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# The battle of Kosovo, hero cults, and Serbian state formation: an analysis of Serbian political culture

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## Recommended Citation

THE BATTLE OF KOSOVO, HERO CULTS, AND SERBIAN STATE FORMATION:

AN ANALYSIS OF SERBIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

March 2010

BY

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*"The past is behind, learn from it.*
*The future is ahead, prepare for it. The present is here, live it.*
*Myth, memory, history-these are three alternative ways to capture and account for an elusive*
*past, each with its own persuasive claim."*

*Warren I. Susman*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my thesis advisers Prof. Alex Papadopoulos, Prof. James Krokar, and Prof. Richard Farkas for their insight and encouragement.

Also, thank you to my family and friends for their unyielding support.

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**CHAPTER ONE:**
**INTRODUCTION**

**The Study: Serbian Political Culture**

For many Serbs their nation's past presents a pretext for their present political reality. The past defines what the present represents and what the future will be like. The past remains deeply engrained in Serbian political culture manifesting itself in the national and cultural identity of each Serb.

In this thesis I examine those mediums that enable past events and institutions to shape present-day Serbian political reality. I begin with the hypothesis that events and institutions of the Serbs under the Ottoman Empire shaped the political and cultural realities and identities. Events, like the Battle of Kosovo, and institutions, like the Serbian Orthodox Church, continue to play a substantial role in defining Serbian political and cultural identity. I define the Battle of Kosovo as a crucial moment in Serbian national history which influenced the Serbs to develop a sense of cultural self in opposition to the occupying Ottoman Muslim forces. Under the Ottomans, the Serbian Orthodox Church promoted the idea that God, manifesting himself at the Battle of Kosovo, made the Serbs his chosen people. Throughout this thesis I look for clues of the Battle of Kosovo in Serbian history. Specifically, I analyze the political culture of the Serbs during different historical periods- during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, in the semi-independent and later de jure independent Serbian state, in communist Yugoslavia, and finally under the regime of Slobodan Milošević.

Analyzing Serbian political culture throughout different historical periods allows us better to understand the causes behind the Serbs resistance to cultural, social and political change in the present. For example, many Serbs continue to resist Western political ideas of liberalism and individualism, despite culturally being exposed to them not only in the early Serbian

nineteenth century state but also in present-day Serbia.  Furthermore, many Serbs continue to support communal and patriarchal values in their social and political relationships.  By examining the causes of communalism and patriarchy, and how these two ideas are manifested in Serbian society, we are able better to understand Serbian political culture.

**Research Methodology and Literature Review**

I have approached my research question from a combination of historical, political and sociological perspectives.  By analyzing historical and sociological texts I have established that Serbian political culture is predominantly communal and patriarchal.  Using this as my starting point I have looked selectively in my sources for clues and signals of the influence of the Battle of Kosovo, but also the Serbian Orthodox Church, on Serbian political culture and identity.  Please note that in this thesis I represent only one aspect of Serbian political culture.

My research is qualitative and interpretive.  I have based it mainly on secondary sources, which include historical, political, and sociological sources.  The primary sources that I have used include Serbia's Constitutions from the early nineteenth century and onward, and official European Union documents.

A secondary source that I have used extensively in my research is <u>A History of Modern Serbia 1804-1918</u> written by Michael Boro Petrovich, a well-respected scholar on Balkan history.  In <u>A History of Modern Serbia 1804-1918</u> Petrovich examines the history of the Serbs from the First Serbian Uprising until the Treaty of Versailles in 1918.  Petrovich uses both primary and secondary sources in his book.  Employing a historiographic and interpretive approach, Petrovich offers an in-depth analysis on the socio-cultural and political developments in Serbian society.

For more information on the political development of the Serbs I turned to Alex N. Dragnich's <u>The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia</u>.  Dragnich, a political

scientist, examined the development of Serbian political culture from the period of the First

Serbian Uprising to the development of parliamentary government in early twentieth century. In

Dragnich's work he argues that the Serbs political development was rather intense in that they

successfully created a democratic political system in a very short period of time. Dragnich

argues that the Serbs, as a national group, were pre-wired for democracy in society due to the

strong tradition of communalism in Serbian society, which was brought about by the zadruga

system of social organization.[1] Serbian communalism was free of sharp class divisions and

ethnic or regional differences, while it, however, nurtured strong sentiment of national identity

which existed long before Serbian nation-building occurred.[2]

Socio-Anthropologist Ivan Čolović in The Politics of Identity in Serbia presents Serbian

national and cultural identity through an ethnological and sociological study of Serbian cultural

and political identity. Čolović examines the origins of the Serbian national myth, which he finds

in discourse linked to the Battle of Kosovo namely concerning ideas on heroism, time, national

identity and political borders. Čolović argues that the biggest obstacle to democratization in

Serbian society is the continual reinforcement of the Serbian national myth.

To substantiate further some of Čolović's arguments on Serbian national and cultural

identity, I relied on Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals: The Quest for an Eternal Identity by

Christos Mylonas. In Mylonas' work he examines the complex interaction between the Serbian

Orthodox Church and the Serbs from the period of Ottoman colonialization to the present in

pursuit of defining Serbian national and cultural identity. Mylonas argues that the Serbian

Orthodox Church sacralized Serbian national identity, creating out of the past a "social constant

and a lineage of thought in the life of the Serbian individual and his community".[3]

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[1] Ibid., 117-118.
[2] Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 115-116.
[3] Mylonas, *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals*, xi.

I relied on 'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism by Jasna Dragović-Soso, a professor of political science, to illustrate the role that Serbian intellectuals have played in Serbian national revival from the beginning of the decline of communism to the Milošević regime.  Dragović-Soso argues that the Serbian intellectuals nurtured Serbian national identity during the communist period and under Milošević making them the saviors of the Serbian nation. Dragović-Soso bases her research on both secondary and primary sources, including many personal interviews.

**Chapter Outline**

In Chapter One of this thesis I examine the relevant events and institutions in Serbian society during the rule of the Ottomans that influenced the transformation of Serbian cultural identity and political reality.  My conclusion is that the Battle of Kosovo represents the defining moment in Serbian national history.  The Battle of Kosovo, signifying the defeat of the powerful Ottoman army over the Serbs, led the Serbian Orthodox Church to initiate its campaign designed to preserve Serbian cultural and religious identity, leading to the formation of the Serbian national myth.  Significant of this period is also the role of the zadruga social structure in Serbian society as the chief unit of social organization.  Most importantly, the zadruga social structure promoted a form of communalism in Serbian society which continues to shape Serbian political culture and national identity.  Finally, I conclude that patriarchy became a central feature of Serbian cultural identity and later political culture after the Battle of Kosovo and with the conquest of the Ottomans, who brought traditional Islamic cultural values to the Balkans.

In Chapter Two I provide an in-depth analysis on how the political culture of the Serbian rural population shaped political, social and cultural processes in society in the semi-independent Serbian state.  In early Serbian political history, the Serbian rural population supported those political interest groups who successfully tapped into the patriarchal aspect of Serbian cultural

identity and political culture.  The Serbian rural population represented the most numerous social group in early Serbia and each political interest group perceived its support as central to gaining political power.  In this period, Serbian society witnessed the development of constitutionalism as the overarching body of law promulgated to promote law and order in society and bring the state ideologically closer to Western Europe.  Nonetheless Serbian constitutionalism came about from a tension between external forces emanating from Western European political ideology and philosophy, and indigenous ideas originating from patriarchy and other conservative values.  These competing forces caused a rift between the intellectuals and the rurals in Serbian society and further divided the two groups.

In Chapter Three I examine the gradual spread and support of socialist-populist values and principles in Serbian society.  The Serbian rural population widely accepted socialist-populist ideas and values due to their communal but also patriarchal political culture leading them to support the Radical Party for over four centuries.  In this period independent Serbia experienced continual pressure from Austria-Hungary to abandon its foreign policy interests.  Only with Russia's assistance was Serbia able to expand its territory southward and southwestward.  Within the Austria-Hungarian Empire the South Slavs increasingly began to support the Yugoslav social movement as the ideological precursor to Yugoslavism.

In Chapter Four I study the ideological underpinnings of communist Yugoslavia and the gradual de-legitimization of the communist political system by Serbian intellectuals.  Most Serbs readily accepted communism because of their communal but also patriarchal political culture and identity.  While the majority of Serbs nurtured their Yugoslav identities, the Serbian intellectuals intensely questioned the decentralization processes of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), communicating to the Serbs that the CPY was not representing the interests of the collective Yugoslav nation.

Finally in Chapter Five I examine those political and cultural elements in Serbian political culture that Slobodan Milošević tapped into in order to gain and remain in power. Milošević recognized the communalism but also the patriarchy present in Serbian society and presented himself first as a pro-Yugoslav communist leader, and later as a nationalist. Otpor, a youth-based opposition movement supported by the United States, also took advantage of the communal character of Serbian political culture and rallied the Serbs to overthrow Milošević and his regime, which occurred on October 5, 2000 when a hundred thousand Serbs flooded Belgrade's streets and stormed into the Parliament Building demanding Milošević's resignation.

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**CHAPTER TWO:**
**THE SERBS UNDER THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

**Introduction**

To best understand contemporary Serbian political culture, we must examine relevant events and institutions in Serbian society during the Middle Ages and under the Ottoman Empire. My objective in this Chapter is to examine the political and cultural mediums, resulting from Serbia's historic events and institutions, that continue to influence contemporary Serbian political culture.

The defeat of the Serbs by the Ottomans in the late fourteenth century at Kosovo Polje continues to play a great role in contemporary Serbian political culture. This event represents the Serbs loss of political independence and the influx of Islamic political, cultural and social norms and values which inherently transformed Serbian cultural identity and political reality. The Serbian Orthodox Church, a predominantly religious institution, responded to this defeat by transforming itself into a semi-political institution dedicated to protecting Serbian cultural and religious values from Ottoman Muslim culture. To preserve Serbian Orthodox Christianity, the Church manufactured the Serbian national myth founded on the event of the Battle of Kosovo, which later served as the platform for the Serbian national revival movement in the nineteenth century and for the rise and spread of religious nationalism in the twentieth century. The Serbian national myth on the Battle of Kosovo continues to play an active role in contemporary Serbian political culture.

Ottoman rule continues to influence contemporary Serbian political culture through the medium of general resistance towards government authority, which in this thesis I call *baksheesh*. Under Ottoman political, military, and administrative control the Serbs often evaded Ottoman laws, particularly in regards to the collection of taxes, which the Ottoman forces levied

higher for those Serbs who refused to convert to Islam. *Baksheesh* continues to exist in Serbian society resulting in a high degree of corruption and preventing the full implementation of the rule of law.

The event of the defeat of the Serbs leading to Ottoman occupation in the late fourteenth century continues to influence contemporary Serbian political culture via the medium of gender relations. The influx of Ottoman Islamic cultural norms and values significantly changed the position of women in Serbian society compared to their social position in the Late Middle Ages. Although the Yugoslav communist regime managed to improve the position of women in Serbian society, it secured only minor advances since Serbian political culture remained patriarchal. The religious nationalism of the Milošević regime and the Serbian Orthodox Church strengthen patriarchy in Serbian society further traditionalizing gender roles and relations.

