments to the Yugoslav Constitution, and the will of the Serbian people and all other nations and nationalities living in Serbia and its provinces. In Slovenia, there is no organised action to undermine the Constitutive role of the YPA or the federative structure of Yugoslavia,' explained the Slovenian Assembly (Belić and Bilbija, 1989:151-5).

But it also added that 'there is nothing to add to or amend what was said in the Cankarjev Dom.'

Following this initiative by the Slovene Parliament, the Presidency of Slovenia on two occasions between March and May 1989 invited the Serbian Presidency to discuss problems. But all the Slovenian initiatives met with rejection from Belgrade. Serbian politicians first claimed that any political dialogue concerning the future of Yugoslavia should be conducted within existing federal

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<sup>66</sup> Immediately after Cankarjev Dom, sales of 'Gorenje', the Slovenian firm producing household equipment decreased by 28%, the textile industry 'Mura' lost 20% of its Serbian market, etc.

<sup>67</sup> One should here, however, notice that it was all done with the consent of the federal institutions, and - indeed - with the agreement of the Kosovo representatives in them, including of the Kosovo Assembly itself. This fact, which is emphasised by Meier (1999), was much used by Milošević in his later explanations of the situation in Kosovo.

institutions. They additionally accused Slovenia of issuing ultimatums to others in Yugoslavia, and of being intolerant when it came to the position of others, mainly of Serbia. In his speech in Novi Sad on 22 May 1989, Milošević said the time for empty talks was over and a decision on the future of Yugoslavia should be taken. This decision, he said, must be 'in favour of Yugoslavia, in favour of a new socialism, of a wealthier and more democratic society that will belong to Europe'. He said, however, that Serbia 'does not want to enter Europe as a servant, wanting to please Europe by mocking its own country, attacking its own institutions, including the Army and insulting other, allegedly non-civilised nations'. Slovenian politics, Milošević said, was anti-democratic:

'There is so much talk [in Slovenia] about human rights. Yet, they support separatists in Kosovo, who use terror against the Serbs and Montenegrins and violate their human rights. There is so much talk [in Slovenia] about pluralism – but they are aggressive and intolerant towards those who think differently, for example – towards us in Serbia. Everyone who opposes them is exposed to threats and pressure... There is no civilised country in the world, where such behaviour would be treated as democratic. Their vengeful behaviour is especially incompatible with the culture of contemporary Europe, which they would like to join. In fact, those fascist-like expressions of irrational hatred tell us only how deep the crisis is and how dangerous it would be if it deepened further...' (Milošević, 22 May 1989 in Belić and Bilbija, 1989:180-3).

The Slovenian Parliament and Presidency again protested against Milošević's words, again proposing a meeting. Slobodan Milošević replied in his letter of 1 June 1989.

'Our doors are open to you. However, if you are honestly interested in achieving a result, you should be aware that this is possible only if you change your views about Kosovo and if you bring them into line with Yugoslav and LCY politics.<sup>68</sup> We hope you would then stop deliberately underestimating your anti-Serbian and anti-Yugoslav attitudes, such as those expressed in the Cankarjev Dom, which – and especially the view of Yugoslavia defended in Stari Trg – represented the lowest kick in Serbia's back, at a moment when Serbia has introduced Constitutional amendments and become a republic, equal to the other Yugoslav republics. Also, we think that our talks could not really succeed, if you continue to misinform the public about the situation in Serbia... and if you continue to shape [intervene in] Serbia, and especially Kosovo. When you finally realise that you should not be asked about politics in Serbia any more than we are asked about politics in Slovenia, then we will be happy to welcome you in Belgrade, to talk about our common interest, about Yugoslavia as our common homeland.' (*Politika*, 2 June 1989).

Milošević's reply was an open humiliation of the Slovenian leadership. On 2 June, the Slovene Presidency replied:

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<sup>68</sup> In his diary, on 1 June 1989, Borisav Jović, the Serbian representative in the Yugoslav Presidency (Vice-President in 1989-90; President in 1990-91) said: 'We had great difficulty in convincing Milošević to mention [in his letter] that this was also the LCY and Yugoslav policy. Privately, he thinks this is our policy, and that Yugoslavia and the LCY could not reject it - they would be too ashamed, and he is simply hurt when we mention them. In reality, he is right; but by mentioning Yugoslavia we are in fact strengthening our political position' (1989/1995:16-7).

'SR Slovenia is a sovereign state of the Slovenian people... She has both the right and the responsibility to take decisions on political issues concerning our common life and the future of the country, exactly because we live in our common homeland. This is also the case where the situation in Kosovo is concerned' (Politika, 3 June 1989).

The Slovene leaders said that dialogue would not be necessary if the two sides had the same views, and would be impossible if one side wanted to impose its views on the another. The public dispute between Milošević's and Kučan's Presidencies further endangered the functioning of federal institutions. On 15 June 1989, the president and secretary of the Federal Youth Organisation, Branko Greganovič (Slovenia) and Anita Bara (Croatia) resigned in protest over the speech of the Kosovo representative Rexhep Hoxha, who accused the Slovenes of anti-Serbian and anti-Yugoslav politics. On the same day, the Slovenian writers denied the rights of the Yugoslav Writers' Association to represent them abroad, since it had become an instrument of Serbian politics. The Yugoslav institutions were now on the verge of collapse and paralysis.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, as the Radio Free Europe reported on 17 June 1989, 'the Yugoslav orientation was still very strong among the population.'<sup>70</sup>

On 17 June 1989 the Slovenian Parliament proposed a new group of amendments to the Constitution, in which the right to self-determination (including secession) was emphasised. Speaking in Tacen (near Ljubljana) the same day, Milan Kučan said:

'When we think about the idea that a majority vote should be introduced in a multi-ethnic federation, we ask: is this anything else but a denial of the equality of the peoples, a denial of their sovereignty and of their right to self-determination as an inalienable human right... Yugoslavia is our common state, which we created voluntarily, through a democratic agreement with other nations. Nobody accepted us into it, and nobody can discharge us from it. And we shall not give up our right to it... [However] we do not want to live in a country in which we would be subjugated to political and national supra-power, to economic exploitation, or forms of political, economic and cultural and other Diktat.' (Borba, 19 June 1989).

In his speech, Kučan said that the 'individual' was at the centre of the new Slovenian politics, and that 'without the sovereign individual there is no sovereignty of the nation, and no workers' self-management, and these are the main pillars of our communist movement' (Belić and Bilbija

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<sup>69</sup> There was no surprise that the first gaps occurred in the main organisation of the opposition (such as the Yugoslav Writers Association), and in the most liberal organisation of the system (the Youth Organisation).

<sup>70</sup> RFE, 17 June 1989 (Stojan Novak), quoted in Belić and Bilbija (1989:219-20). Indeed, even Slovenian leaders (such as Janez Stanovnik, Jože Smole and even Milan Kučan) repeatedly stated in their conversations with Meier (1999:68) that they 'could not imagine' a Slovenia outside Yugoslavia. The same statements they repeated to the US Ambassador Zimmermann, to whom Stanovnik said: 'Secession would be suicide for Slovenia... But to survive, Yugoslavia has to be democratized, a market economy has to be created, and the rights of all nationalities have to be respected' (1996/9:32). Kučan even said: 'Nobody sees a future here for Slovenia outside Yugoslavia. But Milošević's imperialist arrogance can only make Slovenes wonder whether this is the kind of Yugoslavia they can live in' (1996/1999:31).

1989:228). While he clearly introduced certain elements of political liberalism into his rhetoric, Kučan still remained convinced that the main question was – ‘what type of socialism we wanted’. The democracy that the Slovene communists were introducing, was ‘democracy for all, which means – democracy for socialism’. Kučan promised he would never again offer his hand to those who rejected dialogue (the Serbian leadership) and said that it was a disgrace that 200 years after the French Revolution there were still political prisoners, and demanded release for all those ‘isolated’ in Kosovo.

On 21 June 1989, the Presidency of the Slovenian Central Committee clearly opposed the ‘one member – one vote’ principle of voting in the LCY. If at the 14<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress the principle of majority voting was introduced, the Slovenian organisation would ‘immediately initiate an extraordinary congress, and either suspend the principle of democratic centralism, or decide in favour of the full organisational independence of the LC Slovenia’. In the programmatic conclusion of this session, the Slovenian Party leadership concluded that ‘nations can exist without socialism, but socialism cannot exist without nations.’

The day after, the Presidency of the Serbian Central Committee for the first time demanded that ‘those parts of the nations and nationalities in all our republics [which live outside their own republic] obtain the right to their full national affirmation, and the preservation of their national and traditional characteristics, as well as of their national identity’. At this moment, the Serbian Party leadership said, ‘it is not realistic to expect that socialism in Yugoslavia could survive without a strong progressive ... factor such as the LCY. Equally... the existence of Yugoslavia is also impossible without socialism based on self-management.’ The main political battle in Yugoslavia was, the Serbian leaders said, between the national bureaucracies and the progressive forces of self-management. Never before had the Serbian leaders so explicitly said that the AVNOJ principle of ‘national equality, brotherhood and unity and federalism’ should be preferred to ‘the model in which Yugoslavia was only what the republics as national states agreed upon’ (Belić and Bilbija, 1989:249). This was a clear rejection of the Brioni Yugoslavia for the Yugoslavia of AVNOJ.

On 28 June 1989, a large crowd of Serbs gathered in Gazimestan to celebrate the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, the central national myth of the Serbs. Slobodan Milošević used this occasion to present himself as the true leader of Yugoslavia. In what was a manifest gesture, he placed himself before the President of the Yugoslav Presidency Janez Drnovšek (Slovenia) and the



LCY Presidency Milan Pančevski (Macedonia) on all ceremonial occasions.<sup>71</sup> Before a large crowd of Serbs and Montenegrins he said:

'If we lost the Battle, then this was not only the result of the social superiority and military advantage of the Ottoman Empire, but also because of the tragic discord at the head of the Serbian state... The discord and betrayal at Kosovo have followed the Serbian people like an evil fate throughout its entire history. In the last war, this discord and betrayal led the Serbian people and Serbia to agony, the consequences of which were both in a historical and in a moral sense more damaging than those of the fascist [aggression]. And also later, when socialist Yugoslavia was created, the Serbian leadership remained divided in this new country, always ready to compromise against its own people. The favours many Serbian leaders granted to others, while disadvantaging their own people, would not be acceptable in either an historical or a political sense, to any other people in the world... The disunity of Serbian politicians harmed Serbia, while their inferiority humiliated Serbia. This has been so over decades, for years. We are here today, on the Field of Kosovo, to say that this is not so any longer. There is no better place in Serbia than the Field of Kosovo to say that unity in Serbia will bring prosperity to Serbia and to the Serbian people and to all its citizens, regardless of their national or religious affiliation' (*Politika*, 29 June 1989).

The crowd responded:

'Now we know/ now we see/ who is the new Tito/ Slobodan, Slobodan/ a name of pride.'<sup>72</sup>

In July 1989 the Serbs in Knin (Croatia) organised their own celebration of the Kosovo battle. The leaders of the newly created anti-communist Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) claimed that the Serbs were 'assimilated', since 'every day there are more and more 'Yugoslavs', and the Cyrillic is under-represented...'<sup>73</sup> They demanded that 'the centralist-Comintern cadre in Croatia, including 90 percent of the Serbian cadres in Split and Zagreb, be replaced' and 'that the Croatian people should rise against its own bureaucracy.' Simo Dubajić, one of the popular leaders of the Krajina Serbs, said he would 'easily settle these problems with Tudjman, but he would not talk to the Central Committee of the LC Croatia'.<sup>74</sup> The Croatian government replied with the arrests of several leaders of the protests in Knin, which - in turn - caused an outburst of anger in the Serbian media. The issue of the relations between Serbs and Croats in Croatia was now widely open for public debate.

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<sup>71</sup> Borisav Jović described this gesture by Milošević in his diary of 29 June 1989: 'Eight in the morning. We are getting ready for going to Gazimestan. Voja Vučićević, the chief of the Federal Protocol came to me, to ask if I could use my influence to make a change in the wreath-laying order. The Protocol of Serbia want: Serbia first, [then] the Federation, [then] the Army. He appeals for the Federation to be first. I called Sloba, who was at home. He was getting ready for Kosovo. He did not want even to hear about this.. He said: 'Ask them if the Slovenes would accept anyone else but them to lay a wreath first at their national holiday.' But, I managed to persuade him to a compromise: all three wreaths to be laid at the same time: the Serbian in the middle, the Federation's on the right, the Army's on the left' (Jović, 1989/1995:29).