**The Myth: The Battle of Kosovo**

> *'When we first heard people talk of political myths, they seemed to us so raw, so comical, so crazy and senseless that we found it hard to take them seriously. Now we know that this was a grave mistake. We must not make it a second time. For this reason it is necessary to undertake research into the origin, structure and technique of political myths.'*[4]

The role of the Serbian Orthodox Church significantly changed in medieval Serbian society in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Established in 1219, the Serbian Orthodox Church served as a proto-religious institution concerned with consolidating Eastern Orthodoxy among the Serbs until the early fifteenth century.[5] As depicted in Figure 2, medieval Serbian rulers commissioned the Serbian Orthodox Church to create literary works and to build architectural masterpieces in order to strengthen the Empire's territorial claims and to reveal its the spiritual and materialistic foundations. For example, the Serbian Orthodox Church under

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[4] Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 296.
[5] Prior to the formation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the thirteenth century, the Serbs pledged their religious allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Eastern Orthodox Church.

Stefan Nemanja, father of the Nemanjić Dynasty, erected eight different monasteries, with Studenica Monastery in Serbia's Raška region currently on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites (see Figure 3). [6]

However, with the defeat of the Serbs by the Ottomans, the Serbian Orthodox Church became a socio-cultural institution, serving as a repository and sanctuary of Serbian cultural and historical identity. The Serbian Orthodox Church became the cultural and religious protector of the Serbs from Islam. According to Mylonas, the Serbian Orthodox Church successfully preserved Serbian cultural and historic identity among the rural population, primarily because this large segment of the population lacked much frequent interaction with foreign cultures other than Ottoman culture.[7]

In order to prevent the Islamization of the Christian Serbian Orthodox population, the Serbian Orthodox Church presented to the Serbs a myth that aggrandized their national past. Since members of the Serbian Orthodox Church were unable to denounce openly Islam, they manufactured a myth based in part on Serbian Eastern Orthodox religious doctrine, the glories of the Serbs in medieval Serbia and the disastrous consequences of the Battle of Kosovo. The Serbian Orthodox Church synthesized religion and history resulting in the creation of a national myth.

The myth of the Serbian Orthodox Church conveyed to the Serbs that God represented a central aspect of their cultural and religious identity, that in fact all Serbs were transcendental,

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[6] The Serbian Empire under medieval ruler Tsar Stefan Dušan of the Nemanjić Dynasty desire particular mention. Under Tsar Stefan Dušan, the Serbian Empire stretched from the Danube in the north to present-day central Greece in the south, and from the Adriatic Sea in the west to regions of present-day Bulgaria in the east. The Serbs expanded and strengthened the Empire thanks to a growing mining industry, the flourishing of various trades, political and social developments that were upheld by a modern judicial system based on statutory legal code. The Serbian Empire disintegrated in 1355 with Tsar Stefan Dušan's death into several rival feudal principalities.
[7] Mylonas, *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals*, 55.

and that God choose them to defend Christianity from the further spread of Islam.[8]  For example, to transcendalize Serbian identity, the Serbian Orthodox Church added Serbian historic rulers to the existing array of Serbian Orthodox saints in its ecclesiastical calendar.[9]  The Church glorified Serbian medieval rulers and knights, such as Tsar Stefan Dušan and Miloš Obilić, giving them mythical and transcendental qualities and placing them as central figures in Serbian epic poetry. The Serbian national myth dissuaded many Serbs from converting to Islam because it gave them pride in their religious and cultural identity.

Central to the narrative of the Serbian national myth is the Battle of Kosovo.  The Battle of Kosovo occurred in 1389 at Kosovo Polje during which, as the Serbian Orthodox Church alleges, the powerful Muslim Ottoman Army crushed the Christian Serb forces.  According to the myth, God manifested himself during this particular Battle because Kosovo is abundant in Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches.  At Kosovo Polje God revealed to the Serbs that they were his "chosen people" and that because of the defeat, the Serbs collectively had to defend Christianity from Islam.  Kosovo Polje became a spiritual but tangible space enabling the Serbs to connect to their ancestors by immersing themselves in the blood of Tsar Stefan Dušan and Miloš Obilić, and allowing them to become transcendental.[10]  The myth of the Battle of Kosovo provided the Serbs with a physical tangible space that enabled them to connect with God through historical narratives.  The myth also offered to the Serbs a mental space where they could find refuge from their daily hardships under the Ottoman political and military regime.

The Serbian Orthodox Church used epic poetry to introduce and promote the mythological Battle of Kosovo among the Serbs.  For example, in the epic below, "The Fall of

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[8] Ibid., 60.
[9] There are fifty-eight saints in the Serb Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar of which eighteen are tsars, kings and queens, and princes and lords.  *See* Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 13.
[10] Čolovic, *Politics of Identity in Serbia*, 13.

the Serbian Empire", the Serbian Orthodox Church sought to communicate to the Serbs the idea

that it was part of God's plan that they be defeated at Kosovo Polje as God's chosen people.

*Shall I choose the earthly kingdom?*
*Or shall I choose the heavenly kingdom?*
*The earthly kingdom lasts only a brief time,*
*But the heavenly kingdom always and forever."*

*So the Tsar chose the heavenly kingdom ...*
*Then the Turks mounted their attack against Lazar.*

*And the Serbian Prince Lazar perished,*
*Together with his entire army,*
*Seventy-seven thousand in number,*
*And all was holy and honorable*
*And acceptable to gracious God...*

As depicted also in Figure 1, this epic narrative of the Serbian Orthodox Church conveyed to the

Serbs the promise that they would be rewarded for their religious and political sacrifices under

the Ottoman forces by eventually receiving the heavenly kingdom which, lasted "always and

forever" unlike the earthly one that they in fact lost as a result of the defeat.  Čolovic in The

Politics of Identity in Serbia argues that Lazar's choice of the heavenly kingdom is transformed

into a strategy of only the "temporary and necessary denial of the main aim, that of achieving the

Kingdom of Earth".[11]

Modern historical analysis shows that the Serbian Orthodox Church, for the most part,

skewed the facts of the battle at Kosovo Polje in order to manufacture the Serbian myth with the

goal of preventing the Islamicization of the Serbs.  Historical research shows that two alliances

of feudal aristocrats consisting of mixed forces of Christian Orthodoxy and Islam fought at the

battlefield in Kosovo.  Unlike the Serbian Orthodox Church's narrative, the Battle of Kosovo

was not fought between two clear-cut factions of Serbian Orthodox forces and the Muslim

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[11]Čolovic, *Politics of Identity in Serbia*, 12.

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Ottoman army.[12]  The Serbian Orthodox Church also has argued that all Serbian states ceased to

exist after the Battle of Kosovo, however, historical research presents evidence that Serbian

vassal states continued to exist to the north along the Morava and Danube rivers well into the

mid-fifteenth century.[13]  The Battle of Kosovo does not represent the decisive battle that led to

the collective fall of the Serbs.[14]

The Battle of Kosovo continued to live among the Serbs despite their liberation from the

Ottoman Empire.  In the mid-nineteenth century the Battle of Kosovo served as the platform for

the Serbian national revival movement as Serbian intellectuals perceived it as the central event in

Serbian national history.

Similar to the Serbian Orthodox Church under the Ottomans, the Serbian intelligentsia

played the central role in defining Serbian national identity, which it did by further

institutionalizing the Battle of Kosovo.  The Serbian intelligentsia, emerging mainly from large

urban areas and under the influence of Enlightenment ideas, incorporated the Battle of Kosovo

into the ecclesiastical calendar of the Serbian Orthodox Church.  Coincidentally the actual Battle

of Kosovo fell on June 28th which was St. Vitus Day, the holy day of martyr St. Vitus.  St. Vitus

Day became Vidovdan according to Serbian linguistic tradition.  Similar to other European states

of the period, the Serbian intellectuals also were under the influence of romanticism and its ideas

of nationalism.

The importance of Vidovdan in Serbian national and cultural identity throughout the

twentieth century should not be underestimated.  In 1914 on Vidovdan, Archduke Franz

Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip in protest of Austria-

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[12] Mylonas, *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals*, 152.
[13] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 6.
[14] The Serbian Orthodox Church fails to mention in its rhetoric the Battle of the Marica in 1371 which brought many more Serb causalities than did the Battle of Kosovo.

Hungary's policies and practices towards the Serbs.  Also on Vidovdan, in 1948 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia officially split from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which resulted in a geopolitical shift in the foreign policies of the United States and the Soviet Union.  In 1989 on Vidovdan, Slobodan Milošević gave his famous speech at Kosovo Polje, the site of the Battle of Kosovo, calling on the Serbs to reclaim their territorial right to Kosovo.  Moreover, on Vidovdan, in 2001 Milošević was deported to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.  Also on Vidovdan, in 2006 the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro split into two separate independent states signifying the final dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.  As depicted in Figure 4, Vidovdan has played a central role in Serbian national history and collective consciousness.

Serbian academic Dragan Nedeljković has argued that the Vidovdan experience reminds the Serbs that the main cause of their defeat at the Battle of Kosovo was disunity and conflict, two elements that must cease to exist in Serbian society.[15]  Furthermore, Nedeljković argues that Tsar Lazar's 'holy Kosovo pledge is a pledge of harmony and unity of Serbdom' which applies to the 'historical moment when the survival of the Serbian nation and its State is in doubt'.

As in the mid-nineteenth century, the Battle of Kosovo played an important role in Serbia's national revival movement of the twentieth century.  Serbia's national revival movement of the twentieth century was initiated largely by Milošević and his followers, some of whom were members of the Serbian intelligentsia, along with the Serbian Orthodox Church.  Through the framework of the Battle of Kosovo, Milošević brought up the question of the political future of the Kosovo Province which most Serbs continue to claim as their national and cultural homeland.  In 1989, on Vidovdan Milošević gave his famous speech at the site of the Battle of Kosovo, at Kosovo Polje, next to Gazimestan, a monument erected in 1953 by the Communist

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[15] Nedeljković, *Reči Srbima u smutnom vremena*, 103.

Party of Yugoslavia in the shape of a medieval tower to commemorate the fight of the Serbs

against the Ottoman military forces.  Significantly, Gazimestan is located adjacent to Gračanica

Monastery which was erected in 1321 by Serbian King Stefan Milutin as a territorial claim.  On

Gazimestan inscribed is Tsar Lazar's "Kosovo Curse":

> *"Whoever is a Serb and of Serb birth,*
> *And of Serb blood and heritage,*
> *And comes not to fight at Kosovo,*
> *May he never have the progeny his heart desires,*
> *Neither son nor daughter!*
> *May nothing grow that his hand sows,*
> *Neither dark wine nor white wheat!*
> *And let him be cursed from all ages to all ages!"* [16]

Standing next to Tsar Lazar's "Kosovo Curse", Milošević appealed to the Serbian nation to

reclaim its collective property right to Kosovo through an unarmed battle for economic, political,

social and cultural progress which may at some point in the future become armed. [17]  Milošević

also suggested that the Serbs in Kosovo increase their birthrate which continues to be low

compared to that of Albanians in Kosovo.[18]  By bringing up the Serbian national question of

Kosovo in his speech, Milošević promoted nationalism among the Serbs, which he later used to

stay in power.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, Milošević along with the Serbian Orthodox Church

sponsored various entertainment media and cultural events centered on the theme of the Battle of

Kosovo to promote nationalism among the Serbs.  For example, in 1989 Milošević endorsed folk

singer Gordana Lazarević to issue the song "Vidovdan" which illustrates the Serbs inherent

sentiment of collective right to Kosovo throughout its verses:

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[16] Since 1999 Gazimestan has been under the protection of KFOR peacekeeping forces due to the attacks of
Kosovan Albanian rioters.

[17] Olga Žirojević, a well-known Serbian academic, commented on how Milošević made it appear as though the
Serbs were reliving the "Battle of Kosovo" as a result of various forces attempting to seize Kosovo, along with
socialism, away from the them.  *See Žirojević, Kosovo in the Collective Memory*, 207-208.

[18] It should also be noted that during Milošević's speech he appealed to all Yugoslavs to support a unitary
Yugoslavia.

*I'm looking at heavens, centuries going by,*
*For old memories that's the healing*
*Wherever I go I will be back, you know.*
*Who can rip away Kosovo from my soul, Vidovdan!*
*Wherever I go I will be back, you know.*
*Who can rip away Kosovo from my soul, Vidovdan!*
*Eternal flame burning in our hearts*
*For truth of battle shall live forever.*
*Wherever I go I will be back, you know.*
*Who can rip away Kosovo from my soul, Vidovdan!*
*Wherever I go I will be back, you know.*
*Who can rip away Kosovo from my soul, Vidovdan!*
*Lord, forgive us all of our sins.*
*Give the courage to our sons and daughters.*
*Wherever I go I will be back, you know.*
*Who can rip away Kosovo from my soul.*
*Wherever I go I will be back, you know.*
*Who can rip away Kosovo from my soul, Vidovdan!*[19]

The Serbian Orthodox Church promoted nationalism through the Battle of Kosovo framework by distributing pins, posters, and other paraphernalia illustrating the Battle during the Vidovdan celebrations. In addition, under the Milošević regime, the Serbian Orthodox Church embarked on a campaign to revive the Serbian Orthodox faith among the Serbs and to spread nationalism by exhibiting the bodies of Serbian heroes who had lost their lives during the Battle of Kosovo. The Milošević regime and the Serbian Orthodox Church worked in concert to gain more power in Serbian society by reviving Serbian national identity and religion among the Serbs.

Despite the bad history that the Battle of Kosovo and Vidovdan have brought to the Serbs, the Battle of Kosovo continues to play an important role in contemporary Serbian political culture. During the campaigns for the February 2008 presidential elections in Serbia, eight out of nine presidential candidates, including President Boris Tadić, declared that Kosovo ought to remain within Serbia proper because it represents the source of Serbian national, cultural, and

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[19] Translation taken from wikipedia.org, *Vidovdan*.

spiritual identity.[20]  However, during the Vidovdan celebrations in 2009 Tadić, while serving his second term, took on a more conservative stance warning that although Vidovdan will always remain an important element in Serbian identity, it ought to never be celebrated again as it was in 1989 under Milošević, an event which triggered political and economic sanctions for Serbia, the Yugoslav wars, NATO's 1999 bombing campaign, and the United Nation's declaration of protectorate status for Kosovo.[21]

During the 2009 Vidovdan celebrations, the Battle of Kosovo was commemorated most vividly at Gazimestan monument where several thousand Serbs from Serbia proper and Kosovo, along with the Serbian Diaspora, celebrated fallen Serbian heroes, such as Tsar Lazar, by participating in liturgies dedicated to them.  Serbs from all around the world came to Kosovo, the Mecca of Serbian Orthodox Christianity, despite the Kosovan Albanians' declaration of independence. On Vidovdan, Serbian Orthodox Church clergy addressed the Serbs that Kosovo would always be the heart of Serbia, just as it was six hundred and twenty years ago.

**Communalism: The Social Structure of the Zadruga and Baksheesh**

Along with the thematics of the Battle of Kosovo, the Serbian Orthodox Church successfully preserved Serbian cultural identity under the Ottomans due to the social organization of Serbian society.  Serbian society was organized around the zadruga- a community of about one hundred rural men and women connected by patrilineal kinship who shared land, money, and livestock with each other.  The internal political organization rested on a hierarchal system of social organization in which the eldest and most capable Serbian male decided on important questions on behalf of the other zadruga members.  Zadruga members lacked contact with languages and cultures other than Turkish or Ottoman because zadruga

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[20] B92.org, *Predsednički izbori* (Presidential Elections).
[21] Ibid.

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existed mainly in rural areas where foreigners rarely spent much time. These factors allowed the zadruga Serbs to preserve and nurture their Serbian cultural identity from the influence of Ottoman Islamic culture.[22]

In the late nineteenth century Svetozar Marković argued that the communal aspect of the zadruga social structure represented the epitome of socialism and democracy in Serbian political culture. Marković, the standard bearer of Serbian socialism, maintained that the communal living and sharing of land, money, and livestock in the zadruga represented the earliest form of Serbian socialism. Zadruga living rested on communal principles that became integral to Serbian political culture over the centuries and ideologically prepared the Serbs for nineteenth century socialism and later communism. Moreover, Marković argued that zadruga members had the "ethical traditions of an egalitarian folk democracy which brought into a natural and moral harmony the dignity and worth of the individual with the needs of the community."[23]

Under Ottoman rule zadruga Serbs developed methods of resisting Ottoman authorities whose rule they perceived as illegitimate. According to Vucinich, Serbian rural folk distrusted the Ottoman authorities, particularly the police agents and the tax collectors, and fought against them for centuries.[24] Vucinich calls Serbian distrust of the Ottoman government *baksheesh*, which in Serbian means gratuity.[25] To survive in Ottoman-run society the Serbian peasant coupled subservience with cleverness which he used to evade Ottoman authority through unethical and illegal means.[26] The Serbs developed the notion that cheating and stealing from the government was justified.[27]

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[22] Mylonas, *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals*, 92.
[23] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia 1804-1981*, 377.
[24] Vucinich, *Some Aspects of Ottoman Legacy,* 89.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

Serbian resistance to Ottoman authority became a feature of Serbian cultural identity that continues to persist even in the twenty first century. Serbian resistance of authority hindered the development of a modern bureaucratic Serbian state in the nineteenth century as the Serbian rural folk distrusted the bureaucracy and obstructed its activities. During the communist period, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was unable to cope with the resistance of its constituents of government despite the regime's stringent laws.[28] The Milošević regime failed to address the issue of resistance to authority because it relied on the corruptive practices of its constituents, and its own support of underground criminal groups and networks, to stay in power.

After the fall of Milošević in October 2000, the Serbian government under the energetic leadership of Zoran Djindjić embarked on a journey to eradicate the practices of the Serbs' resistance to government authority, which I will know call corruption. Serbia's first wave of anti-corruption initiatives occurred under the Djindjić government when it initiated a widespread crackdown on Serbia's organized crime network that previously was supported by the Milošević regime but had shifted its allegiance to Djindjić just days before the regime fell. Serbia's main criminal organization, the Zemun Clan, greatly disapproved of Djindjić's anti-corruption activities and assassinated him in March 2003.

The Serbian government has made significant strides in its fight against corruption during its second wave of anti-corruption initiatives. Serbia's second wave of anti-corruption initiatives has been more institutionalized than the first wave and is conducted according to the principles and objectives set out in its Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. Most progress has been made in institutional political processes, such as the ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, the adoption of a National Strategy for Combating Corruption, and the passing of legislation making public and private sector

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[28] Ibid.

corruption, extortion, the abuse of office, money laundering, and bribery all violations of the

Serbian Criminal Code.  As of 2009, Serbia's most corrupt policy areas are public procurement,

privatization and other large budgetary agencies along with taxation, customs and licensing, and

the financing of political parties.[29]  Although the institutional process of passing legislation has

been successful, the actual implementation of these rules and regulations remains slow.[30]

Serbia's Anti-Corruption Agency, which was created to ensure the implementation of Serbia's

anti-corruption rules and regulations, is scheduled to begin operations in 2010.

**Patriarchy: A Shift in Gender Relationships**

The status of Serbian women in society significantly deteriorated under the Ottoman

Empire.  In medieval Serbia women could rule as queens and empresses while the Serbian

Orthodox Church allowed women to divorce their husbands if deserted or abandoned.[31]  The

Ottoman Empire revoked these freedoms.  Under the Ottomans, Serbian Christian women often

shared the same fate as their Serbian Muslim sisters- they lived in isolation, "deferred to men

with blind subservience, and in some districts adopted veils and other pieces of Muslim female

dress."[32]  Some Serbian Christian males adopted the tradition of male polygamy.[33]

Along with the influence of Ottoman Muslim culture on gender relations in Serbian

society, the myth of the Battle of Kosovo and its progeny of male heroes and martyrs reinforced

patriarchy among the Serbs.  Under the influence of Battle of Kosovo mythology, Serbian

society formed the impression that all Serbian men were inherently transcendental warriors

whose role was to defend Christianity from Islam while all Serbian women were to serve them in

the name of Serbdom.  In the epic poem from the Battle of Kosovo cycle, Kosovka Devojka, or

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[29] EU.org, *Serbia 2009 Progress Report*, 12.
[30] Ibid., 14.
[31] Vucinich, *Some Aspects of Ottoman Legacy*, 91.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

The Kosovo Girl, the central female character hurries to the battlefield after the Serbs are defeated to mend the wounds of the fallen heroes with water, wine and bread, however, her efforts are fruitless as each warrior dies shortly after proposing marriage to her.

Epic poetry on the Battle of Kosovo reinforced patriarchy in Serbian society that became a permanent feature in Serbian cultural and political identity that continues to exist. Annoyed with their position in Serbian society, some Serbian women took advantage of the communist character of the partisan forces and fought alongside men to liberate Serbia from Nazi occupation and to improve their position in society.[34] Under the communist regime, although the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) made some progress in advancing the status of women it was unable to eliminate widespread patriarchy in society. CPY argued that gender equality would arise from class equality and addressed the issue of gender equality in Yugoslavia's 1946 Constitution:

> *Women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of state economic and social life. Women are entitled to a salary equal to that of men for the same work, and enjoy special protection in the labour relationship. The state particularly protects the welfare of mother and child by the establishment of maternity hospitals, children's homes and day nurseries, and by ensuring the right to paid leave before and after confinement.[35]*

In 1977 CPY admitted that the regime's program of gender equality failed to eradicate patriarchy from Serbian society.[36] Furthermore, CPY party officials argued that the root causes of patriarchy were a traditional value system dictating the role of men and women in society, religion, and other conservative prejudices.[37] Despite the communist regime's efforts in promoting gender equality through education and legal action, it failed to eradicate the deeply

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[34] Interestingly, the Četniks, a pro-monarchy and pro-Serbian Orthodox Church World War II Serbian faction, prohibited women from joining their forces. *See* Jancar-Webster, *Women In the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement*, 68.
[35] Ramet, *Gender Politics in Western Balkans*, 94.
[36] Ibid., 101.
[37] Ibid.

instilled patriarchy in Serbian society.[38]  Nonetheless, the CPY continued to argue that patriarchy would be eradicated once class equality was achieved.