<sup>72</sup> *Start*, 8 July 1989.

<sup>73</sup> Dragan Dobrota, *Start*, 22 July 1989.

<sup>74</sup> Simo Dubajić, *Start*, 22 July 1989.

The Croats felt seriously endangered by both the Belgrade offensive and the Knin demands for an 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' against Zagreb. The inability of the Croatian leadership (still divided between pro- and anti-Šušteršič factions) to formulate a clear policy for Croatia, now increasingly 'sandwiched' between Slovenia and Serbia, gave rise to Croatian anti-communist nationalism, which was now represented by newly created parties, most notably by Franjo Tuđman's Croatian Democratic Community.<sup>75</sup> At the 26<sup>th</sup> session of its Central Committee, the Croatian Party made a surprising about-turn, claiming that 'political pluralism is – contrarily to what is often argued – not a tool to homogenise but to de-homogenise national communities... It is a tool of political segmentation, not national homogenisation. This is why it is in fact a tool against the emergence of monopolist national programmes and national mass movements.'<sup>76</sup> It was now Croatia, not just Slovenia, that moved towards a pluralist political system.

Finally, in October 1989 the Serbian leadership also moved to accept the possibility of party pluralism.<sup>77</sup> In a speech at the Central Committee session Balša Špadijer finally abandoned the idea of reforming the 1974 Constitution by endless amendments. Serbia now sought 'radical changes', based on the 'introduction of the citizen as the basis of the system'. They demanded a two-chamber federal assembly, with a democratic principle of 'one-member-one-vote' to elect a House of Citizens (as the lower chamber) (IB 10/1989:22-5). The principle of consensus should be still respected, but for a rather limited range of essential issues. Slovenia was again seen as the main obstacle to such reforms.

On 27 September the Slovenian Republican Assembly amended its constitution to describe Slovenia as 'an independent, sovereign and autonomous state' with the right to self-determination and secession. Before this, the federal Presidency asked the Slovenes to withdraw their constitutional

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<sup>75</sup> The initiative meeting of the CDC was held on 28 February 1989, the same day when the Slovenes organised the Cankarjev Dom meeting, and the Serbs reacted at the mass rally in Belgrade. It held its first Congress in February 1990 in Zagreb.

<sup>76</sup> Celestin Sardelić, *Start*, 22 July 1989.

<sup>77</sup> Already in July 1989, Borisav Jović argued in favour of legalising political organisations outside the Socialist Alliance of Working People, if these organisations were Yugoslav (and not republican or separatist). 'Serbia is the last republic to fear this. The LC in Serbia has wide support, and we do not fear we would lose power... I believe the LCY has had in almost 50 years of power enough time to create its own basis, and that no one is to be blamed if it had failed. Many people accepted my arguments, but it seems to be too early for the final decision' (Jović, 1989/1995:36) On 13 October 1989, Jović presented the same arguments to Milošević, who agreed, but said there was also a 'state reason' for scepticism. 'In this case, an Albanian party would be created in Serbia. There are almost 2 million of them. Whatever they call their party, they would win power in almost all areas, and we would lose Kosovo... Our strategy should be to secure, not only in words, but in practice, full democracy for the Serbian intelligentsia, in a non-party pluralism, so that they do not attack us severely... Taking into account the multi-ethnic character of Yugoslavia, he thinks, the West will understand our country even if we secure democratic non-party pluralism. This is a much stronger guarantee of the survival of Yugoslavia than the multi-party system, which could partition it' (Jović, 1989/1995:62). Jović thought Milošević's arguments were logical, but was not sure if the West cared so much about the existence of Yugoslavia as during the Cold War. 'They maybe care more about the destruction of the 'regime' than about the existence of Yugoslavia!', he said.

amendments, but they failed to obey. On 22 September the Federal Defence Secretary Gen. Kadrijević told the Vice-President of the Federal Presidency Borisav Jović (Serbia) that he was ready to prevent the Slovenes from proposing their constitutional amendments on the grounds of 'the protection of constitutional order', for which the Army was authorised by the Constitution (Jović, 1989/1995:53). However, three days later, Kadrijević withdrew on the advice of the Army legal experts who thought 'the action would be on the edge of legality' (Jović, 1989:1995:54). The Serbian leaders now realised that the Army was not a reliable ally and that the Federal Prime Minister Ante Marković was still influential when it came to federal institutions. They concluded that 'the historic opportunity' to stop the Slovenes had been missed (Jović, 1989/1995:55).

In October 1989, the Serbian leaders decided simply to ignore the Slovenes 'as if they did not exist', and to prepare constitutional changes relying on the majority they still commanded in most federal institutions.<sup>78</sup>

On 30 November 1989, the Slovene Ministry of the Interior banned a Serb rally scheduled to take place in Ljubljana on 1 December, the day when Yugoslavia was created in 1918. The Slovenian leaders were not worried that the (as they called it) 'export' of the anti-bureaucratic revolution could succeed in their republic, but they feared incidents between the domestic population and Serb protesters, which could eventually provoke the Federal Army to intervene against Slovenia. On 4 December the Croatian Republican Assembly (Sabor) decided to support Slovenia against Serbia. The demonstrators gave up, but the Serbian leadership decided to cut off all official relations with Slovenia. An economic boycott of Slovenian goods was now official policy. At the same time, the Montenegrin League of Communists supported Serbia.

In December 1989, Milošević declared the Slovenian leadership to be the 'protector of conservatism in Yugoslavia and one of the last defenders of conservatism in socialist countries in general'.

'This conservatism of Slovenia is confronted with forces of progress in Yugoslavia, and especially with progressive economic and political changes in Serbia, and hence reacts aggressively and brutally... The aggressive reaction of these bureaucratic forces... insults the dignity of other people. And today's politics of Slovenia not only insults our dignity, but it threatens the very basic human rights of other Yugoslav citizens in the Slovenian part of the Yugoslav state. The bureaucratic, arrogant and aggressive Slovenian leadership have cut all links with the people in Serbia, and we have taken this decision of theirs seriously. We shall remain consistent in this serious response, as long as the forces of conservatism, aggression and violence are not replaced by a democratic, peaceful and brotherly attitude in Slovenian politics' (*Borba*, 12 December 1989).

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<sup>78</sup> Borisav Jović on 2 October 1989 (1989/1995:60).

At the same time, the newly established Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian political parties expressed radical views about the future of Yugoslavia. The Serbian National Revival party (led by Vuk Drašković) demanded a restructuring of Yugoslavia towards a confederation of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats, in which the Serbian state would include Macedonia, Montenegro and - Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Croatian Democratic Community of Franjo Tuđman (initiated on the very day of the Cankarjev Dom meeting and the Belgrade rally against the Slovenes) also demanded more (although not yet full) independence for Croatia. The new Slovenian parties (which appeared in the form of various 'Associations', later to be renamed 'Parties') followed the programme of Nova Revija. In all three cases, the members of the intellectual elite who opposed the regime now became directly involved in party politics. The LCY, although still the only recognised political party in the country, was far from being in full control of events.

## 7.8. The LCY Membership Divided

The two political options - Slovenian and Serbian - divided not only the leadership but the whole membership of the LCY and the population itself. A survey among 5,000 LCY members, commissioned by the Federal Party Central Committee in its preparation for the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress (conducted by Ivan Šiber in November 1989) demonstrates that the LCY had practically split on all the main issues of the debate.

On the issue of consensus or majority vote within the Party: 67% of members in Slovenia were in favour of the former, while 73% of the Serbian Party favoured the latter option. The Croatian and Kosovo organisations were closer to 'consensus', while more than 50% supported a majority vote in Montenegro (66%), Vojvodina (65%), Macedonia (57%) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (52%) (Šiber, 1989:15).

On further autonomy for republics and provinces: 85% of the members in Slovenia were in favour of 'more independence for republics and provinces', while 90% in Vojvodina argued the opposite - for 'more unity in the federation'. Slovenia was, in fact, the only republic in which more members argued in favour of 'more autonomy' than 'more unity'. Even among the Croatian and Kosovan members 49% and 45% respectively favoured 'more unity', as opposed to 38% and 40% for 'more autonomy'.

On the direct representation of the two Provinces in Federal bodies (as it was in the 1974 Constitution) - only 30.9% of all respondents in Yugoslavia were now in favour of it, while 61.7% of

respondents preferred them to be represented in the federal institutions only as integral part of the Serbian delegation. The differences were again great between various parts of the LCY: direct representation was favoured by 71% of the LC members in Kosovo, 67% in Slovenia and 48% in Croatia. At the same time, 88% in Serbia, 76% in Montenegro, 74% in Vojvodina (!), 68% in Macedonia and 51% in Bosnia-Herzegovina were for indirect representation through the Serbian delegation.

The 'state of emergency' in Kosovo, introduced in March 1989, was supported by 81% of the LCY members, but only 28% in Slovenia and 40% in Kosovo. The level of support in other republics and Vojvodina varied from 72% in Croatia to 97% in Serbia outside the Provinces.

Mass rallies were supported as the 'most suitable form of expressing political views' by 53.3% of LCY members. This was a clear approval of the ongoing demonstrations of the Serbs and Montenegrins that had already forced leaders in Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro to resign. Not surprisingly, the level of support was highest in Serbia (87%), Vojvodina (76%) and Montenegro (72%), but high support for these protests in Macedonia (56%) indicated that this republic could be next in line for 'revolution'. Just like their leaders, the LCY members in other republics, however, were much less supportive: in Bosnia the mass rallies were supported by 37%, in Kosovo by 22%, in Croatia by 19% and in Slovenia by 11% of LCY members.

In another evidence of the strength of the Serbian position, 70.1% of the respondents expressed themselves in favour of 'democratic centralism' in either the existing (35.1%) or in an even stronger form (35%). In Slovenia, however, 73% of those interviewed demanded that this principle be abandoned in favour of consensual decision-making in the Party. In fact, 'democratic centralism' had more supporters than 'the consensus principle' in all republics with the exception of Slovenia: in Serbia 81%, Montenegro 78%, Vojvodina 77%, Bosnia-Herzegovina 76%, Macedonia 68%, Kosovo 66% and Croatia 64% of members favoured it. Furthermore, in all these republics, except in Croatia, more members declared for further strengthening of 'democratic centralism' than for mere preservation of the principle in its existing form.

The centralising tendencies were to be seen in the demands of 46.2% of LCY members to abandon any republican/provincial 'key' in the elections to the Central Committee of the LCY. As many as 60% of the members in Serbia supported the conclusion that 'the best candidates should be elected, regardless of the republic/provinces they come from'. In Slovenia, on the other hand, 52% said the elections of the CC members 'should be entirely left to each organisation in the republic/province', thus not even requiring formal 'confirmation' by the federal Party Congress. This radically

'confederalist' principle was supported by only two percent of members in Vojvodina and Montenegro, and nowhere outside Slovenia did it secure more than 20% support. Similarly, while 62.7% of the entire sample argued that the Yugoslav Central Committee should have the final say if/when two republican organisations disagreed, 71% of the members in Slovenia refused to accept any arbitration 'since each organisation should have the right to its own opinion'. The differences were so great that one wondered if it was still the same party.

The survey showed that the Party elites of Serbia and Slovenia enjoyed the almost unanimous support of their respective membership on the issues of the 'three reforms': of the economy, the political system and the Party. In Slovenia, 95% of members assessed the Slovene programme of economic reform the best in Yugoslavia, 94% thought the same of the programme of political reforms proposed by Slovenia, and 93% for the programme of Party reform. Just a slightly lower level of homogeneity was achieved in Serbia: 93% put the Serbian programme of economic reform first, while 72% favoured the Serbian programme of democratisation and 79% the Party reforms promoted by the Serbian leadership. The same level of support (77%, 63%, 73%, respectively) for the Serbian programme was reached in Vojvodina. There could be no doubt that the Slovenian and Serbian leaders spoke for their members. Consequently, the Serbian accusation against the Slovene leaders of being 'bureaucrats' (i.e., cut off from their members) proved to be unconvincing. The strong support for the Serbian leaders in Vojvodina demonstrated that the 'Yoghurt revolution' in this province (unlike the cadre changes in Kosovo) was genuinely supported by the (largely Serb) Party membership.