Nonetheless, the post-war rebuilding of Yugoslavia and the political reality of the cold war demanded that Serbian women contribute all their skills and energy to the communist state, similar to the Serbian women who lived in the zadruga social structure under the Ottomans. Serbian women worked mainly in the social services and the textile sectors, and in the 1980s represented eighty percent of the total number employed in these two sectors but lacked representation in academics, the judiciary, and politics.[39]  Despite some advances in their professional lives, Serbian women still experienced gender discrimination from patriarchal Serbian society.

The lurking presence of patriarchy re-surfaced with the religious nationalism of the Milošević regime and the Serbian Orthodox Church.  In the post-communist era the Serbian Orthodox Church re-emerged as a key power player in Serbian society.  It zealously promoted patriarchy "to save the Serbs" by campaigning to re-traditionalize gender relations in society. The Church advocated that Serbian men re-awaken their inner Tsar Lazar and fight at the battlegrounds of Bosnia and Croatia while it urged women to bear more children to "revitalize" the Serbian nation.  For example, the Serbian Orthodox Church accused mothers who had lost their only child in the Yugoslav wars of sinning against themselves, the Serbian nation, and God because they had procreated only one child.[40]  The Church revived the Battle of Kosovo by arguing that the growing number of Albanians in Kosovo threatened the Serbian nation with extinction.

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[38] Vucinich, *Some Aspects of Ottoman Legacy*, 92.
[39] Ramet, *Gender Politics in Western Balkans*, 94.
[40] Papić, *Women in Serbia*, 161.

The Milošević regime joined the Serbian Orthodox Church in its campaign of promoting patriarchy among the Serbs.  In 1990, the regime introduced the "Law on Population Policy" that gave married couples with four or more children the right to receive extra financial assistance from the government but punished those who were either married couples with only one child or married couples who were both older than thirty years of age without children with higher taxes. To further promote its agenda, the Milošević regime changed the 1974 abortion law to prohibit abortions after a woman's tenth week of pregnancy, except when authorized by a physician, psychologist, or social worker.[41]  The regime passed a law allowing Serbian public health insurance to cover recovery from alcohol addiction and plastic surgery but prohibited coverage for abortions, which made it extremely difficult for Serbian women to have abortions because the cost of one equaled the sum of two average paychecks in Serbia.  By promoting these policies, the Milošević regime coerced women into becoming "pregnant and barefoot in the kitchen", or the term "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (or "Children, Kitchen, Church") that the Germans used in the nineteenth century to describe a woman's role in society, promoting further the deeply instilled patriarchy in the collective psyche of the Serbian nation.

Since the fall of the Milošević regime and Serbia's commitment to European Union membership, Serbia's democratically-elected government has been trying to improve the position of women in Serbian society.  In February 2009 Serbian parliament adopted a national strategy to promote gender equality by focusing on five areas where improvement is deemed necessary- women's health and economic position, the representation of women in public and political positions, gender equality in education, the suppression of violence against women, and the

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[41] The 1974 law on abortion allowed a woman to have an abortion even after her tenth week of pregnancy in cases of rape or when the health of the mother or the fetus was endangered.  *See* Lilly, *Negotiating Interests: Women and Nationalism in Serbia and Croatia*, 134.

elimination of gender stereotypes in the media.[42]  The European Union has expressed concern that Serbia still lacks a mechanism to report violations which occur against women's rights and that the government still must pass its proposed Gender Equality Act.

**Conclusion**

Contemporary Serbian political culture continues to be shaped by relevant events and institutions from Ottoman rule.  The result of the Battle of Kosovo led the Serbian Orthodox Church to become the protector and nurturer of Serbian cultural identity by manufacturing the Serbian national myth.  The basis of the Serbian national myth is the idea that the Serbs are God's chosen people, that they are transcendental.  Under this theory, the Serbian Orthodox Church succeeded in dissuading many Serbs from converting to Islam and in preserving Serbian cultural and religious identity.  The Church promoted the myth by the teachings of epic poetry in rural areas mainly inhabited by Serbs.  The Battle of Kosovo continued to play a central role in Serbian political culture and identity in the nineteenth century when Serbian intellectuals used it as the basis of the Serbian national revival movement.  Moreover, the Battle of Kosovo served as the platform for the spread of religious nationalism during the Milošević regime.

The zadruga social structure preserved Serbian cultural identity because it was cut off from the influence of foreign cultures and languages, aside from Turkish.  Communally organized, it promoted a form socialist-populism that became an integral part of Serbian political culture and identity.  In addition, the zadruga represented a breeding ground for *baksheesh,* resistance to government authority, a practice that unfortunately became part of Serbian cultural identity.

With the arrival of the Ottomans gender relations significantly changed within Serbian society.  Prior to the influx of Ottoman norms and values, Serbian women enjoyed a multitude of

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[42] EU.org, *2009 Serbia 2009 Progress Report*, 17.

freedoms that disappeared.  Ottoman invasion brought patriarchal values to the Serbs which

became central to Serbian cultural identity and later Serbian political culture.  Although the

status of women in Serbian society has improved compared to the Ottoman period, Serbian

women continue to face discrimination in both the public and private spheres.

# CHAPTER THREE:
## THE SEMI-INDEPENDENT SERBIAN STATE

**Introduction**

In this Chapter I examine the political, socio-cultural, and legal developments in the Principality of Serbia with the goal of better understanding the challenges that the Serbs faced during the state and nation building processes under the Ottoman forces. In this period, urban Serbian elite, but also the rural population, faced the challenge of limiting the rule and power of Serbia's royal leaders and political interest groups. Although the Serbian rural population still lived in the zadruga social structure and largely nurtured communal and egalitarian values, it became vulnerable to the paternalism of Serbia's first political leaders and interest groups. Patriarchy reinforced paternalism. In the early development of the Serbian state the Serbs deemed it necessary that strong authoritarian leaders lead the nation to independence from the Ottoman Empire as opposed to democratically elected leaders (see Figures 5 and 6).

In this period of early state development, the Serbian government initiated a campaign to modernize the Serbian state by implementing a bureaucratic apparatus, developing constitutionalism and the rule of law, and creating a sound foreign policy to serve the Serbian state for future decades. Serbian society stratified into three new social classes, the rural class, the bureaucracy and merchantry, and the intellectuals. Western European ideas and capitalism brought about new challenges to Serbian society.

**Early Serbian Political Developments**

The political sentiment of the Serbian rural folk often determined the outcome in the struggle between Serbia's monarchs and political interest groups for political power. After the First Serbian Uprising Serbian rural folk and the elites rushed to fill the political vacuum caused by the ongoing withdrawal of the Ottoman military and administrative forces. Both groups

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aspired to install a political system to benefit their particular social group.[43]  Under Ottoman rule

the zadruga social structure reinforced communalism but also paternalism, through the rule of the

male elder, in Serbian political identity and culture.  At public gatherings for determining the

political system that would ensue, zadruga elders lobbied for a system akin to a representative

democracy that would give each male zadruga member the opportunity to represent his group in

the political assembly.  Zadruga elders believed that Serbian rural folk were entitled to influence

policymaking due to their strenuous efforts in liberating the Serbs from Ottoman power.

The elites, on the other hand, adopted a paternalistic approach and argued that they ought

to have all political decision-making power because they better understood the political climate

of the period.  Despite the elites alleged superiority in resources, the Serbian rural folk

successfully took charge, however, failing to install a representative democracy but electing the

rule of one man.

The Serbian rural population gave their political support to Karadjordje, or Black George,

a former Austrian Freicorps soldier and a livestock merchant, who led the Serbs in their struggle

against the Ottoman forces in the First Serbian Uprising and who promised to liberate further the

Serbs from Ottoman power.  Political realism trumped the idealism of the Serbian rural folk.

The Serbian rural folk believed that in order to win in their struggle for freedom they would need

to confer all political decision-making power to Karadjordje.[44]  To stay in power, Karadjordje

often relied on patriarchy and paternalism.  He reminded the Serbian rural population of the

heroic martyrs of the past, such as Tsar Lazar, who had fought courageously to defend the Serbs.

The Serbian rural population argued that Karadjordje was a man of the people, a genuine

democrat who sometimes had to rule with an iron fist in order to free the Serbs from Ottoman

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[43] The Serbian rural population and the elites competed for power in society by seeking to acquire as much property
as possible that was owned still by the Ottomans.

[44] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 52.

power.[45]  Karadjordje justified his authoritarianism, and general dismissal of the rule of law and

constitutionalism, by arguing that it was rather easy to implement the rule of law in a warm room

but very difficult in the face of war.[46]

While the Serbian rural folk politically supported Karadjordje the elite sought to disrupt

his power and to implement their own political rule.  The Serbian elites complained that

Karadjordje refused to share power with them and argued that the Belgrade Pashalik ought to be

fragmented into several smaller districts, a structure that would have resembled the organization

of the medieval Serbian vassal states.  Unlike the Serbian elite, Karadjordje, representing

Western European ideas on state formation, argued that the Pashalik ought to remain whole.  In a

bid for political power, the Serbian elites lobbied the rural population for support but were

unsuccessful.  The elites organized the Governing Council, which consisted of twelve members

who were to make important political decisions on the future of the Pashalik.  Refusing to share

political power with the Serbian elites, Karadjordje denounced the Governing Council, rejecting

a form of organization that most likely would have given the Serbian rural folk greater

representation in the political process.  In 1813 Karadjordje abandoned his activities in the

Pashalik and fled to the Austrian Empire for safety.

Despite the Serbian rural population's support of Karadjordje, this social group refused to

give legitimacy to the authoritarian rule of Miloš Obrenović.  Like Karadjordje, Miloš was "a

man of the people", he actively participated in the First and Second Serbian Uprisings, and made

it well-known that the survival of the Serbs as an independent nation depended on his survival as

ruler of the Serbs.[47]  However, despite his paternalism towards the Serbian rural folk, Miloš

never received political support from this social group despite his tactics, which included giving

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[45] Ibid., 44.
[46] Ibid., 51.
[47] Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 14.

zadruga members vested interests in vacant Ottoman land.[48]  Nonetheless, the Serbian rural folk continued to dislike Miloš's authoritarianism.

Discontent with the lack of political rights and freedoms the Serbian rural population supported Miloš's political opposition.  To stay in power and as a result of facing political pressure Miloš established the Council of State in 1826 which was intended to be a government branch that would oversee Serbia's internal affairs and its foreign relations with the Great Powers of the era- the Ottoman, Austrian, and Russian Empires.  Miloš reserved veto power over all the decisions of the Council which disintegrated shortly after being established.

The Great Powers recognized the political turmoil in the Serbian Principality as an opportunity to interfere in Serbia's internal politics and to re-assert their presence in the region.  In order to demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire was still the dominant geopolitical power player in the region the Porte imposed two hatti sheriffs on the Serbs.  As a response to Ottoman muscle-flexing, Miloš brought the Constitution of 1835, which the Austrian Empire quickly declared illegitimate since it gave the Serbs too many rights and freedoms.  The Austrian Empire worried that its subjects would follow suit and ask for similar liberties.[49]  Moreover, the Russian Empire as well opposed the Constitution of 1835 because Miloš had failed to ask Tsar Nicholas I for approval before promulgating it.  Miloš responded to the criticisms of the Great Powers by replacing the Constitution of 1835 with the Turkish Constitution in 1838, which he largely ignored.