In other republics, however, many members preferred either the Slovenian or the Serbian programmes of the three reforms to those proposed by their local leadership. In Montenegro, 63% of LCY members favoured the Serbian programme of economic reforms (compared with 19% for the Montenegrin, and 13% for the Slovenian). However, the members from Montenegro supported their new leadership more than any other (including Serbia's) when it came to political reforms and the LCY reform (61% and 68% respectively). In Macedonia, about 40% chose the Macedonian programme on all three counts, while about 20% favoured the Serbian and Slovenian programmes on all three issues. Small deviations from these percentages indicated that more Macedonian members favoured the Serbian programme of Party reform, at the same time showing more support for the Slovenian programme of political democratisation.

It is also for this reason that one should be careful when arguing that the conflict followed lines of republics/provinces. The party was in fact still divided on two camps, with many left in between them. The main line of divisions was still the one between the 'defenders of the Constitution' and

'reformers of the Constitution', but both of them now moved further away from a compromise, and towards constructing their own narratives, rather than debating the one previously existing - the Kardelj concept.

For example, the Slovenian programme of economic reforms was favoured by 45% of the members in Croatia. The Croatian members were, however, more sceptical about the Slovenian proposal of political reforms (33% ranked Slovenia first), and the Party reforms (23%). However, the Serbian programme did not have any significant support in Croatia. Although almost 25% of the LCY members in Croatia were ethnically Serbs, only between 4% and 6% favoured the Serbian proposals over all others. Following the pattern of the whole post-war period, political behaviour in the LCY did not strictly coincide with the ethnic affiliation of its members. It often did not strictly follow the lines of republics, as the preferences of many Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Bosnian members for either the Slovenian or Serbian programmes demonstrated even in 1989. However, Serbia and - especially - Slovenia now became exceptions to this rule. The almost exclusive loyalty of the Slovenian members to their own organisation, closely followed by the similar level of support for Serbian programmes by Serbian members (not in an ethnic but a political sense!) polarised the Party around two diametrically opposite positions. The others, unwilling or incapable of formulating a third alternative (as the failure of Šušteršič and Marković clearly demonstrates) were driven to support one side or the other. Or to perish.

In some cases, such as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it was not easy to make a choice. The 1989 survey shows that more members from this republic supported the Slovenian than the Serbian proposals for economic and political reforms (37%:24%; and 22%:14% respectively), while the opposite was the case with the Party reform (18%:14% for the Serbian programme). In other cases, such as in Kosovo, the choice was less complex. Unlike their new leaders (imposed by Belgrade, and shielded by a ban on demonstrations following the 'state of emergency' in the Province), the large majority of LCY members in Kosovo supported the Slovenian political (66%), economic (55%) and even Party reforms proposals (55%) more than any other on offer. These figures were much higher than those for the Serbian economic (34%), political (24%) and Party (26%) programmes of reforms. The survey, hence, confirmed that, unlike in Vojvodina or Montenegro, the 'unity' between Kosovo and Serbia was reached only between the two leaderships, but not among the membership of the Party. One could safely assume that support for the Serbian initiatives among the general population in Kosovo was even lower. Slovenia was, Milošević had argued earlier, to be 'blamed' for this.

In general, the 1989 survey of Party membership, showed the following level of support for the Serbian and Slovenian options in the other Yugoslav republics and provinces:

**Table 7.1. Acceptance of Serbian and Slovenian programmes, 1989.**

	Serbian	Slovenian	Difference (Serbian - Slovenian)
Vojvodina	70.9	12.4	Serbian + 58.5
Montenegro	33.7	10.1	Serbian + 23.6
Macedonia	20.5	20.3	Serbian + 0.2
Bosnia- Herzegovina	18.7	24.5	Slovenian + 5.8
Croatia	4.9	33.6	Slovenian + 28.7
Kosovo	28.5	58.6	Slovenian + 30.1
Yugoslavia	40.2	24.3	Serbian + 15.9

Source: Šiber (1989: 75).

Hence, on the eve of the 14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Congress, the Serbian Party had secured much greater support among the LCY membership than the Slovenes, especially when it came to intra-Party reforms (38.9% in favour of the Serbian approach, 18.0% for the Slovenian). However, it had still failed to secure a clear winning majority of 50% of the votes among the Party members. The support of 24% of Party members in the country as a whole for the Slovene programmes exceeded by almost four times the Slovenian share in the LCY membership. It was certainly clear that the Slovene programme of reforms was unlikely to win the vote at the 14<sup>th</sup> LCY Congress. It was, however, less clear whether the Serbian proposals would secure sufficient support for changes of the Statute in order to centralise the organisation. From the point of view of both sides, it was crucial to gain the support of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia on the main issues on the agenda. But, the Macedonian and Bosnian party membership were split down the middle on every single important issue debated.

The prospects for victory for the Serbian approach on the eve of the 14<sup>th</sup> Party Congress were confirmed by the fact that (only?) 30.7% of the LCY Party membership identified Slobodan Milošević as the person who 'expressed political views closest to [their] own'. Although the level of personal support for Milošević was almost 10% lower than that for the Serbian programmes of reforms, his personal popularity among LCY members was almost five times greater than that of his main competitor, Milan Kučan (6.2%). The other two potential candidates for the top post, Stipe Šušvar (former Party President, Croatia) and the newly elected Yugoslav Prime Minister, Ante



Marković (also Croatia) followed him closely at 5.2 and 4.9% respectively. Support for Milošević varied from 0.6% in Slovenia (and only 1.9% in Croatia, despite the large number of Serb members!) to 71.6% in Serbia. Kučan scored 62.8% of the 'vote' in Slovenia and 18.5% in Kosovo, while no 'votes' at all in Serbia. Two Croatian politicians of different political orientations ('the Kardeljist' Šušar and 'liberal-reformist' Marković) fell victims to their refusal to 'mobilise' Croatia behind themselves. Torn apart by deep personal rivalry and led by a Serb, Stanko Stojčević (1986-1988) and Party bureaucrat Ivica Račan (1989-), the main constructors of the politics of the 'Croatian silence', the Croatian Party had no leader to match Kučan and Milošević. Šušar was the first choice for only 12.5% of the Croatian members, while - except in Bosnia-Herzegovina (10.3%) he was only marginally supported elsewhere. Marković was more popular amongst the general population, but he - as Yugoslav Prime Minister - deliberately stood outside Party politics.<sup>79</sup> Marković believed the programme of economic reforms he introduced in 1989 would unite Yugoslavia around his government. But the Party was still the main political battlefield. The lack of a Croatian leader was one of the further reasons for polarisation within the Party. Having no third partner in traditionally Slovene-Serb-Croat-led Yugoslav politics, neither Kučan nor Milošević were forced to accommodate their claims to a potential 'coalition' partner from Croatia. Yugoslav politics now became polarised, rather than coalition-seeking.

The lack of credible Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian communist politicians in this crucial year resulted in the growth of anti-Communist and nationalist leaders in these three republics. The survey revealed that 40.8% of the whole Yugoslav LCY sample did not identify with either of the LCY leaders. These percentages were, however, significantly higher in Croatia (54.8%), Bosnia-Herzegovina (56.8%), and Macedonia (58.3%), the three republics in which the Party finally lost the first democratic elections to the opposition parties less than a year after this survey was conducted. The Croats simply could not wait for Marković and Šušar to turn nationalist and to homogenise them against Milošević. Šušar and Marković were, however, convinced that - as Šušar said in an interview for this thesis in April 1998 - 'it was easy to become a nationalist leader, nothing was more simple than this - what was difficult was to lead a civil war against each other, if you still believed in Yugoslavia.'

The same logic, to some extent, led Milošević and Kučan to put themselves at the helm of their republics and nations. It is too easy today to accuse these two politicians of supporting and organising the nationalism that finally really led to civil war. True, one can have little doubt that they bore great responsibility for what happened. However, it is still likely that - had they not

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<sup>79</sup> Support for Marković was at 15.3% in his own Croatia, but he was popular neither with Slovenian Party members (3.2%) nor in Serbia (1.1%).

accepted this role – somebody else would have done. Slovenia and Serbia would perhaps have followed the Croatian, Bosnian and – to some extent even Macedonian – path of electing Tadjman-like ‘genuine’ nationalists. In acting as they did, both Kučan and Milošević believed they would prevent the most radical nationalist elements in their republics from winning the elections: people like those in Nova Revija and Vuk Drašković respectively. The leaders of the last generation of the communist elites in Yugoslavia, faced a dilemma which they just simply could not resolve while remaining true to their long-standing personal beliefs. They had to ‘ride the tiger of nationalism, if they did not want to be eaten by it’, as David Owen (1995:129) metaphorically explained. And they were powerless to choose, however powerful they seemed. Finally, they had to realise that much more than power was at stake: their personal beliefs, peace in the country, and even their personal lives.<sup>80</sup>

In 1989 Milošević and Kučan did not yet command the unconditional and full support of their ethnic groups, not even among Party members, who would naturally be supportive of their leaders in any case. One must notice that even in the last months of 1989 the ethnic homogenisation behind Milošević and Kučan was still incomplete, as far as the members of the LCY were concerned. Although Milošević, for example, was speaking for 54.6% of the (ethnic) Serbs in this survey, the remaining 45.4% of the members of the LCY of Serb ethnic origins did not identify with him first (in fact, 40.3% did not identify with any politician at all). In Kučan’s case, he was the first choice for 67.9% of the Slovene members (significantly higher than Milošević among the Serbs), yet a third of the members failed to support him. Šušteršič and Marković together were favourite choices for only 30% of the ethnic Croat members. The level of ethnic homogenisation, therefore, was in all cases (even in the Slovenian or Serbian) lower than the level of homogenisation between the members from the same republic.

While Milošević was the first choice for 71.6% of the members in Serbia Proper, only 54.6% of all (ethnically) Serbian members of the LCY ‘voted’ for him. Taking into account that 45% of the Montenegrins supported him, as well as (only) 25.2% of those declared ‘Yugoslavs’<sup>81</sup> one could safely conclude that the support for Milošević was significantly lower among the Serbs outside

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<sup>80</sup> Borisav Jović quotes General Veljko Kadijević, who feared ‘being hung in public’ if the anti-communists took over in Serbia (19 January 1990). He sincerely feared revenge against communists in Croatia, after Tadjman won the elections in 1990 (26 April 1990). Borisav Jović also feared Albanian revenge against the Serbs in Kosovo if they were not prevented from ‘taking over our institutions’ (Jović, 1995).

<sup>81</sup> The fact that only a quarter of the ‘Yugoslavs’ supported Milošević is significant for two reasons: (1) it shows that the ‘Yugoslavs’ were not only ‘reserve Serbs’; and (2) raises the question of Milošević’s ‘Yugoslavism’. If those who declared themselves Yugoslavs did not recognise him as the protector of Yugoslavism, how could then the Slovenes, Croats and others?

Serbia than in Serbia itself.<sup>82</sup> This explains the gap of more than 15% between the share of the Serbs in the LCY membership (45%) and the 'vote' for Milošević (30.7%). It was precisely because of the 'uncompleted' homogenisation of the Serbs in the LCY membership that Milošević could not yet – despite a higher share of the Serbs in the LCY than in the general population – with safety count on overall and unconditional victory at the Party Congress. He still needed full control over the Kosovo delegation, which seemed likely to be more defiant in secret ballot than its leadership was in its public endorsement of Serbia's new course. It was also important to discredit the leading Serb members of the Croatian and Bosnian Party leaderships, who were still committed to the old Party line of criticising nationalism only within their own nation. In the last few months prior to the Party Congress, the Serbian Central Committee, media and demonstrators launched a strong campaign against Serb Communist leaders from Croatia, such as Dušan Dragosavac,<sup>83</sup> and from Bosnia, such as Bogić Bogičević. In turn, this only inflamed Serbian anti-Communist nationalism in these areas, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, it was of crucial importance to homogenise ethnic Serbs in the LCY and in the population in general behind Milošević.