Attempting to regain political control in the Serbian Principality, the Ottoman Empire lobbied the elites, most of whom joined the Constitutionalist political group, to promote Ottoman agenda in the region.  The Constitutionalists favored the modernization of the Principality and

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[48]Some other of Miloš's political manipulations include bringing a law that prohibited creditors from taking homes, inherited homesteads, oxen and a cow from the Serbs and giving the rural folk state loans and funds to help relieve debt.

[49] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 149.

the implementation of the rule of law which would ideologically and structurally bring the Serbian state closer to Western Europe. Although the Porte preferred disorder and chaos over order and the rule of law in the Serbian Principality, it saw the Constitutionalists as its green card to control in the region. The Constitutionalists could promote their political agenda as long as ultimate decision-making on important issues, such as foreign policy, was left to the Porte.

Aware of the political culture of the Serbian rural population, the Constitutionalists used paternalism to win the support of this social group. Although the Serbian rural folk was aware of the fact that the Ottomans, from whom they were trying to gain complete independence for the last four centuries, created the Constitutionalists in order to promote the Porte's foreign policy interests in region, the Serbs supported the Constitutionalists because they perceived them as a viable alternative to Miloš's authoritarianism and appreciated their emphasis on the rule of law and constitutionalism in society. Drawing on Karadjordje's statement, the Constitutionalists represented the notion of "a warm room and the rule of law". By politically supporting the Constitutionalists the Serbian rural population could have the best of both worlds.

Nonetheless, although the Constitutionalists successfully modernized the semi-independent Serbian state by establishing a bureaucratic apparatus, they failed to promote the interests of the Serbian rural folk. In the newly developed government bureaucracy, the Constitutionalists, for the most part, employed Austrian Serb recent émigrés from the Austrian Empire who were literate and better educated than the Serbs in the Principality. Employees of the Serbian state bureaucracy, along with the Constitutionalists, discounted the Serbian rural folk as people and often referred to them as the "incompetent wards of the state".[50] Petrovich argues that the Austrian Serbs émigrés were "wastrels, vagabonds, and desperados".[51] Miloš denounced

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[50] Ibid., 271.
[51] Ibid., 192.

the employees of the bureaucracy and often dismissed then as he pleased and refused to give them regular salaries.  The Constitutionalists relied on the chaos and confusion that the modernization of the Serbian state caused among the Serbs to stay in power.

Along with the establishment of a bureaucratic apparatus, the Constitutionalists modernized the semi-independent Serbian state by creating a foreign policy to ensure the complete independence of the Serbian state and to strengthen Serbia's position vis-à-vis the Great Powers.  The Constitutionalists figured that for Serbia to ward off the influences of the Great Powers and their potential territorial claims to the state, Serbia would need to establish an outlet westward to the Adriatic Sea.  The Constitutionalists also may have perceived Serbia's potential of becoming a regional hegemon in the Balkans after obtaining an outlet to the Adriatic Sea and with the demise of the Austrian and Ottoman Empires.

The foreign policy of the young Serbian state first was formulated by Ilija Garašanin in his secret memo "Načertanije", or Manifesto.  In "Načertanije" Garašanin conveyed that all land stretching from Northern Albania in the south to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the north ought to become part of the Serbian state because this territory traditionally was inhabited by Serbs.  He believed that the Serbs on these lands had the right to political self-determination.  In the post-Yugoslav period, many have equated Garašanin's "Načertanije" with the idea of a "Greater Serbia", however, scholar Josette Baer argues that Garašanin's ideas had nothing to do with nationalism but with economic growth, which she maintains was the "typical geopolitical direction of nineteenth century agrarian countries (which) sought territorial expansion for economic sustainability and growth."[52]  In "Načertanije" Garašanin also addresses a common union among the South Slavs on the basis of a shared language and culture.  "Načertanije" remained a secret memo until being published on the eve of the First World War.

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[52] Baer, *Slavic Thinkers or The Creation of Polities*, 146.

The Serbian rural population quickly became discontent with the rule of the Constitutionalists and Obrenović dynasty, which it overthrew in 1842 with a large rebellion. The Karadjordjević dynasty was re-installed under Aleksandar Karadjordjević who became Prince of Serbia and ruled as monarch until 1858 when he was deposed due to a conflict with the national assembly. The Obrenović dynasty returned to the throne that year under Miloš Obrenović, who died in 1860 and left the throne to Mihailo III Obrenović who died in 1868 after being assassinated by a member of the Serbian army. Following Mihailo III Obrenović, Milan IV Obrenović came to the throne who ruled as King Milan I until 1889 when he abdicated in favor of his son Aleksandar I who was assassinated in 1903 and succeeded by Petar I of the Karadjordjević dynasty.

Like the Constitutionalists the Liberals tapped into the political culture of the Serbian rural population in order to gain power. However, unlike the Constitutionalists, most Liberals believed that Serbian rural folk could become active participants in a representative democracy. The Liberals argued that folk democracy represented a significant part of the rural population's political culture due to the peasants' experiences in the zadruga. The Liberals encouraged the Serbian rural folk to participate in Serbia's Grand Assembly which finally gave this social group a space to express their political will. The Liberals consisted mainly of Serbian intellectuals who were under the influence of the European Revolutions of 1848 and believed in a common bond among the members of the Serbian nation.

The Liberals faced political opposition from the Conservatives, another group of Serbian intellectuals who were unable to win the support of the Serbian rural class. Most members of the Conservatives believed that Serbian rural folk was ignorant and backward. This political faction gained its political power from the military, the merchantry, and the state bureaucracy.

In 1878 Serbia's foreign policy strategy of westward expansion was crushed when the Ottoman Empire granted Austria-Hungary special rights to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sandzak of Novi Pazar under the Treaty of Berlin. The Great Powers, however predominantly Austria-Hungary, the United Kingdom, and the Ottoman Empire, were determined to prevent Serbia from establishing an outlet to the Adriatic Sea by expanding westward. Moreover, the Great Powers also had decided to counter the spread of Russian influence in the Balkans by giving Serbia territories known as "Old Serbia", Niš, Pirot, and Vranje, an area that the Serbs had liberated previously from Ottoman power and which was promised by the Russian Empire to an independent Bulgaria under the Treaty of San Stefano.[53]

**Constitutionalism Pre-Independence**

In order to understand the development of Serbian political culture it is important to examine the development of constitutionalism and the implementation of the rule of law in Serbian society. The decline of Ottoman political, military, and administrative power in the Belgrade Pashalik and subsequently the Serbian Principality made the development of constitutionalism and the spread of the rule of law a necessary feature of Serbian society. Serbia's political interest groups, such as the Constitutionalists and the Liberals, argued that for Serbia to become a modern state it would need to have a well-written Constitution that would embody the rights and freedoms of Serbia's citizens and serve as the supreme law of the land. Also, Serbia's first Constitutions served as instruments to solidify Serbia's international status as a semi-independent state.

Despite the fact that resistance of government authority and the law was a central feature of the political culture of the Serbian rural population under the Ottomans, Serbian rural folk

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[53] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 397.

generally supported the implementation of the rule of law in Serbian society in the nineteenth century. Along with the Battle of Kosovo, the Serbian Orthodox Church had educated the Serbs on Serbian medieval history and how well Tsar Dušan's complex legal code regulated Serbian medieval society. Although Serbian rural folk generally rejected the modernization of the Serbian society, they supported the development of constitutionalism and the rule of law. It has been recorded that in 1805 a Serbian peasant stated the following:

> *"... the law is the will of the nation. Where there is a good constitution, there is freedom ...Whereas when one or more individual rule according to there own will, the nation dies, there is no freedom, no security, only banditry exists"*[54]

From this excerpt we learn that the Serbian rural population understood that laws regulate society and that they are necessary for the well-being of both the nation and the individual.

Serbia's first constitution served to limit Karadjordje's rule in Serbian society and to assert Russian influence in the previously Ottoman-controlled Pashalik. In 1808 Russian diplomat Rodofinkin drafted Serbia's first constitution, during his diplomatic mission to the Belgrade Pashalik, which transferred political power from Karadjordje to a group of Serbian elites who would govern through the Governing Senate. However, Rodofinkin's constitution never went into force because Tsar Alexander I of the Russian Empire declared it illegitimate since it failed to mention the Empire's right to intervene in Serbia's internal and external affairs.

After Rodofinkin's failed constitution, Karadjordje brought the Constitution of 1811 where he introduced a governing council of six ministers and a supreme court of six justices but also proclaimed himself the hereditary, supreme ruler of the Serbs. In 1813 the Porte declared Karadjordje's 1811 Constitution illegitimate since the Ottoman Empire still exerted political control over Serbia.

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[54] Radojević, *Serbia's Constitutions from 1835 to 1990*, 8.

In 1830 the Ottoman Empire, in its exercise of muscle-flexing in the Balkans, imposed a hatti-sherif in the newly established Serbian Principality in an effort to limit the rule of Miloš Obrenović and to increase the authority of the Constitutionalist government. The hatti-sherif of 1830 mandated that a governing council be formed which would have veto power over all of Miloš's political decisions.[55] Although the Porte sought to remain influential over Serbia's internal and external affairs, it mandated in the hatti-sherif that Serbia modernize by establishing a bureaucratic apparatus, a military, and an adequate educational and healthcare system.

Miloš ignored the restrictions that the hatti-sherif of 1830 placed on his rule and the rights and freedoms that the document gave to the Serbs. After a significant amount of pressure from the Serbs, Miloš brought the Presentation Constitution of 1835, which was based on the French Constitutions of 1791 and 1814.[56] In this period, Western European ideas of liberalism and democracy crept into Serbian society and many Serbs wanted similar rights and freedoms that Western European nationas enjoyed. As a result of Miloš's political survival depending on the acquiescence of the Serbian rural folk, he included in the Constitution a full Chapter of over twenty articles on the individual rights and freedoms of Serbs along with a State Council to oversee the protection of these rights.[57] The Presentation Constitution also established a National Assembly to bring the rural population into the political decision-making process and an independent judiciary to help promote the rule of law in the Serbian Principality. However, in 1838 the Great Powers, the Austrian, Ottoman and Russian Empires, denounced the Presentation Constitution as excessively liberal, since it contained too many progressive ideas, and ordered Miloš to abolish it.

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[55] Ibid., 9.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 48.

The Porte interfered again in the Serbs' constitutional-making process and issued the Turkish Constitution of 1838 that ensured Ottoman control over the Serbs by mandating that the Ottoman forces re-establish their military and administrative command in the Serbian Principality.  Most importantly, the Turkish Constitution revoked most of the rights and freedoms that Serbian society enjoyed under the Presentation Constitution and distanced the Serbs from their Western European political ideals.[58]  The Turkish Constitution remained the ruling constitutional document in the Principality until 1869.

In 1868 a three-man regency of fourteen year old Prince Milan Obrenović, which was under the leadership of Jovan Ristić of the Liberals, appointed a committee of experts to draft a new constitution for the Serbian Principality that would regulate the powers of the National Assembly, freedom of the press, jury trials, and ministerial responsibility.[59]  The Large National Assembly, which the Liberals had formed years prior, adopted the proposed Constitution in 1869, however, only after Austria-Hungary and later the Russian Empire approved of the Constitution did the Assembly ratify it.  The Constitution formally restored the Large National Assembly and gave it legislative power whereby no law could be promulgated, repealed, amended or reinterpreted without the agreement of the Large National Assembly.[60]  Three-fourths of the Assembly's deputies were to be elected by virtually universal manhood suffrage while the remaining one-fourth were to be appointed by the Serbia's prince.[61]  Many Serbs were dissatisfied with the Constitution of 1869 because the document lacked rights on local self-government, which were particularly important to the Serbian rural folk, and guarantees on the freedom of press, speech and association, which were to be addressed in separate legislative acts.