## 7.9. The Last Hours: the 14<sup>th</sup> (Extraordinary) LCY Congress

The final clash between the two political positions occurred at the 14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Congress of the LCY on 20-22 January 1990, which was in advance considered by both sides to be a potential turning point in the history of Yugoslavia.<sup>84</sup> The Congress had 1,457 elected members, 564 of whom were from Serbia (333 from Serbia without Provinces, 94 from Kosovo, and 137 from Vojvodina), and 114 from Slovenia.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Subsequently, in all but one of the 14 municipalities with a Serb ethnic majority in Croatia, the (Croatian) League of Communists won elections in April 1990. Only in Knin was the radical nationalist Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) elected. Public opinion polls conducted by me and my associates and published in *Danas* in summer 1990 showed that only when the LC Croatia – Party of Democratic Change supported Tudjman's new Constitution, did the Serbs start to support the Serbian Democratic Party. During the summer the SDS forcibly took over the administration in the municipalities in which the LCC won elections. More in my article in *Ljetopis* 1996.

<sup>83</sup> Dragosavac attacked Milošević's politics at several sessions of the CC LCY in 1989. He later complained that somebody wrote a graffito 'Dragosavac - The Traitor' on a street in Belgrade where the CC had its building. Bogić Bogičević, the Serb who, since May 1989, represented Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Federal Presidency, voted against Serbia in the crucial vote on the state of emergency, proposed by the Army in March 1991 (Silber and Little, 1995). Needless to say this vote was against Milošević too. In an interview I conducted with him, Bogičević talked about the pressure by Serbian leadership on him.

<sup>84</sup> As Borisav Jović described after his talks with Slobodan Milošević on 20 June 1989, 'the LCY Congress was the critical moment for changing the Constitution. If things were ready by then, the Constitution would be changed. If not, everything would remain the same until the next Congress' (Jović, 1989/1990:25).

<sup>85</sup> Other republics were represented proportionally to their share in the Party membership: Bosnia-Herzegovina 248, Croatia 216, Macedonia 141, and Montenegro 99, while 68 members represented the LCY in the Army and seven the federal party organisations. The ethnic structure of elected members also closely matched the Party structure: 545 delegates were Serbs,

The main aim of the Serbian delegation, as formulated at an informal meeting between Slobodan Milošević, Petar Gračanin, Bogdan Trifunović and Borisav Jović (10 January 1990) was 'to preserve the existence of the LCY as an organisation, to preserve democratic centralism, at least in the terms of the Statute. The aim [was] also that the Slovenes remain isolated, and that Croatia and Macedonia, or even Bosnia-Herzegovina, do not join.' The Army representatives accepted the role of the front-runners for this policy, 'so that the Croats and Macedonians are not put off from it' (Jović, 1989/1995:88).

In two days of debate, the Slovene delegation opposed the main tone of the proposed declarations, including the new, amended Statute of the LCY. However, the delegates of the Congress were unwilling to accept any of the Slovenian amendments. The Slovenian proposal that the LCY should be defined as 'an organisation of republican organisations of the LC, which are equal in rights and associate with one another in the LCY' was rejected by 1,156 votes against 169. Two Slovene proposals, aimed at the immediate suspension of all political trials in Kosovo (including those for 'counter-revolutionary endangering of social order; hostile propaganda; and insulting the highest institutions of the state'), were supported by only 236 and 399 members respectively. The proposal that all economic sanctions introduced by Serbia on Slovenian goods should be immediately lifted, was supported by 755 delegates, while 589 voted against. However, this was still about 70 votes less than the required majority. The amendment proposed by the president of the Slovenian Parliament Miran Potrč, that the Party documents should clearly identify that 'the peoples associated in Yugoslavia exercise their sovereignty within republics, having the right to freely decide which of their sovereign rights should be realised through democratically elected institutions in Yugoslavia', was supported by 526 delegates. At the same time, the Serbian amendment that the new federal Constitution should clearly define Yugoslavia as a state 'with full legal and state subjectivity', was accepted with 955 votes.

Although not all Slovene amendments received the same level of support (ranging from very low support for any confederalisation of the Party, to higher support when it came to further decentralisation of the state), it was nevertheless clear that none of them secured sufficient support at the Congress. At the same time, almost every Serbian proposal was accepted by a convincing majority. The Congress was on the verge of becoming a crucial triumph for Milošević's programme.

This was the moment when Slovenia's delegation decided to leave the Congress and declared Slovenia's League of Communists an independent organisation, not subject to any 'democratic

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195 Croats, 137 Macedonians, 128 Yugoslavs, 122 Montenegrins, 114 Slovenes, 95 Bosnian Muslims, 63 Albanians, 21 Hungarians, etc.

centralism' by the federal Party organisation. Staying in the LCY under the new rules of the game would mean losing any support in Slovenia and subjecting its Party organisation to permanent out-voting by the Serbian-led majority. The Slovene Communists simply could not accept this. While they were leaving the stage, the Serbian delegates at the Congress applauded. Milošević immediately proposed that the Congress should establish a new 'quorum' by recognising that the 114 delegates from Slovenia were no longer part of it, and continue as if nothing had happened. This was opposed by the Croatian members, who argued that the LCY without the Slovenes was no longer a Yugoslav organisation, and warned that they themselves would 're-examine' their participation in it. The Congress, therefore, 'postponed' its final session, as would become clear - indefinitely.

## 7.10. The End of the Party and of the State

The Serbian communists, as well as those in the Army and most of the other republics, claimed before the Congress that the existence of the LCY was a *conditio sine qua non* of the existence of the Yugoslav state. Its disintegration was now 'the beginning of the end of any possibility for Yugoslavia to function'.<sup>86</sup> The same belief was shared by the Slovenian and Croatian opposition. The Slovene Communists, however, claimed that the disintegration of the Party might not inevitably lead to the collapse of the Yugoslav state.

'The disintegration of the LCY is not a fatal event for the future of Yugoslavia. Because, the future of Yugoslavia does not depend on the two integrative factors that certain politicians always tend to connect with each other: that is - the Party and the Army. The fate of this country depends on the real interests of its peoples, on how we answer the question: should we be able to work and live like the rest of the civilised world... I even think that we are now closer to a democratic solution of the crisis. The LCY was a mechanism which those who created undemocratic politics in Yugoslavia have manipulated. If it is destroyed, then this is certainly a step forward to the faster democratisation of society. I would link this process with further pluralisation and reforms, which should be even more radical than those proposed by the Federal Government,' said Milan Kučan immediately after the Congress (Kučan, Danas, 30 January 1990).

Kučan, however, admitted that it was not easy to accept that the LCY had come to an end.

'It was very difficult, although I knew it would happen. All my life, and especially my youth, was linked to the Party. I have been influenced by these ideas through my family, and even if the Party is now clearly not what it once was, it is still not easy to say goodbye.

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<sup>86</sup> Borisav Jović in his diary on 24 January 1990 (1990/1995:93).

I am perhaps also responsible for this, since I am still strongly emotionally attached to the Party' (Kučan, Danas, 30 January 1990).

While Kučan's emotional attachment to the Party had gone by now, he was still in a state of disbelief when it came to the disintegration of Yugoslavia as state. In January 1990, he described himself as 'non-separatist':

'I can hardly even think about the possibility of Slovenia leaving Yugoslavia. Personally, I have never been for it. I cannot come to terms with this possibility. But, Yugoslavia as it is now is good for no one. If the Helsinki declaration and the way of thinking in Europe, which is now hostile to any amendments of the borders, change – and I am not sure that [Europe] will remain committed to this view after all that has happened in Germany and in the countries of the East – then we Slovenian non-separatists, would face a very difficult situation. Of course, it all depends on what Yugoslavia would look like.'

Kučan was still trying to convince others in Yugoslavia that he was the least nationalistic partner in Slovenia. By refusing his proposals, the others in Yugoslavia in fact undermined his position at home. The Slovene communists felt misunderstood, unsupported, and even humiliated by their Party colleagues from Serbia.<sup>87</sup> Their decision to leave was taken without enthusiasm, but it was clearly seen as necessary.

In Slovenia, the majority clearly supported Kučan's brave decision, but many feared a reaction by the centralisers. Kučan's prediction that separatist ideas would now gain new ground among the Slovenian population proved accurate. Janez Janša, the leading opponent of Belgrade, declared the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress 'the last congress of the Party, but also the end of the Yugoslav state, as it is now'.<sup>88</sup> Another Slovenian opposition politician, the Christian Democrat Lojze Peterle, also believed that 'this is yet another proof that the Second Yugoslavia has come to an end, and that a state should be re-established on new grounds.'<sup>89</sup> These new grounds should be found in the confederal model of a commonwealth of Yugoslav states, said Joze Pučnik. Confederation was now seen as a means to the full independence of Slovenia. It would include full recognition of its statehood, and almost entirely destroy the authority of federal bodies.

Similarly, confederalist options became stronger in Croatia, where Franjo Tudjman, the president of the newly established Croatian Democratic Community, commented:

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<sup>87</sup> Sonja Lokar, the secretary of the LC Slovenia, cried as she left the Congress stage. But her tears met with humiliating applause from her victorious Serbian colleagues. Slobodan Milošević believes the Slovenian action was planned well ahead. As shown earlier in this Chapter, the Slovenian LC indeed announced they would leave LCY if 'outvoted' on the main issues.

<sup>88</sup> Danas, 30 January 1990.

<sup>89</sup> Lojze Peterle, Danas, 30 January 1990.

'This is not only the ideological and organisational disintegration of the LCY. The LCY has been identified with the overall construction of the SFR Yugoslavia as a state community. The failure of the LCY is therefore a sign of the ideological and organisational collapse of the existing AVNOJ Yugoslavia' (Danas, 30 January 1990).

Tudjman concluded that Yugoslavia should be 'thought out again', since it faced not only a state crisis, but a crisis of inter-ethnic relations.

Although the newly established Serbian Renewal Movement (led by Vuk Drašković) proposed a three-member confederation in Yugoslavia, in which the Serbian unit would include Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and large parts of Croatia, the confederalist option for the Serbs meant in fact separatism. Similarly to the Czechs in the case of Czechoslovakia, the Serbs felt con-federation was the worst of all the options on the agenda. They already felt Yugoslavia was partitioned to the level of disintegration. The new proposals, to them, in fact meant the disintegration of the country. There was, therefore, no surprise, when Borisav Jović concluded:

'The Congress was the last chance for those who sincerely hoped that the course of events in Yugoslavia could be redirected for the better, towards unity and the solution of the constitutional problems... I am afraid that this is the beginning of the end of any possibility of agreement, and also of the functioning of Yugoslavia. A general confusion and uncertainty is created' (Jović, 24 January 1990, 1995:93).

And it was even less surprising that the Army felt 'totally disappointed', as the Defence Secretary Kadijević conveyed to Borisav Jović, the Vice-President of the Yugoslav State Presidency:

'He [Kadijević] said that many communists had become scared under the wave of anti-communism. They had become entirely lost. They do not fight, do not react, as if they do not care about what is happening. And what is happening leads us directly to a civil war, to bloodshed. He analysed the Western strategy towards Yugoslavia... The tragedy is that they [the West] do not understand that in this way [by introducing multi-party democracy] they are in fact destroying Yugoslavia and pushing it to a civil war. They do not understand that parties like these will not resolve the Yugoslav problem, because they do not understand the national question in Yugoslavia. For Yugoslavia, for its existence and re-birth it is necessary that the LCY exists and that is re-born in competition with other parties.'<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Borisav Jović, talk with Gen. Kadijević, 26 January 1990 (1990/1995:94). While Kadijević remained committed to his communist vision of Yugoslavia, Jović was soon moved to argue that Yugoslavia could be preserved even as a multi-party democracy.

## 7.11. The Last Hope: Ante Marković's Attempt to Unite Yugoslavia Without the LCY

Immediately after the collapse of the LCY Congress, the Federal Government of Ante Marković took the initiative to transform Yugoslavia into an economically prosperous and politically viable Federation. Just like his predecessors Milka Planinc and Branko Mikulić, Ante Marković faced opposition from the Party in his attempts to reform the Yugoslav economy and political system. This is why he saw the disintegration of the Party as the final chance to take a free initiative.