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[58] Ibid., 13.
[59] Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 51.
[60] Ibid.
[61] I use the word "virtually" because only men who paid a certain minimum in taxes were eligible for political office. *See* Radojević, *Serbia's Constitutions from 1835 to 1990*, 78.

Despite these deficiencies, the Constitution of 1869 was a "great step towards constitutional government" and it provided a governmental framework that allowed parliamentarianism to grow in Serbian society.[62]

In the young Serbian semi-independent state competing indigenous and exogenous ideas and ideologies influenced the development of early Serbian constitutionalism. Although Serbian rural folk for the most part supported constitutionalism and the rule of law, the patriarchal political culture of the peasantry prevented this social group from accepting the progressive Western European ideas and political philosophies in Serbia's Constitutions. Patriarchy commanded that political authority emanate from Serbia's ruler and not from political pluralism and democratic rule. Moreover, communalism promoted collective rights and not the individual rights and freedoms that Serbia's Constitutions embodied. The Serbian rural population preferred its traditional values over the progressive values of Serbia's intellectuals that rested on the spread of the rule of law and the development of constitutionalism.

**Serbian Intelligentsia and the Rural Folk**

Several social divisions existed within Serbian society under the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman military and administrative forces divided the conquered Serbian population according to the Ottoman millet religious system by placing those Serbs who had converted to Islam into the powerful Musulman millet while designating the Christian Serbs to the Rum millet, a separate religious community of Christian Orthodox peoples from the Balkans. Most Christian Serbs lived in rural regions in the zadruga, as mentioned in Chapter 1, while Muslim Serbs and a very limited number of Christian Serbs, whom I will refer now to as just Serbs, lived in urban

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[62]Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 53.

areas.  Also, it is important to note that many Serbs lived across the Danube and Sava rivers in the neighboring Austrian Empire.

As the Ottoman Empire became less powerful in the eighteenth century, an elite group of Serbs emerged from the Serbian rural and urban populations under the Ottomans but also from the Austrian Empire and introduced foreign ideas and philosophies to the Serbs.  These exogenous ideas and philosophies emerged from Western European political ideologies and philosophies of the Enlightenment Period that rested on the ideas of nationalism, the rights and freedoms of individuals, and the role of the state in society.  Serbian intellectuals, namely Vuk Stefanović Karadžić and Dositej Obradović, adopted many of the ideas of Western European political thought and made them a part of the Serbian state and national framework.  Along with others, Karadžić, who was a linguist and political philosopher, introduced the idea of the Serbian nation to the Serbs that was based on the theory of linguistic unity.[63]

Karadžić argued that the Serbs spoke Štokavian, a form of dialect that belongs to the South Slavic group of languages, and that all South Slavs who spoke Štokavian belonged to the Serbian nation, including those in the Austrian Empire.  Along with institutionalizing Serbian nationality, Karadžić's ideas influenced Serbian youth to promote the unification of Štokavian speaking people in Austria-Hungary but also the creation of a united South Slav state on the basis of a shared South Slav language.[64]  In the mid-nineteenth century many Serbian intellectuals returned to Serbia from their government-sponsored studies abroad, though mainly in Western Europe, and brought into Serbian society the ideals that Karadžić and Obradović first introduced.[65]  Some of the intellectuals focused on cleansing the Serbian language and culture

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[63] Karadžić is best known for reforming the Serbian language, wherein during his lifer he wrote the first Serbian vernacular dictionary along with publishing several hundred pieces of Serb epic poetry.
[64] Milojković-Djurić, *Pan-Slavism and National Identity in Russia and the Balkans*, 48.
[65] Petrovich, *The History of Modern Serbia*, 239.

from influence of the Ottoman Empire, while many others became politicians and other civil servants.

The position of the Serbian rural population in Serbian society greatly changed with the semi-independence of the Serbian state which led the Serbian peasantry to disapprove through local resistance of the progressive Western European ideas and political philosophies introduced by the Serbian intellectuals . While the Serbian intellectuals provided the ideological support for the formation of the Serbian state, Serbian rural folk provided the "manpower" necessary to liberate Serb-populated territories from the Ottomans forces. Nonetheless, despite their great involvement in the liberation wars, the Serbian peasantry lost much of the social and political power that it had enjoyed under the Ottomans in the zadruga social structure. Petrovich argues that the resulting position of the Serbian peasantry in the semi-independent Serbian state was paradoxical because with state independence social groups usually become more politically autonomous.[66] Moreover, Petrovich suggests that this phenomenon was due to the nation's transition from a "patriarchal folk democracy to an impersonal modern political machine."[67] The Serbian rural population demonstrated its aversion towards Serbia's new political system by verbally attacking and denouncing the government bureaucracy, the Serbian peasants referred to the employees of the bureaucracy as frauds, traitors and nemci, "Germans".[68]

In this period, Serbian rural folk denounced progressive Western European ideas also because they were ideologically distant to the patriarchal political culture of the Serbian peasantry. The introduction of these ideas by the Serbian intellectuals initiated a battle between the opposing forces of traditionalism, which belonged to the peasantry, and modernity, which the intellectuals sought ardently to promote. Traditionalism in Serbian political culture included

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[66] Ibid., 190.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 192.

religiously-based social stratification, communal decision-making, collective rights, resistance of authority, and many other factors diverging from modernity. The progressive ideas of the Serbian intellectuals introduced the social stratification of Serbian society based on skill and economic opportunity, individual rights and freedoms, the acceptance of bureaucrats and other civil servants as authority, and the development of constitutionalism and the rule of law. Serbian rural folk deduced that they lacked any commonality with the intellectuals and bureaucrats due to differences spanning from tangibles such as dress and speech mannerism to intangible factors such as social challenges, opportunities and aspirations.

**Conclusion**

Patriarchy and paternalism marked the early days of Serbian political development. Serbia's political rulers, beginning with Karadjordje, tapped into Serbian political culture in order to earn the support of the Serbian rural population. For example, both Karadjordje and Miloš Obrenović proclaimed themselves the fearless leaders in the Serbs' fight for freedom against the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the Constitutionalists presented themselves as the educated saviors of the Serbs promising to modernize the Serbian state and bring it ideologically closer to Western Europe. All three interest groups relied on the blind faith that Serbia's rural population vested in their leaders.

With de facto independence the Serbs received their first constitutions, however, only with the approval of the Great Powers. De facto independence exposed Serbian intellectuals, but also merchantry, to Western European political ideologies and philosophies which often clashed with the conservative values of the Serbian peasant.

**CHAPTER FOUR:**
**SERBIA POST-INDEPENDENCE**

**Introduction**

In this Chapter I provide an analysis on how the political culture of the Serbs in the

second half of the nineteenth century influenced the rise and spread of socialism as a legitimate

political ideology among the Serbian rural folk and enabled the collective acceptance of

communism in the twentieth century.  I also examine the foreign policy interests of the Great

Powers of the era, namely Austria-Hungary, the Russian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, in the

Balkans in order to understand more effectively how the interests of these Empires influenced

the processes of state-building in Serbia.  Finally, in this Chapter, I explore the origins of

Yugoslavism as the ideological predecessor to the Yugoslav state.

The immediate post-independence period of the Serbian state marked the onset of a new

type of political system rooted in socialist ideology that persisted in Serbian politics until the

establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.  The communal aspect of the

zadruga social structure influenced the Serbian rural population to support politically the

Radicals political party due to its ideology of "narodnism", or populism, which rested on the idea

of giving more power to the peasantry through increased local self-government.  The Radicals

believed that the social organization of the zadruga represented an embryonic socialist system

that ought to be replicated on a grander scale.

Post-independent Serbia continued to face similar foreign policy challenges, aside from

the influence of the waning Ottoman Empire, like semi-independent Serbia still under the grip of

the Ottoman Empire.  Austria-Hungary's foreign policy interests in the Balkans continually

clashed with those of Serbia preventing the state from expanding westward and realizing an

outlet to the Adriatic Sea, and also from further developing economically.  Nonetheless, Russia's

foreign policy interests of increasing its influence in the Balkans benefited Serbia by supporting

the enlargement of the Serbian state to counter Austria-Hungary's claims in the region.  Due to

the support of the Russian Empire, Serbia expanded southward which resulted in the size of its

territory almost doubling which threatened Austria-Hungary and ultimately set the stage for

World War I (see Figure 8).

Under the influence of the Revolutions of 1848, South Slav political philosophers in

Austria-Hungary re-created a pan-South Slav political movement that was based on the idea of

forming of a Yugoslav state within Austria-Hungary under the ideology of Yugoslavism.

Yugoslavism served as the founding ideology for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in

1917 and the Communist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945.

## Communalism: A Re-birth

With the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 Serbia became a de jure independent state which

resulted in a change of political organization among the various political factions within Serbia

(see Figure 7).  Serbia's independence finally freed Serbia of the Porte's perpetual political

influence on the state's internal affairs and its organization.  Political parties could now formally

exist which thereby allowed various political factions to organize themselves better throughout

the state and to encourage the political participation of Serbia's rural folk in the political process.

As Serbian rural folk became more engaged in the political process, Serbian political culture

became more egalitarian as the communal aspects of Serbian political identity trumped

patriarchal values in an environment of equal economic opportunity for the rural folk.  Political

pluralism led to the spread of democracy and the fortification of the representative democracy

form of political system in Serbia, bringing the state, but also the nation, ideologically closer to

Western Europe.

Before the rural population pledged its widespread support to the Radical Party, this group elected the representatives of the Progressive Party into government only to become disappointed with the Progressives' subsequent treatment of the rural population. The Progressives were a group of foreign-educated intellectuals, offshoots of the Conservatives, who argued that in order for Serbia to become a modern state the political and economic interests of the Serbian rural folk, as the most numerous social group, had to be represented in government. After only a brief period in office, the Progressives determined that the members of the Serbian rural population could never become participants in the political decision-making process despite their tradition of folk democracy and as a result neglected the political and economic interests of this group which they had previously energetically campaigned to represent.

Socialist ideas emerged into Serbian society by way of Russian "narodnism" as espoused by Svetozar Marković. The political ideology of the Radicals emerged from the ideas embodied in Russian "narodism", or populism, a 1860s and 1870s social movement of Russian intellectuals who advocated socialist principles, focusing primarily on the improvement of social and economic living standards for Russia's poorest peasants.[69] "Narodism" was introduced into Serbian society by Svetozar Marković after studying in St. Petersburg on a scholarship given by the Serbian government in the 1860s during which he became active in the Russian socialist movement. During his studies, Marković took interest in the teachings of Nikolay Chernyshevsky, founder of "narodism", who in his literary work advocated the overthrow of the aristocracy and the implementation of a socialist system based on the structure of the traditional peasant commune. Applying narodism principles, Marković identified the Serbian peasant with the industrial worker and argued that it was the responsibility of the Serbian intelligentsia to lead

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[69] "Narodnism" ideology paved the way for the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

the rural folk to the establishment of a social order with the zadruga as its nucleus.[70] Marković

hoped that Serbia might "skip capitalism and pass into capitalism directly via the zadruga" while

criticizing the Liberals and the Constitution of 1869 that civil liberties were not an end to be

accomplished but a means to the "transformation of the  socioeconomic system and the political

regime that rested on it." [71]   Similar to Chernyshevsky's ideas on Russian "narodism",

Marković's theoretical approach to the socialist peasant revolution in Serbia rested on the

communal and egalitarian aspects of the political culture of the Serbia's rural population as

presented through the zadruga social structure.