Marković was elected Yugoslav Prime Minister on 19 January 1989, when Yugoslavia faced not only political conflicts (such as those between Slovenes and Serbs, or in Kosovo) but also inflation of about 25,000% p.a. (Zimmermann, 1996/1999:49). His programme of economic reforms, supported and advised by American economist Jeffrey Sachs, was launched in December 1989, showing the first results at the beginning of 1990. The value of the national currency was fixed to the Deutsch-Mark at the 1:7 level. The Yugoslavs were for the first time allowed to buy foreign currency in banks. Inflation sharply decreased and confidence in the new government rapidly grew. But, the new economic programme (accompanied by Marković's idea of 'new socialism') favoured export-oriented firms, most of which were in Slovenia and Croatia. The Serbian leaders saw this as the 'robbery of Serbia' in favour of the more developed Western republics.<sup>91</sup> Serbian industry, oriented more to the collapsing market of the Soviet Union, suffered a lot. At the same time, the Slovenes' refusal to agree on a federal budget left federal funds half-empty. The Army, already extremely critical of Slovenian politicians, now joined Serbia and the under-developed regions against Slovenia and Marković. The Federal Government, although generally popular among the population, faced enormous opposition from Serbia and Slovenia, on several issues joined by other republics and Kosovo.

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<sup>91</sup> On 12 June 1989 Borisav Jović spoke to Slobodan Milošević and Borisav Srebrić about Marković's programme: 'We concluded that this was exactly the policy we were afraid of: the policy of redirecting income to Croatia. The bill will be paid by everyone, but to the benefit of the exporters, mainly from the developed regions of the country... Finally, the benefits for those who export to the USSR, which means mainly the Serbian economy, have been drastically cut - which means that our markets are now limited... The general line of our politics is based on the fact that Serbia cannot survive under this burden, unless new taxes are introduced at the federal level. And it is impossible to introduce new taxes. Thus, we have to confront this policy, which is very cunning indeed: it reduces the revenue paid to the federation by the more developed republics, and increases contributions from the less developed. On the average, there is indeed, as they claim, some reduction of the budget; but this does not mean anything to those who give more. This policy inevitably will lead to new tensions between republics, and indeed between nations, and is not inspired by good intentions.' (Jović, 1995:22). On 27 June 1989, Milošević asked Jović to warn Marković that Serbia could 'overthrow him much sooner than he could overthrow Serbia' (1995:29). On 2 August 1989, Milošević concluded that Serbia was about to get 'robbed' by Marković's economic policy. 'This is a deliberate action against the Serbian leadership,' wrote Jović in his diary (1995:60). Yet, on 31 October 1989, Jović saw that 'Slovenia attacks Marković even more than we do in Serbia' (1995:64). On 17 November 1989, Milošević and Jović concluded that Marković should be replaced by somebody else, preferably by General Veljko Kadijević, the Defence Secretary. 'It is important to have a candidate who is in favour of Yugoslavia and socialism. Ante is not for either of these.' (1995:69). An accommodation with Marković was reached only between January and March 1990, when Serbia tried to get out of the isolation it found itself in in Yugoslavia. Soon, however, the Serbian leaders returned to an anti-Marković position.



Trying to find a way out, Ante Marković attempted to rely on the support of the general public (using the media more than any other communist politician before), Western economic support and his own cabinet. On all three fronts, however, he faced hurdles. The media were already under the control of his opponents to such an extent that he decided to launch a new - Yugoslav - TV station. When he did it, the local (republican) TV stations both in Slovenia and Serbia refused to transmit its programme through 'their' transmitters. In the West, Marković found a genuine political support, but his financial pleadings remained unanswered. Finally, at least two crucial ministers in his cabinet (the Interior Secretary Gračanin and the Defence Secretary Gen Kadrijević) wavered between loyalty to him and to Serbia's President.

As the results of a survey, conducted in June 1990, of 4,232 respondents in Yugoslavia demonstrated, the Yugoslavs were already deeply polarised on the functioning of the federal state and the powers of the federal government.

'The respondents from all republics and provinces were in favour of a market of commodities, capital and labour, a uniform tax system and an end to the present method of providing aid for underdeveloped regions. On all other topics views [were] divided. At one end of the scale, the respondents from Serbia proper, Vojvodina, Montenegro, and to some extent Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, would like to see a stronger government with powers to intervene and impose repressive measures: they are in favour of maintaining the current level of expenditure for the Yugoslav People's Army and of promoting investment programmes in underdeveloped regions. At the other end of the scale, the public in Slovenia, Croatia and Kosovo call for a federal government whose functions would be only to take initiatives, maintain co-ordination, and mediate; they want the army budget reduced and are in favour of giving underdeveloped regions professional, cultural and research assistance but not monetary aid, or would even go so far as to abolish all forms of aid.'<sup>92</sup>

The differences on this polarised scale are shown in the following table:

**Table 7.2. Approval and Disapproval of Markovic's Reforms, May-June 1990.**

Measure	Yugoslavia Approval: disapproval	Highest support	Lowest Support
Reforms in general	66% : 7%	Macedonia 81%	Slovenia 32%
Market economy	56% : 2%	Croatia 66% Bosnia 66%	Kosovo 28%
Greater legal powers for the federal government	58% : 21%	Bosnia 72% Vojvodina 72%	Slovenia 26%
Funding a new political party	41% : 28%	Bosnia 65%	Slovenia 23%

<sup>92</sup> *Yugoslav Survey*, 3/1990: 3-26. The survey was conducted by a consortium of several Yugoslav Universities and Institutes between 20 May and 26 June 1990 in all Yugoslav republics.

Slovenia and Kosovo were the two regions of Yugoslavia in which Marković's government found least support. Whereas 49% of the Yugoslav sample expressed 'complete agreement with the policies advocated by Ante Marković', this percentage was as low as 16% in Slovenia and 13% in Kosovo. Even on specifically economic issues, such as Marković's programme of market reforms, Slovenia and Kosovo placed themselves next to each other on the two lowest positions on the scale of support. In the most developed Yugoslav republic, Slovenia, Marković's market reforms were supported by 38% and in the least developed, Kosovo, by only 28% of the population. In another example, Kosovo and Slovenia were the two least optimistic regions when it came to Marković's anti-inflation programme (only 15% in Kosovo and 5% in Slovenia were confident that Marković would succeed in bringing it under full control; compared with 28% on the Yugoslav average). These data clearly demonstrate how little economic factors (such as the level of development) influenced political decisions in the last years of Yugoslavia. They also show how difficult, almost impossible was Marković's position. He was accused by Serbia of favouring the developed western regions in the country. But it was in Slovenia that he found the greatest opposition to his policy. He was seen as a 'cunning non-Yugoslav' by the Serbian leadership - yet in the ethnically heterogeneous regions of the country (such as in Vojvodina, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) he had the most support.

The results of the survey demonstrate that Marković was a much greater threat to Milošević than to Kučan. In Slovenia - the public was already sceptical about Yugoslav initiatives, even when they came from a liberal reformer and a Croat. By contrast, a large share of the Serbian population supported Marković's initiatives, many of which aimed at establishing an effective federal state. Marković's 'new socialism' was also seen as a veritable alternative to the 'bureaucratic leadership' that sank after the collapse of the LCY. In Serbia proper, 44% of the population was 'in full agreement', while an additional 41% was in 'partial agreement' with Marković's policies. The survey showed that 56% of the respondents had improved their opinion of Marković when compared with when he was elected six months earlier. It was no surprise, therefore, that Milošević needed to make a great effort to portray Marković as an 'enemy of Serbia'. Borisav Jović personally contributed to the anti-Marković campaign by writing a long article in Politika against Ante Marković:

'I wrote a series of three articles 'The Truth about Ante Marković' and sent it to Slobodan. He gave them to Politika. They will be published on 5, 6 and 7 [August 1990] under somebody's pen-name. We have to unmask him, because people are under many illusions about who and what he is. Many see him as a saviour, but he is just a common cheat and an enemy of the Serbian people,' wrote Jović in his diary on 2 August 1990 (1995:173).

The articles, subsequently published in the main Serbian daily, were a unique case of a member (Vice-President) of the State Presidency attacking his Prime Minister under a pen-name.

But the most serious threat to Milošević's and Jović's politics came from the popularity which Ante Marković enjoyed within the Yugoslav People's Army. Many in the Army, including those in the highest positions, were dissatisfied with Milošević's politics in Serbia. On 26 February 1990, General Blagoje Adžić, the Chief-of-the-Staff of the YPA (himself a Serb) conveyed this dissatisfaction in a conversation with Borisav Jović:

'He [Adžić] attacked Serbian politics in the strongest terms. He says Serbia is now isolated and opposed by Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and half of Montenegro; and that also half of Serbia is against the Serbian leadership... The unintelligent Serbian leadership is responsible for all of this. They [the Serbs] make mistake after mistake. All their actions had played into the hands of the western republics, and in fact helped them to realise their aims: anti-Yugoslavism and anti-Communism.'

Specifically, Adžić complained to Jović that the Serbian leaders did not need to antagonise the Slovenes by refusing dialogue with them, and had to distance themselves from the Greater-Serbs in Knin (Croatia). Adžić also criticised Serbian attempts to send 100,000 Serbs to Kosovo as a 'provocative and unrealistic' action. In Kosovo, Adžić said, dialogue with the Albanians would give better results than repression. 'It was a mistake when Azem Vllasi was removed. He was a suitable person to work with...', he said to Borisav Jović. General Adžić, the highest-ranked Serb in the Army leadership, was not only verbally dismissive of Milošević's politics: in January 1990 he refused to obey the Serbian request to use tanks against demonstrators in Kosovo (Jović, 1995:95).

In fact, even General Veljko Kadijević, the Federal Secretary for Defence (himself of mixed Serbo-Croat ethnic origins, from Croatia), was for a long time an unreliable ally of Milošević and Jović. He also tried to avoid the involvement of the Army in Kosovo and he stopped short of intervening against the Slovenian Constitutional amendments in September 1989. But, the main problem the Serbian leaders had with Kadijević in this period was his loyalty to Ante Marković. Although the Army and Serbia had 'the same objectives', as Jović noticed after spending holidays with Milošević and Kadijević in August 1989 (1995:45), Milošević was aware that 'Veljko might try to convince us to support Ante Marković a little bit more.' Milošević warned Jović to 'beware of this'. For the whole crucial year between August 1989 and August 1990, the Serbian leaders suspected that Kadijević's hesitant behaviour in fact originated in his 'split loyalty' between them and Marković. In December 1989, Kadijević openly supported Marković's new reforms and tried to convince the Serbs to accept them in exchange for Marković's later support of the Serbian position in changing

the Constitution.<sup>93</sup> Jović thought this proposal was 'naïve' and wondered 'how can Veljko not see it' (1995:79). In January 1990, Kadijević saw Marković's programme as the potential core for the unification of the country:

'He thinks that Croatia will be with Ante; that Bosnia will be with Croatia, and that Macedonia would not dare to risk her own future... On these grounds one should make a deal with Serbia... I warned him to think again. I do not share his position. The concept of Ante Marković aims at survival, not a resolution of the problem, and this is what plays into the hands of anti-Yugoslavia forces' (Jović, 1995: 92).

It was only in February 1990 that Kadijević became 'disappointed with the Federal Government'.<sup>94</sup> Until then, he was, as Borisav Jović said, 'under the obsession that Ante fought for Yugoslavia' (1995:118). It was only on another summer vacation, in August 1990, that Kadijević fully agreed with the three main Serbian leaders (Slobodan Milošević, Borisav Jović and Bogdan Trifunović) that 'Ante Marković is totally unacceptable and unreliable.' In a note in his diary of 10 August 1990, Jović described their conversation:

'No one any more doubts that he is a direct US stooge aiming at the destruction of the system and the removal from power of everyone who even thinks of socialism... He is playing the dirtiest possible traitors' game... One needs to finish with him, in any case... Veljko [Kadijević] calls him 'a son of a bitch'. He regrets that he saved him several times from his mistakes that could have compromised him, but he has no intention of repeating it... We should do anything to drive Marković and all others who are destroying the country mad...' (1995:177).

Yet, even then, Kadijević disagreed with Milošević on ideological and several practical issues. Between 1990 and 1991 the Army still argued that the existence of Yugoslavia depended on the renewal of the LCY, and it sent this message to various foreign representatives, including the main European armies they visited. For a significantly longer time, the Army remained committed to the old ideological paradigm that the existence of Yugoslavia depended on socialism, whereas the Serbian leaders in November 1989 moved to the argument that 'the first problem is the dissolution of the country, while the nature of the social order is only a secondary issue' (Jović, 16 November 1989, 1995:68). The gap between the two interpretations only widened after March 1990, when the Serbian leaders decided to create a new Party out of the Serbian and Montenegrin LCYs and Socialist Alliances if their attempts to renew the LCY failed. In March 1990, Milošević twice met Dobrica Ćosić. After their first (three-hour) conversation, Milošević was 'pleased', although neither

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<sup>93</sup> In one of his first reports to Washington, Warren Zimmermann concluded that the Army was a stabilizing, thus a positive force (1996/1999:86).

<sup>94</sup> The motive for Kadijević's anger at Marković was its ideological commitment: he accused the Prime Minister of being an agent of Western capitalism. Kadijević was less pragmatic and more dogmatic than Milošević.

he nor Jović shared Čosić's belief that Yugoslavia was not worth fighting for. However, it was in March 1990 that the Serbian leaders started thinking of Yugoslavia without Slovenia.<sup>95</sup>

'We agreed that we need to make a new Constitution, regardless of whether the Slovenes agree or not, and that then they should be left with the option of either being in Yugoslavia or out... We fear Croatia – they might leave the whole story and spoil it all. I hope the Croats are aware that this would create problems they could not resolve, and maybe even armed conflicts' (21 March 1990, 1995: 125).

After the second meeting with Čosić, Milošević promoted a new Serbian position at the meeting of the 'Co-ordination' Committee in Serbia, on 26 March 1990.

'We have concluded that the process of the disintegration of Yugoslavia is under way, in a manner similar to that of the LCY. It seems this cannot be halted. Serbia will sincerely try to preserve the federal Yugoslav state, but would also be prepared to live without Yugoslavia. If Yugoslavia disintegrates, we count on unity with Montenegro. We will not beg Macedonia [to join]. If they want to join, they will have to seek forgiveness for what they did to the victims of the First World War, who are still treated as occupiers. Our aim is to avoid bloodshed, to form a territory within which there will be no war. Outside these borders, war will be impossible to avoid, since Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot survive as a state, and it is hard to imagine a struggle for territory without blood. Serbia will not agree to confederation. The only possible way to accept it, but this is impossible to realise, would be contract-like guarantees of the rights of Serbian people in the other Yugo-states. Since this would be a provocative demand and unrealistic, and since the Serbs would be cheated even if everyone agreed on this, in reality Serbia has no reason to accept a confederation. No one can impose it on us... Serbia has decided to immediately prepare a new Constitution, which would be able to 'cover' the new independent Serbian state' (Jović, 26 March 1990, 1995:132).

The results of the first democratic Croatian elections in April 1990, in which Tudjman's CDC secured a majority in the *Sabor* (winning about 42% of the total vote and 56% of the seats) made any future agreement on Yugoslavia very unlikely. Additionally, Tudjman's openly anti-Serb rhetoric only poured oil onto the flames of Serbian nationalism. On his election as President of the State Presidency on 15 May 1990 Borisav Jović for the first time mentioned the need to introduce a Law on Secession, in order to enable any nation to leave Yugoslavia. In June 1990 the Serbian leaders announced that a Socialist Party of Serbia would be created. This decision 'confused and disappointed' General Kadijević.

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<sup>95</sup> The shift in Serbian politics was mirrored in the main Serbian media. Milorad Vučelić, the journalist closest to Čosić and Milošević, wrote in *Nin* (18 March 1990) that the LC Serbia decided to move away from the 'idea that Yugoslavia is a non-contested project'. The last session of the CC LC Serbia, Vučelić said, had come to the conclusion that Yugoslavia was still a rational and desirable project, but that 'no one should be begged to be with us in a united Yugoslavia and LCY.' On 25 March 1990, the main creator of the new Serbian Constitution Ratko Marković said that a referendum was the most suitable means to establish whether a nation wanted to remain in Yugoslavia or to leave (*Nin*, 25 March 1990). 'Serbia should not force anyone to remain in the federation... She must protect her dignity. She must not humiliate herself to save Yugoslavia, since she has the longest state tradition of all the Yugoslav countries, she has the richest constitutional history and the greatest international reputation...'

'He believes that this is the final end of Yugoslavia, and that the Americans have succeeded in their aim in Serbia - removing the LCY from the historical stage. He thinks the Serbs should have preserved the name 'Communist'. All their plans had now sunk without trace. It will be much more difficult, maybe impossible to preserve the country.... He is especially disappointed that Slobodan Milošević did not tell him about the Socialist Party of Serbia, they had spoken only two days before about further work within the LCY. He cannot recover from this. He has lost his 'point of balance',' Jović reported the reaction of Kadjević (1995:152-4).

In June 1990, Slobodan Milošević still doubted if the Army was willing to follow the Serbian plan of 'cutting off' all the non-Serbian parts of Yugoslavia in the west of the country.<sup>96</sup> By then the Serbs had already decided to make new borders for the new state. It was then that Milošević and Jović finally left the Yugoslav option behind and favoured the 'Greater Serbian' alternative instead. Referendums of the local population (especially the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) would in fact draw the new borders.

'He [Milošević] agrees with the 'expulsion' of Slovenia and Croatia, but he asks if the Army was willing to execute such an order? I told him they have to execute it, and that I have no doubt about this, but the problem is what to do with the Serbs in Croatia, and how to secure a majority in the SFRY Presidency for such a decision. Sloba had two ideas: first, to 'cut off' Croatia in such a way that the municipalities in Lika and Banija, and in Kordun, which had created a community, remained on our side, and that people later decided by a referendum if they wanted to stay here or to leave; and - secondly - that the members of the SFRY Presidency from Slovenia and Croatia were to be excluded from deciding on this decision, since they did not represent the part of Yugoslavia which made this decision. If the Bosnians vote in favour, there is then a 2/3 majority. Sloba wants us to make this decision in a week's time, if we want to save the state. Without Croatia and Slovenia, Yugoslavia will have 17 million inhabitants, which is enough for European standards' (1995:161).

The Army was still hesitant to accept the end of Yugoslavia. General Kadjević originally agreed with the Serbian new policy, but then withdrew, showing 'an incredible instability' (1995:163). The Army still wanted to 'defeat' the Croatian and Slovenian nationalists and to preserve Yugoslavia's unity. On the other hand, the Serbian leaders now accepted Čosić's argument, that this was no more than 'plain nonsense which would come back on us like a boomerang' (1995:169).

In May 1990 over 100 people were injured in fighting between the football supporters of 'Dinamo' (Zagreb) and 'Crvena Zvezda' (Belgrade) at a Zagreb Maksimir stadium. On 30 May, Franjo Tuđman, the head of the Croatian Democratic Community, was elected President of the Croatian Presidency, while his party formed the first democratically elected Croatian Government. The

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<sup>96</sup> Jović on 27 June 1990 (1995:160).

Serbian leaders, but also the Serbs in Croatia, perceived him as 'almost insanely anti-Serb'.<sup>97</sup> The media in Serbia compared Tudjman's party with the war-time Ustasha regime.<sup>98</sup> On 2 July in a referendum in Serbia, 86% of voters voted in favour of a new Serbian constitution. At the same time, 114 Albanian members of the Kosovo Assembly declared Kosovo an independent republic. On 3 July 1990, the Slovenian Republican Assembly passed a declaration on Slovenian sovereignty. Two days later, Serbia suspended the Kosovo Assembly and seized the radio and TV stations in Priština. On 25 July 1990 the Croatian Assembly (Sabor) approved 12 constitutional amendments, removing the word 'Socialist' from the name of the Republic, introducing a new flag with the Croatian check-board coat of arms and 'de-recognised' the Cyrillic alphabet in areas where it did not predominate. In a last minute change, several other, more radical proposals (such as to define Croatia as the 'nation-state of the Croatian nation', instead of a state of its citizens) were withdrawn. The former Communists, now renamed the 'Social-Democratic Party of Croatia', voted for the changes. The Serbs, who massively voted for the SDP at the April elections, now moved their support to the more radical Serbian Democratic Party, whose leaders denounced the changes and declared the sovereignty and autonomy of the Serbian people in Croatia, and their right to 'determine with whom and under what regime their people would live, and how they would integrate with the other nations in Yugoslavia'. In August, they held an unofficial referendum on the 'Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina', and took over several police stations and other governmental offices. The Croatian government was prevented from intervening by the Yugoslav Army, who moved in between the Serbs and Croats, in order to 'protect the villages of the ethnic Serbs from discrimination'. Although the Army claimed they were only playing a peace-keeping role between the Serbs and Croats, they in fact were marking the new borders of the 'Serbian unit', just as Borisav Jović and Slobodan Milošević had planned two months earlier.<sup>99</sup> The Army was now fully engaged in protecting one ethnic group against the other - even if, despite itself, it was still the case that the Army was no longer protecting the constitutional order as it was defined by the 1974 Constitution: this order simply did not exist any longer.

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<sup>97</sup> Borisav Jović, 22 August 1990, 1995: 182.

<sup>98</sup> Milorad Vučelić in *Nin* on 25 February 1990. Many statements by Tudjman and his closest political aides only poured fuel on this interpretation. The President of the Croatian League of Communists Ivica Račan also warned that the CDC was 'a Party of dangerous ambitions' (*Nin*, 4 March 1990). Croatian journalists, such as Jelena Lovrić (*Danas*, 6 March 1990) compared Franjo Tudjman with Vojislav Šešelj. Both of them expressed their ambitions to extend Serbia/Croatia to the Bosnian territories. Both the Serbian and Croatian press compared Tudjman not with Milošević and Kučan, but with the Serbian extreme nationalists such as Vuk Drašković and Vojislav Šešelj. Unlike them, Tudjman won an election in Croatia, becoming the first genuine ethnic nationalist to come to power in a Yugoslav republic.

<sup>99</sup> Still, General Kadijević was 'appalled' when he saw that the radical Serb nationalists supported him' (Jović, 1995:179). It seems that he did not see that by then there was little difference left between the official Serbian position and that of the Serbian extreme nationalists.

## 7.12. Conclusion

August 1990 could be taken as the effective end of the Yugoslav state and the beginning of the war for the territories of the new successor states. By then, no elements of the Yugoslav federation (as legally established by the 1974 Constitution) had been left intact. The LCY did not exist any more and new parties had been legalised in all republics. Slovenia and Croatia ceased to be 'socialist republics' and were for the first time run by anti-communist parties and coalitions. The borders of the republics were contested, primarily by the Serbs, but also by the Croats (in Bosnia) and Albanians (in Kosovo and Macedonia). Ethnic homogenisation was for the first time taken as the basis of politics in all republics without exception. Socialism as an ideology was either openly rejected (as in Croatia and Slovenia) or ranked second to nation-state formation (as in Serbia). No one any longer wanted to 'reform' the system and no one tried to convince the others that Kardelj's concept meant something different from what happened in political reality. The Yugoslav institutions had either already collapsed or were completely ignored. New 'entities' had been declared in Kosovo and the Serbian parts of Croatia (Krajina).<sup>100</sup>

Finally, nothing was left intact of the narrative of Brioni (or indeed of any 'Titoist') Yugoslavia. In Serbia, just as in Croatia, the new narratives were based on a clear opposition to the previous interpretations of history and identity. These narratives were at the same time incompatible with each other - they blamed the other for the historical injustice done to 'us'. The internal cohesion of the emerging nation-states was now based on the difference between them and their neighbours. When these differences were small (as in case of language between Serbs and Croats), they were deliberately enlarged by state intervention. History was re-interpreted in such a way that all examples of co-operation were eliminated and 'forgotten'. 'Ethnic hatred' and 'ancient conflicts' now emerged as the main preoccupation of Serbs and Croats living next to each other.

This, of course, did not have to happen. Had the Yugoslav nations had more responsible political leaders, not only at these crucial moments but in previous times as well, the chain of events might have been quite different. The leaders played the most important, decisive role in what happened to Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was, I argue along the lines of many others,<sup>101</sup> destroyed from inside and from the top of the social and political pyramid down.

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<sup>100</sup> This would be later followed by the declaration of the 'Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina', the 'Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna' and the Albanian Republic of 'Ilyrida' in Macedonia.

<sup>101</sup> Such as, for example, Zimmermann (1996/9:VII), Perović (1993), Goati (1995) and Sekelj (1990).