Some years after Marković's death his followers tapped into the communal and

egalitarian political culture of the Serbian rural folk to spread the socialist movement in Serbia's

rural regions.  Marković's followers, Adam Bogosavljević and Pera Todorović, presented his

ideas to Serbia's peasantry by stressing the communal aspects of Marković's socialism and

advocating for the creation of a peasant state where Serbian peasants would enjoy the same

political and economic rights as the bureaucracy and the merchants.[72]  However, since

Marković's followers also were aware of the patriarchal nature of Serbian political culture they

avoided mentioning the aspects of socialist thought that would have been repugnant to the

peasantry.

The members of the Radical Party, led by Nikola Pašić, connected with the mainly

illiterate Serbian rural folk through symbolism.  In line with the Radicals teachings on socialist

ideology, Party leaders bridged the divide between themselves, as Serbia's educated elite, and

the illiterate peasants by using symbolism to communicate effectively with them, similar to the

Serbian Orthodox Church under the Ottomans when through symbolism it narrated epic poetry to

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[70] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 376.
[71] It could be argued that the freedoms embodied in the Constitution of 1869 allowed for the free expression and the subsequent spread of socialist ideas.  *See* Ibid.
[72] Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 63.

promote the myth on the Battle of Kosovo.  The Radicals established district offices throughout

towns in Serbia and in the spirit of communal decision-making used symbols to explain the

current events political and the underlying ideas of the Radical Party's platform.  For example, to

highlight to the importance of constitutionalism in society, Party leaders explained that people

without a constitution were like nomads who lived on the bare soil under an outstretched canvas,

people with a bad constitution were like men who lived in small and miserable huts which were

full of smoke, darkness, cold, and dirt, while people with a good  constitution were like men who

had large and well-lit rooms filled with warmth.[73]  It is important to note that the Radicals were

able to organize oral discussions and to gain the support of the rural population through such

means in part due to the right to freedom of expression that existed as a result of the Constitution

of 1869.

Resistance to authority still was alive in Serbian political culture so that when King Milan

refused to recognize the overwhelming victory of fifty-three percent of the Radicals over the

Progressive Party in the 1883 elections the rural population revolted against him.  Milan, who

was pro-Austrian, believed that the Radicals received support from the Russian monarchy to

promote Russian influence in Serbia and refused to allow them their allotted seats in Serbian

Parliament.  To supply the Serbian Army with weaponry in Serbia's 1876 war with the Ottoman

Empire, Milan issued an order that each peasant relinquish all of his weaponry to the state for

and that he would be reimbursed monetarily later.  After failing to reimburse monetarily the

Serbian rural folk and to recognize the overwhelming victory of the Radicals, the peasantry

responded in the Radical-controlled Timok region of eastern Serbia by boycotting the state

bureaucracy and destroying public establishments resulting in the death and imprisonment of

many Serbs.  The Timok Rebellion represents an important event in nineteenth century Serbian

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[73] Ibid., 64.

history because it demonstrates the collective determination and political maturity of the Serbian peasants to reclaim their rightful political and economic position as the liberators of the Serbian nation under the Ottomans.

After the Radical party split into two separate political parties the Serbian rural folk supported the political group who advocated for more local self-government and lower taxes for the peasants.  Due to the support of the Serbian peasantry, the Independent Radicals stayed in power under Nikola Pašić and promoted socialist ideology benefiting the Serbian rural population until the end of World War I in 1918 when the party dissolved.

From the First and Second Serbian Uprisings in the early nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, Serbian society experienced a period of intense political, social and economic change.  Scholar Alex Dragnich argues that Serbian political culture, rooted in patriarchy but also communalism and egalitarian principles, allowed for the political modernization of the Serbian state.[74]  Unlike in the cases of the Germans or the Italians, the Serbs' political culture developed from a sentiment of national identity that the Serbian Orthodox Church had nurtured for centuries which facilitated nation-building.  In addition, Serbian political culture was communal and absent of rigid class divisions, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century.  State-building and nation-building came naturally because Serbian political culture was free of major ethnic or regional differences, despite the apparent existence of local differences and loyalties.[75]  Also, the rural population's tradition of folk democracy paved the way for the spread of democracy in Serbian society in the nineteenth century.  Finally, Serbian intelligentsia dedicated itself as a group to the modernization of the Serbian political

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[74] Ibid., 118.
[75] Ibid.

state which resulted in the development of the rule of law and constitutionalism along with the institutionalization of political processes and practices.[76]

**Constitutionalism Post-Independence**

After Serbia's independence in 1878 the Radical Party, the Obrenović monarchy along with the Liberal and Progressive Parties, and the Great Powers participated in a tug of war over power in Serbian politics.  Relying on the Serbian rural folk for political support, the Radicals sought to please the Serbian peasantry by giving them certain rights in Serbia's Constitutions that would better their social and economic position in Serbian society.  On the other side, the Liberals and Progressives aimed to disempower the rural folk because they feared the peasants' numerosity in Serbian society, despite their mutual commitment to advance the civil rights and freedoms of all Serbs.  Finally, Austria-Hungary and Russia both wished to remain influential in Serbia and in the region at large.  Most characteristic of this era of Serbian constitutionalism is the competing ideological interests between socialist ideals, as promoted by the Radicals and supported by Serbia's most numerous social group, and the ensuing capitalism of the period that Austria-Hungary and other western European states promoted, largely for their own benefit.

As the majority party in Serbian government, the Radicals passed the Constitution of 1888 after criticizing the Constitution of 1869 for its lack of clarity on individual rights and freedoms.  Like the Constitution of 1869, the Constitution of 1888 was drafted under the influence of Western European ideas and political philosophies, mimicking the Belgian Constitution.  Serbia's new Constitution presented the individual rights and freedoms of Serbs in clear and consistent language absent ambiguity or space for further interpretation.  It guaranteed Serbia's citizens the freedom of speech, as had the Constitution of 1869, an independent

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[76] Ibid.

judiciary, and a clause prohibiting the suspension of the Constitution regardless of circumstances. As with the Constitution of 1869, the importance of the Large National Assembly as a law-generating body grew and a majority vote became necessary to pass legislation while government representatives at the Large National Assembly now enjoyed the right to overrule the monarch's political decisions by a majority vote. In addition, the Constitution of 1888 allocated more power to local self-government thereby vesting the Serbian rural population with more control over their position in society.

However, as with Serbia's previous Constitutions, the Constitution of 1888 discriminated against Serbia's poor by denying them suffrage rights unless they pay a poll tax.[77] Unfortunately, like in other western European states, Serbian women were denied suffrage rights. Nonetheless, despite the apparent setbacks of the Constitution of 1888, this Constitution guaranteed Serbia's citizens considerable freedoms, frightening the Great Powers, particularly Austria-Hungary, that its own subjects would seek similar freedoms.

Austria-Hungary greatly disapproved of the Constitution of 1888 because it threatened the rule of King Milan, whose decisions could now be overruled by the majority Radicals in the Large National Assembly, and the little power that the Liberals and Progressives had. Austria-Hungary promoted its interests in Serbia through Milan, Liberals and the Progressives and perceived as a threat the increasing powers of the Serbian rural folk, and as a result exerted pressure on the Radicals to pass a new Constitution that would diminish the rights of Serbia's rural population.

Shortly after members of the Radical Party in the Large National Assembly passed the Constitution of 1894, as per the demands of Austria-Hungary, Russia demanded the reenactment

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[77] However, this phenomenon does not prove Serbia's political system as unsophisticated in the period given that the United States, a traditionally democratic state, constitutionally outlawed suffrage rights based on the payment of poll tax only in 1966 in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*. Nonetheless, the Constitution of the United States did guarantee universal manhood suffrage in with the XV Amendment in 1869.

of the 1888 Constitution.  Russia saw the Constitution of 1894 as a furtherance of Austria-Hungary's interests in Serbia.  While the Constitution of 1894 promoted Austria-Hungary's economic interests as a growing capitalist power, the Constitution of 1888 nationalized Serbia's industries, primarily salt and tobacco, and prevented the Great Powers from investing in them.  Although Russia's monarchy denounced socialist ideals, it supported the Radical Party because of its anti-Austrian position.

Due to Russian pressure, the Serbian King Aleksandar Obrenović promulgated the Constitution of 1901 but tailored it to appease Austria-Hungary.  The Constitution of 1901 lacked the enumerated individual rights and freedoms of the Constitution of 1888 but instead made them subject to legislation by the Large National Assembly and the Senate.  It introduced a bi-cameral legislative form of government that consisted of the Large National Assembly, which had 130 representatives, and a Senate with 51 representatives of which three-fifths King Aleksandar was to elect.

The Radicals, representing the Serbian rural population but also the Serbian Army, strongly opposed the Constitution of 1901 and demanded that a new, more liberal constitution be brought.  In 1903, the Serbian army assassinated King Aleksandar and his wife Draga Mašin which brought an end to the Obrenović dynasty and the overwhelming influence of Austria-Hungary over the Serbs.  The Radical Party installed the Karadjordjević dynasty and ratified the Constitution of 1903, enumerating similar rights and freedoms as those presented in the 1888 Constitution.  To ensure the protection of rights and freedoms of Serbia's citizens, the Radicals mandated the formation of a Council of State and independent judiciary.

Constitutionalism in post-independence Serbia demonstrates the evolvement of Western European ideas and philosophies on individual rights and freedoms in Serbian society and the growing tension between Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire in international affairs.  After

experiencing the protection that individual rights and freedoms gave to the Serbian rural population, the peasantry became adamant about retaining these rights.  Interestingly, despite the Serbs acceptance of the idea of individual rights, Serbian political culture remained communal, for the most part, allowing for easy integration into the Yugoslav communist framework in second half of the twentieth century.

**Foreign Relations: A Determining Factor**

Since Garašanin's "Načertanije" central to Serbia's foreign policy was the idea that Serbia expand its territory westward so that it could establish an outlet to the Adriatic Sea and thereby increase its economic and military power in order to deter the Great Powers from exerting their influence in the region by interfering in Serbia's affairs.  An economically and militarily powerful Serbia would be able to deter Austria-Hungary from enlarging its territory at the expense of independent Serbia and the decaying Ottoman Empire, and to prevent Russia from attempting further to include Serbia in its sphere of influence.  Moreover, a strong Serbian military would be able to defeat the remaining Ottoman forces in the Balkans and thereby enable Serbian expansion westward, southward, and southwestward into Old Serbia and finally Kosovo.

However, in 1878 with the Treaty of Berlin, Serbia's aspiration of westward expansion were crushed when Austria-Hungary negotiated with the other Great Powers that it receive the right to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, territory that had been under the control of the Porte since 1463.  Although the Treaty of Berlin recognized Serbia's independence from the Ottoman Empire by making Serbia a de jure independent state, the Treaty indirectly prohibited Serbia from westward expansion by giving Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary.  With the Treaty of Berlin, Serbian political philosophers and the government realized that Serbia would need to compete with Austria-Hungary and Russia for power in the region.