Saying this, however, one needs to understand why the Yugoslav politicians behaved as they did. Why did they behave in an 'irrational', and 'irresponsible' manner? Why did they take the decisions they did? Were they simply incapable of understanding the real interests of their peoples? Were they simply irrational? The main argument of this thesis is that they acted on their beliefs, in the ideological context in which their actions made perfect sense to them and to many other people who – tacitly or actively – legitimised their actions. To the leading Yugoslav communist leaders in the 1970s and 1980s, Yugoslavia made sense as long as it was conceptualised as a socialist self-managing federation of republics and provinces. Once they realised that this concept was no longer viable, or was not the best possible, they needed to find another narrative to preserve and reform Yugoslavia, or to allow others to do so. To those who found themselves there it proved impossible to agree on any alternative narrative that would keep Yugoslavia together. Yet, still less did they want to allow 'anti-socialist', 'statist' or any other 'hostile' forces to replace them. They simply could not allow that, since they still believed in the very narrative they themselves had created. Yugoslavia, thus, became a victim of its own narrative, whose elements had been collapsing for decades, pulling the Yugoslav institutions after them.

Despite the optimistic predictions of Ante Marković (shared by most of the Western analysts of the Yugoslav crisis) that the disintegration of the LCY would not necessarily lead to the collapse of the Yugoslav state, but would even strengthen democracy in the country, the opposite happened. The League of Yugoslav Communists was not only the ruling party, but was the core, the essence of Yugoslavia, as defined in the 1974 Constitution and within Kardelj's concept that created it. Furthermore, the concept claimed that Yugoslavia (in the only form in which it deserved to exist) was created by the Party, and that it would – as a state – 'wither away' once the Party succeeded in making a state-less, self-managing society. Ultimately, the Party was more important than the state itself. While the state was to wither away, the Party was expected to lead society towards the final objective: communist self-management. Without a real state, and now without a Party to replace it, there was little left to bind the Yugoslav republics together.<sup>102</sup>

As a result of a chain of events in Yugoslav history by 1990 no common beliefs, no ideology, no narrative were left to keep Yugoslavia together. And, while the common beliefs of the communist elite made almost impossible compromises (such as that of the 1974 Constitution) viable, the lack of common beliefs now made much more viable options impossible. The fate of the Yugoslav Army, a real force that started crumbling once the ideological glue that held it together disappeared, demonstrated that without common beliefs even the most powerful institutions become powerless.

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<sup>102</sup> The Army was first to feel the consequences of the lack of a federal state. It soon became, as Gen. Kadrijević said in the title of his book - 'an Army without a State'.

The state, the most powerful of all institutions, now simply collapsed: despite the unwillingness of the great powers to recognise it; despite its powerful law-enforcement agencies; despite even the emotional attachment she commanded from its leaders (even of Kučan and Milošević) and many of its citizens.

Left without its ideology, Yugoslavia now became unsustainable.

# Conclusion

## 8.1. The Main Argument

The disintegration of Yugoslavia was the result of many factors, not of a single one. But the main one, I argue, was the break-down of the ideological consensus within the Yugoslav political elite during an extended period of 15 years preceding the actual disintegration of Yugoslav institutions. In this thesis I have analysed the emergence (1967-1974), implementation, crisis and the breakdown of the fourth constitutive concept of Yugoslavia (1974-1990).

This ideological consensus was based on Edvard Kardelj's interpretation of Marxism (Chapter Two) and on a fragile but viable compromise reached between the various sections of the political elite during the 1967-1974 Constitutional debate (Chapter Three). The main notion behind the new concept was the Marxist idea of (direct) democracy, which included the gradual replacement of the state with social self-management in the transitional period from capitalism to communism ('socialism'). In this process the role of the political elite was exceptional. Its main objective was to formulate a vision of the future, and - through the League of Communists - to lead society towards it. The Party was not legitimised in elections (as in representative democracy) but in its own mission, based on Marx's (and Kardelj's) understanding of the *General Laws of History*. The politics of the Fourth Yugoslavia was politics of its elite. It is, therefore, of crucial importance to understand the motives and reasons behind the decisions taken by the elite. I argue that without focussing on elite's perceptions of reality, one cannot understand Yugoslav politics in this period. Although 'objective' factors, such as economic crisis, ethnic structure of the country, international politics, processes of modernisation and globalisation, etc., provided the context in which the elite operated, it was the elite's perception of these problems that decisively influenced their decisions. Without focussing on the subjective, we would fail to explain the action itself. The main aim of this thesis has been to map out the elite's perceptions in order to emphasise this point.

By saying this, I do not argue that the elite could or even wished to neglect reality, nor that it was insensitive to public discontent, the activities of 'dissident' circles, international pressure, the ethnic complexity of Yugoslavia, or its economic and political crises. On the contrary, both the constitutional debate in the 1967-1974 period and the actual period of the Fourth Yugoslavia demonstrate that the Yugoslav elite recognised the existence of these elements and debated on how to react to the problems it faced. Nor have I argued that their personal interests or interests of certain social groups they belonged to (such as nations, republics, etc.) did not play any role in their actions. As the evidence presented throughout the thesis demonstrates, members of the

elite were concerned with the interests of their social groups (i.e., republics), in the way they perceived them. However, these interests were always interpreted from the Marxist (Kardeljist) viewpoint. Although many members of the elite argued in favour of abandoning certain elements of the narrative, the majority (especially in the Party leadership) was in favour of minimal (if any) changes to the Kardelj concept, and successfully blocked any significant deviation from it. This commitment to Kardelj's concept kept the Yugoslav elite together, although internally divided about the *right interpretation* of the model, until the model itself was challenged in the 1986-1987 period, primarily in Serbia.

The Kardelj concept was a genuine attempt to respond to re-emergent national and other social questions by introducing the notion of anti-statism and de-centralisation. It was not only because they were aware of the potential explosiveness of the national question in a multi-ethnic federation, but also because they wanted to offer a viable alternative to both the inter-war doctrine of 'national unity' and to the previous centralised model of socialist 'brotherhood and unity', that the Yugoslav elite agreed on Kardelj's ideas. This was especially the case with the Serbian leaders in the 1967-1974 period, who felt unjustly suspected of 'centralism' and 'unitarism'. In Kardelj's views de-centralisation was the pre-condition for self-management, which was an alternative to statist politics. Anti-statism was also an alternative to Soviet socialism, which they identified as the main potential danger for the future of Yugoslav socialism. The Yugoslav elite aimed at demonstrating that its model was a viable alternative to both representative (liberal) democracies and mono-party political systems modeled on Soviet example.

Once agreed upon by the political elites, this ideological consensus was codified into a complex legislative and political practice, becoming the constitutive concept of the last (fourth) Yugoslavia. As demonstrated in Chapters Four and Five, this constitutive concept was, however, permanently contested both from within the elite and from outside. Controversies about the relation between reality and ideology characterised Yugoslav politics in the whole period I here analyse. Various segments of the elite argued over what its main creators (Kardelj and Tito) really meant and intended when proposing one or another legal or practical solution. For as long as the two leading figures of the Yugoslav federation were alive (until 1979 and 1980 respectively) they were the supreme arbiters of the meaning of the constitutive concept. After the deaths of Kardelj and Tito the 'impartial' and supreme position of the federal state disappeared. Political conflicts in Yugoslavia in the 1980s took the form of a struggle for the 'correct' interpretation of the meaning of the constitutive concept.

The impossibility of either imposing one interpretation by simple majority voting, or of reaching a new compromise between the sections of the political elite, caused a permanent stalemate in federal institutions, leading to disintegration. The final push aimed at occupying

the power vacuum was attempted in the 1987-1990 period, when the two dominant interpretations of Kardelj's concept ('defenders' and 'reformers' of the Constitution) evolved towards two separate (and mutually irreconcilable) programmes: one which insisted on unity in Yugoslavia (often identified with Serbia and its party leader Slobodan Milošević), another proposing further confederalisation (the Slovenian, identified with Milan Kučan). Unable to reach any compromise between the two options, and pressed by public protests and 'dissident activities' in both republics, the Serbian and Slovenian communists gradually moved from two different interpretations of Kardelj's concept to constructing new concepts based on a separate national, not an all-Yugoslav consensus. New participants (such as the media, intellectual elites and spontaneously emergent groups of citizens) entered politics. Although originally neither Milošević nor Kučan aimed at supporting nationalist movements but - on the contrary, at reducing nationalist influence on public protests - they *de facto* acted as shields and promoters of Serbian and Slovenian nationalism.

The shift from the principle of communist solidarity against nationalism to the populist principle of 'national reconciliation' (i.e., co-operation of all groups within a nation, which included not only communists but also their opponents) made a new compromise within the elite impossible. The Yugoslav institutions, based on highly ideological grounds, collapsed as the result of the collapse of the ideological consensus upon which they had been built. At the same time, the differences between various segments of the 'opposition' were equally great, if not even greater than those within the elite itself. This prevented the emergence of a non-communist compromise for a *fifth Yugoslavia*. The 'anarchy', in which the divided elite failed to react to the 'culture of apocalypse' promoted by nationalist circles within both the intellectual elite and the leaders of popular discontent, created a situation of fears and uncertainties, in which the most extreme options became possible.

The rapid change of the context in which Yugoslav politics operated in its last years made even the most radical changes possible. Public protests of Albanians, Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo and the growth of alternative concepts among the intellectual elite (analysed in Chapters Six and Seven) exposed the weaknesses of the Yugoslav elite and challenged the legitimacy of the constitutive concept, both in its lack of democratic content and in its approach to the national question. When the Cold War was over and the Berlin Wall had fallen the existence of Yugoslavia, just like that of Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union, was no longer guaranteed *per se*. International forces demanded its democratisation, i.e., a new constitutive concept for Yugoslavia, one that would make it a 'democratic and united country'. But such a programme was unacceptable to the main Yugoslav participants.

This thesis is focussed on the *prelude* to the actual disintegration of the Yugoslav state, which - I argue - must be studied in order to understand the disintegration itself. Contrary to those who

have argued that the collapse of Yugoslavia was the result of the 'revolutionary' changes in Eastern Europe, or of a sudden change of mind (almost 'overnight') of its population and leaders, or of the accession to power of one or another political leader, here I demonstrate that it came as an end of a long process, in which all the instruments of this collapse had already been previously 'tested'. Political leaders, such as Milošević and Kučan (and, indeed, others) did not enter Yugoslav politics from somewhere outside of it: they represented the already existent trends within it. Once in power, however, they influenced the course of events, acting from their own perceptions of reality. It was my intention to reconstruct these perceptions to the greatest possible extent, not only of these two leaders, but of others who influenced Yugoslav politics in its last phase.

Currently accessible sources suggest that none of these leaders (including Milošević and Kučan) intended to destroy Yugoslavia. To many of them, as to the majority of the Yugoslav population, to almost all analysts from within the country, and to many outside it, what happened came as a surprise. To them, it looked as if they would save Yugoslavia, in one or another form. It turned out that they were wrong. Viewing reality from the ideological position they shared, they certainly could not foresee that the 'old world' of capitalism, nationalism, or 'statism' would ever come back. To them, socialist revolution and its achievements were irreversible: the only question (though by no means unimportant) was which type of socialism would win. Had they not been committed to their own visions and beliefs, even when it was almost obvious that these visions contradicted reality, the events would perhaps have taken another direction, as they finally did, once the ideological beliefs of the leading members of the elite (such as those of Milošević and Kučan) had been shaken.

Yugoslavia certainly did not have to disintegrate. There are no inevitable events in politics. Politics is a highly subjective activity, not a pure physical reflection of everlasting social divisions. It is up to the relevant participants to decide which course of events will prevail. In socialist systems, the political elite was this relevant participant. Therefore, as Goati argues 'it was the attitude of the ruling political elites that decided which of the following courses events would take: democratic integration of the country, peaceful separation of the republics, or war' (1997:456).

At the same time, however, at one moment it looked as if the elites themselves faced a situation of no exit, in which no decision could improve the situation. Whatever they did seemed to them a mistake, or – at its best – the least bad decision. This was felt most directly by the Yugoslav Army, paralysed between its unwillingness to take firm (but anti-constitutional) measures and its strong opposition to further divisions in the country. As the political elites lost full control over events, they found themselves in the position of having to choose between representing the interests of their 'electoral constituency' (i.e., republic/province) and being defeated. In

Slovenia and Serbia (and from January 1990 in Montenegro), the elites decided to take up this challenge, putting themselves at the head of national movements. In Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, they rejected this option and were - consequently - defeated in the first democratic elections in 1990. The shift from the attempt to create a cross-national intra-elite consensus to creating a consensus within their respective nations was the real turning point in the history of Yugoslavia's disintegration. This thesis focused more on those who achieved this new consensus (Slovenia and Serbia) rather than on those elites which failed to transform themselves from communist to nationalist concepts. I admit that this was somewhat 'unfair' to all those in other segments of the elite (such as the Macedonian, Bosnian, and Croatian leaders) who stubbornly refused to accommodate their position to nationalist trends in their republics, even if they knew they would lose elections to ethnic nationalists. Paradoxically, the most loyal Kardeljists now became, as Zimmermann (1996/1999:32) argues, 'closer to the culture of Western political moderation than members of many noncommunist Yugoslav political groupings'. But they did not manage to prevent nationalist leaders from taking over in their republics too.

I argued in this thesis that the collapse of Yugoslavia was not the result of 'ethnic hatred' among its constitutive nations. Indeed, the main political conflicts within the Yugoslav elite were not between 'representatives' of Yugoslav ethnic groups, and not even between republics. Even in its last phase, when the two new rival concepts were identified with Slovenia and Serbia, the 'coalitions' around them crossed the borders of these two republics, dividing Yugoslavia into two halves. Subsequently, the wars that followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia were not 'inevitable' either. As Zimmermann (1996/1999:VII) convincingly illustrates, they were the result of neither 'ancient ethnic or religious hostilities' nor of the collapse of communism at the end of the cold war, not even of the failures of the Western countries. In fact, as he says, it was 'amazing how many Yugoslavs resisted, and continue to resist, the incessant racist propaganda' developed by ethnic nationalists in the last years of Yugoslavia and the first years after the break-up. While Yugoslavia disintegrated because of the lack of a new constitutive concept which would glue together the differences within it, the wars were the result of other narratives, other ideologies (the ones of ethnic nationalism), which attempted to create other types of unity from the top down in a more or less similar manner (though with different substance) to the old communist elite in the immediate post-WWII period. They needed the *other*, the *enemy* to consolidate the fragile unity within the new political nations. The 'ethnic hatred' was originally generated in a way similar to that by which support for the communist narrative had been created in the first years after the socialist revolution: by intimidation and elimination to all opposition of the demagogic designs invented by the new elites.

Analysis of these new narratives and their 'constitutive concepts', as well as of the mechanisms for creating 'unity' within the new nations is, however, a topic for another, but no less relevant, research project.

## 8.2. Contributions to the Field and Further Research

There are two major contributions to the field of Yugoslav studies I would hope this thesis can claim.

First, this work presents new sources (such as interviews, unpublished documents, correspondence, etc.) related to the period and area I have studied. More than any research so far, it has aimed at reconstructing the motives and reasons for political actions as expressed and understood by the political elite itself. No other research into Yugoslav elite politics has presented interviews with so many relevant participants, and in no other work have the diaries and memoirs of participants been analysed in such detail. There is, of course, much more to be done before the whole picture of this regime-collapse and state-disintegration is completed. However, by the time the archives become fully accessible, many of the participants will not be able to explain their reasons for acting as they did. Since I define politics as subjective activity, I believe their explanations, although certainly not the whole truth, are a necessary and important part of the truth. I hope this thesis makes a contribution towards this objective. This research - including further interviews which I plan to conduct in the immediate future - represents, I hope, a necessary first step for any further research, which could be completed only once the archives are fully accessible.

Secondly, this thesis, I believe, offers in many respects an original interpretation of the events which happened in the analysed period. Although several authors have emphasised the importance of ideology in Yugoslav politics (Pavković, 1997; Wachtel, 1998; Ferdinand, 1991; Radošević, 1996; Vejvoda, 1996, etc.) what they normally understood by 'ideology' was the 'Yugoslav idea' and its interpretation by various groups of intellectuals, especially in the 1980s. The Marxist origins of the Yugoslav official ideology were somehow neglected, perhaps on the grounds that ideology was no longer an important element of political life in the 1980s. This thesis argues the opposite: that Kardelj's concept was yet another attempt to formulate and implement the Yugoslav version of the Marxist ideology, and that this interpretation was at the core of political action in Yugoslavia. In this respect, Yugoslavia was perhaps never so 'ideologised' as in the period analysed in this thesis. Although I do not argue that ideological motives played an exclusive role in the actions of the Yugoslav political leaders, I do emphasise that the actions themselves cannot be fully understood without their ideological context. As Lapenna points out 'the knowledge and study of these theories [the Marxist doctrines of state



and law] is, irrespective of their scientific value, an absolutely essential element' in any attempt to understand the nature of communist societies (1964:2).

More than other works in this area, this study is focused on the link between elite and ideology, on (as expressed in its title) the ideological consensus within the Yugoslav political elite. I aimed to map out the beliefs of the members of the political elite and their interpretations of the complex reality they found themselves in (economic crisis, international circumstances, ethnic complexity, constitutional structure, etc.). I argue that although all these ('objective') factors provided the context in which the events leading to the collapse of Yugoslavia happened, it was up to the political actors themselves to 'use' them in one or another way. By themselves, neither economic crisis, nor ethnic complexity, nor the changed international structure of the world would have necessarily led to the break-up of Yugoslavia, although all of them facilitated the emergence of new, alternative 'constitutive concepts' which ultimately brought about the emergence of new states. Only when these factors became interpreted in certain ways by political actors, so as to construct new constitutive concepts instead of the old one, did the state collapse. The main novelty of this thesis, I suggest, is in demonstrating the permanent interaction between the objective and the subjective, by following the reactions of the political elites to the challenges they faced from outside their ranks. It is the analysis of this interaction that I suggest as the most appropriate way of explaining the crisis and collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1974-1990 period.

I also hope I have successfully corrected some misconceptions in the debate on the collapse of Yugoslavia. Some of them, like the argument about 'ethnic hatred', have - unfortunately - become so frequent and influential that they have already entered the dominant public, political and even academic, discourses. I understand my analysis is unlikely to change the firm beliefs of those who argue that Yugoslavia collapsed because its nations hated each other from the very beginning, from 1918, or indeed from much further back in the past. However, I would be satisfied if this thesis has made even a small contribution to displaying how inadequate this claim is.

As a historical case-study, this thesis does not pretend to make a general point about why states disintegrate or why regimes collapse. It may, however, formulate a hypothesis for further research on the collapse of states in general, and communist multi-ethnic federations in particular. The hypothesis - that states disintegrate once their constitutive concepts (based on narratives and ideologies) collapse - should be further tested by experts in comparative politics. An immediate choice of cases to be included in such an analysis is obvious: the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, two socialist federations which disintegrated at about the same time as Yugoslavia. Bunce's recent comparison (1999) between these three cases could be a good starting point, but it should be supplemented with analyses of ideologies, which Bunce failed to

produce. Another interesting case study would include countries with an 'original' interpretation of Marxism, such as Albania, China, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Ferdinand's (1991) analysis of three main interpretations of Marxism (Soviet, Chinese and Yugoslav) in the light of the events in these three states in the 1980s and 1990s is a good source, although his conclusion that because of the ideology these three states were strong, not weak, is contested in my research here. The post-doctoral project I intend to conduct at the European University Institute in Florence - on 'Yugoslavia: the state that withered away', should perhaps be a good opportunity to broaden and deepen my argument further and to relate it in more detail to other case-studies and to analyses within the field of comparative politics.

My hypothesis would not be fully tested before a contrasting case of a non-communist multi-ethnic state is included, and I suggest the United Kingdom to be this case. If there is anywhere in Europe where processes of globalisation clashed with processes of nationalism; where loyalties to separate ethnic groups sought a compromise with loyalty to a larger multi-cultural state and with the even wider European supra-national entity, then it is in the United Kingdom. Only the future will show which way the UK will go: towards further devolution of power from the top down (or even to partition) or towards consolidating the British nation as a 'mini-globalised society' (to use Giddens' expression). The question: why did Yugoslavia, Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia collapse and the United Kingdom did not (or has not yet!) would soon bring us back to the approach I have followed in this thesis: to an analysis of history, ideology (especially different notions of the state) and elite perceptions of reality.

This thesis hopes to make a modest contribution to the field of the methodology of social science too. Although it is certainly not at its central focus, the thesis demonstrates that Skinner's analytical approach could be implemented not only when it comes to medieval political ideas, but also when we analyse contemporary political history. Socialist regimes, such as the Yugoslav, were created on an ideological basis and remained committed to ideas developed by Marx and Marxists. It is for this reason that no analysis of communist politics is complete without being a history of ideas too. Even if to an outsider the rhetoric of communism seemed as pure ritual, a *wooden language* without any sensible meaning, for insiders (including the population at large), at any rate in Yugoslavia, it was rarely only a meaningless talk.

In most cases, Yugoslav political rhetoric (especially in intra-elite debates) was not pure demagoguery - it was an expression of the intentions and beliefs of the political actors, and an analyst ought to take it seriously. Although they rarely neglected the importance of the structural circumstances they acted within, the politicians were not pure 'agents' of nations, classes, their own social status, etc. Even less did they under socialism - which was not a 'representative democracy' - represent social groups as they were. They represented their own vision of historical necessities. This is why, if we want to understand communism, studying

these visions has the same importance as studying electoral laws in the case of representative democracies. The struggle for the 'right' interpretation of texts, often in forms not unlike 'philological seminars' was, therefore, if not central, then certainly an important activity in a socialist society. This is why the methodology suggested by Skinner, himself a historian of ideas, proves to be helpful. In addition, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, the four methodological mistakes identified by Skinner (*prolepsis*, *parochialism*, *ideal type* and *coherence myths*) are at the core of the frequent misunderstandings of Yugoslav politics in the 1974-1990 period.

Yugoslavia was - as Aleksa Djilas said - a difficult country to understand, perhaps even more so for those who lived in it and felt some attachment to it. It was a country of paradoxes. Its elite did not fail to use examples from the tragic past to warn about the danger of nationalism and chauvinism. Yet, it failed to prevent the past from repeating itself in its new form 45 years after the horrors of the civil war within the Second World War. Its leaders jailed 'nationalists' and nationalists. Yet they themselves shielded and - ultimately - assisted the rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia. They thought Yugoslavia could never disintegrate, and should not become a country of statism or ethnic nationalism ever again. Yet, it indeed disintegrated, while both ethnic nationalism and statism re-appeared in all its parts, in all republics and provinces. They constructed a system which was economically the most advanced and politically the most 'liberal' in the socialist hemisphere. Yet, it all ended up in sky-high inflation and in a war which ignored the human rights and freedoms of all its citizens, and especially of all minorities. Once an example of tolerance between religious and ethnic groups, Yugoslavia became a symbol for ethnic violence and intolerance at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is even more paradoxical is that those who held in their hands the reins of power in more than four decades of Yugoslav post-war politics, now appear like prophets who accurately claimed this could all happen if the project of self-managing socialism was defeated. The elite that once looked so powerful, was at the same time powerless to stop the process initiated largely by itself. All their good intentions ended up in disaster and they could not understand how and why. They found themselves surprised, angry, disappointed and misunderstood. And many Yugoslavs felt the same.

Finally: a personal note. Regardless of how much a researcher tries to be 'objective' and personally detached from his/her subject, I do not believe this is (always) possible. It would not be in accordance with my own thesis if I said I had no personal motives and reasons to undertake this research. I was born in Yugoslavia and have been influenced by the events I have analysed here. Like so many of my compatriots, I lived through this period, sharing with them fears and hopes, disappointments and anger, pride and shame. The events I analysed here influenced my life and the lives of all of us born in a country that does not exist any longer. My motive was to understand why these events happened. It would be very bold to say I know the

whole answer. Some things cannot be understood, and never will be. But I hope it would not be too bold to say that I have explained at least some of them, and not only to myself.

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Anthony Giddens, June 1999, parts published in Feral, 10 June 1999, the whole text in Acque e Terre 4/5/1999:19-24.

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Catherine Samary, June 1996, published in Arkzin, 15 June 1996.

Josip Županov, December 1995.

### **5.B. With Political Actors:**

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28 June 1983  
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