Restrained by Austria-Hungary, Serbia developed friendly relations with Russia. In the early twentieth century the Radicals government and the Karadjordjević monarchy determined that partnership with Russia would assist the Serbs in southward and southwestward expansion which have the effect of not only increasing Serbia's territory but also deterring Austria-Hungary from exerting its influence on Serbia. Russia would benefit from its partnership with Serbia since it could then more easily spread its influence in the region.

Serbia's collaboration with Russia in the area of foreign policy led Austria-Hungary to adopt an increasingly imperious posture in relation to Serbia which resulted in the acceleration of anti-Austrian sentiment among the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and eventually the onset of World War I with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of the Austrian Empire.

Austria-Hungary knowingly obstructed Serbia's foreign policy interest of westward expansion and sought to deter the Serbian state from forming an alliance with Russia in order to promote its foreign policy objectives. In its aim to prevent Serbia from collaborating with Russia Austria-Hungary granted Milan Obrenović title of King of Serbia and signed with him the "Secret Convention" which stipulated that Austria-Hungary would support Serbia's expansion southward at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of the Sandzak of Novi Pazar that was to remain in Austria-Hungary's sphere of influence, while Serbia would abstain from organizing and/or supporting any political or religious uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sandzak of Novi Pazar that were to be directed against Austria-Hungary.[78] Austria-Hungary considered the Sandzak of Novi Pazar, a strip of land that connects Bosnia and Herzegovina in the north with Kosovo and Metohija in the south and Serbia in the east with

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[78] The agreement is called the "Secret Convention" because it was kept secret from the Serbian public until 1893. *See* Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 414.

Montenegro in the west, as strategically important to its foreign policy interests in the region which included containing Serbia's westward expansion.

In 1881, Serbia and Austria-Hungary signed the "Trade Treaty of 1881" which bound Serbia to an agreement that limited its profits on most of its exports to Austria-Hungary as a trading partner. The "Trade Treaty" stipulated that Serbia export its pigs, cattle, hides, and agricultural products to Austria-Hungary at lower tariff rates than was standard in nineteenth century circumstances while Austria-Hungary exported manufactured goods to Serbia.[79] Like the "Secret Convention", the "Trade Treaty" was negotiated by Austrophile Milan. The Radicals denounced the "Trade Treaty" and argued that Austria-Hungary's intended through the Treaty to deter Serbia from developing its industrial sector, which in this period represented a sector of the economy characteristic of western European modern states and which would have promoted Serbia's economic development.

In 1903, after the coup d'etat in Serbia, the pro-Russian Serbian government under the Radicals and the Karadjordjević monarchy overtly shifted its foreign policy towards Russia. After the "Trade Treaty" of 1881, the Radicals worked to liberate Serbia from Austria-Hungary's influence on Serbia's economic development and the growth of the Serbian military.[80] Disapproving of Serbia's increasingly cordial relations with Russia, Austria-Hungary declared a tariff war on Serbia in 1906.[81] Subsequently, in 1908, Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Empire and built a railroad in the Sandzak of Novi Pazar that formally separated Serbia and Montenegro in order to prevent Serbia from establishing an outlet to the Adriatic Sea via its unification with Montenegro.[82]

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[79] Ibid., 411.
[80] Ibid., 542.
[81] Austria-Hungary also disapproved of the Serbs close social and political relations with South Slavs in Bosnia.
[82] Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 103.

Austria-Hungary's increasingly aggressive posturing towards Serbia led Serbia to pursue further its strategy of expansion southwestward into Old Serbia and southward onto present day northern Macedonia. Since the 1860s with Serbia's national revival, Serbia maintained that Old Serbia was de facto Serbian land because it was inhabited by a population who spoke Štokavian, practiced the Serbian Eastern Orthodox faith, and shared the same customs as Serbs in the motherland.[83]

As of 1878 Serbia's foreign policy interests included southward expansion onto present day northern Macedonia as well. Moreover, Serbia used the same factors in demonstrating territorial ownership rights on the basis of self-determination of northern Macedonia as with Old Serbia, except adding that northern Macedonia was abundant in Serbian Orthodox monasteries which further proved that the territory belonged to the Serbs prior to Ottoman invasion. In the early twentieth century, Serbia established schools in the region, with Bulgaria following suit in eastern Macedonia, and provided financial resources for the organization of guerrilla factions to spread Serbian national identity among the population.

Serbia also lobbied to deter Russia from including northern Macedonia in its sphere of influence. In 1904 Serbia signed with Bulgaria, which was under the influence of Russia, two separate treaties wherein the two states promised to honor each other's sphere of interest in the region. Austria-Hungary responded to the treaties between Serbia and Bulgaria with a tariff war against Serbia two years later. Despite devastating economic pressure from Austria-Hungary, Serbia remained committed to its territorial goals in Old Serbia and northern Macedonia and a loyal partner to Russia vis-à-vis Bulgaria.

In 1912 Serbia and Bulgaria signed another treaty stipulating that the two states would defend each other in the event that a foreign power attempt to annex, occupy, or even

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[83] Carnegie Endowment, *The Other Balkan Wars*, 47.

temporarily to invade with its armies any territory held under Ottoman control.  A secret annex

to the treaty maintained that the liberated territories would be divided into the Serbian zone, the

Bulgarian zone, and a contested zone, which was within the intermediate regions of Macedonia,

once Serbia and Bulgaria cleared the land from the Ottoman forces.[84]  The Serbian zone

consisted of Old Serbia, the Sandzak of Novi Pazar, and areas north and west of the Šar

mountain range.  When Austria-Hungary learned of the secret annex, it responded by denouncing

the treaty between Serbia and Bulgaria and arguing that the secret annex threatened its interests

in the Balkans, in particular the Sandzak of Novi Pazar.[85]  Serbia's and Austria-Hungary's

foreign policy interests continued to clash creating a great deal of tension between Serbia,

Austria-Hungary, and Russia, and setting the stage for World War I.

 Russia promoted its foreign policy interests by supporting the territorial expansions of

Serbia and Bulgaria at the expense of the crumbling Ottoman Empire.  In 1912 Russia supported

the establishment of the Balkan League, a loose military alliance formed among Serbia,

Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece with the objective of liberating the remaining Balkan lands

from the Ottoman forces.[86]  Austria-Hungary, but also France and Britain, perceived the Balkan

League as an instrument of Russian power, which in deed it was, since it was established to

promote Russian interests in the Balkans and counter those of Austria-Hungary.  By the end of

1912 the Balkan League victoriously liberated a large amount of land from the Ottoman forces.[87]

 The Treaty of London in 1913 ended the First Balkan War and thereby changed the

geopolitical landscape of the Balkans.  In the making of the Treaty of London, Austria-Hungary,

along with England and France, sought to contain Russian interest in the region while advancing

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[84] Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, 595.
[85] Ibid.
[86] The Balkan League was created by Serbian Prime Minister Milan Milovanović.
[87] The Balkan League was successful in part because the Ottoman Empire was declining in power and over-extended and at war with Italy over Tripoli, and  in the midst of the Young Turk revolution.

their own interests.  In the negotiation of the Treaty of London, Austria-Hungary remained intent

on containing Serbia and, as a result, lobbied for the establishment of an independent Albania,

despite ongoing Ottoman presence, that would receive a greater part of Old Serbia and

Macedonia, including Peć, Prizren, Djakovica, Debar, Ohrid and Struga.[88]  Austria-Hungary

sought to share its sphere of influence over Albania with that of Italy.  Thanks to Russian

pressure, Serbia received some of Old Serbia, however, excluding present day Kosovo and

Metohija.[89]

Despite Serbia's acquisition of a part of Old Serbia, the Serbian government argued that it

remained vital to Serbia's economic interests that Serbia establish an outlet to the sea.

Furthermore, Serbia argued that if the great powers refused to award Serbia an outlet to the sea,

that Serbia would have to establish one itself.[90]  Serbia maintained that it had abstained from its

territorial ambitions in Albania because of Austria-Hungary and that because of this territorial

sacrifice Serbia ought to be awarded an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea via Salonica.  Serbia's

assertions to Salonica threatened Bulgaria that Serbia conspired to acquire its territorial

ambitions in eastern Macedonia.  As a result, Bulgaria attacked Serbia, Greece, and Romania in

the Second Balkan War, however, only to be quickly defeated by a far greater alliance of Serbs

and Greeks, and Romanians and Ottoman forces.  The Second Balkan War ended in 1913 with

the Treaty of Bucharest.  As a result of Serbia's war efforts in the Second Balkan War, Serbia

gained one half of the Sandzak of Novi Pazar, all of Old Serbia- Kosovo and Metohija, and

northern and central Macedonia.[91]  Serbia's territory increased from 18,650 square miles to

33,891 square miles.  As per Austria-Hungary, the Empire lost the Sandzak of Novi Pazar to

Serbia and Montenegro which cut Austria-Hungary off geographically from Albania and thereby

[88] Ibid., 600.
[89] Bulgaria received the Thrace region as a result of the Treaty of London.
[90] Ibid., 601.
[91] The other  half of the Sandzak of Novi Pazar went to Montenegro.  *See* Ibid., 603.

devastated it geopolitical strategy in the region. With Serbia's acquisition of Old Serbia, Kosovo and a part of present-day Macedonia, Serbia became a regional hegemon, a circumstance that severely embarrassed and threatened Austria-Hungary.[92]

**Yugoslavism**

Yugoslavism provided the ideological underpinning for the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and later the Communist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. It originated from the merging of ideas of Illyrianism, a nineteenth century Croatian political movement, and pan-Slavism, a mid-nineteenth century Russian socio-political movement embraced by twentieth century Serbian intellectuals. Yugoslav ideology rested on the idea that the Great Powers would cease to exert their political and economic influence on the South Slavs if the South Slavs formed a political state on the basis of their common South Slav language, despite differences in dialect, and shared customs.

Illyrianism originated in the 1830s as a political movement by a group of Croatian intellectuals, most notably Ljudovit Gaj, who argued that the growing influence of the Magyar culture in the Croat Banovina of Austria-Hungary ought to be countered by aggrandizing Croatian national culture. These two political philosophers believed that the Croats could better resist Magyar culture by learning that they belonged to the South Slav nation, who were really Illyrians, and integrating into the Croatian state in Austria-Hungary under one common Croatian language.[93] Furthermore, the Croatian nation included all Croats in Austria-Hungary despite the

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[92] As a result of the Balkan Wars, the territories of Greece almost doubled while Bulgaria's territory declined, although it did manage to acquire western Macedonia, an area just west of the Struma River.
[93] The Banovina region is located between the rivers of Sava, Una, and Kupa, and southwardly borders Bosnia and Herzegovina.

fact that they spoke three different dialects- Štokavian, Kajkavian, and Čakavian.[94]  The

Illyrianists argued that Štokavian ought to become the national language of the Croats because it

was spoken by the majority of South Slavs outside of Austria-Hungary, a fact that would enable

the easier unification of the Croats and the other South Slavs.[95]

Since Illyrianism relied on the ideas of Croatian national revival the most Serbs in Serbia

proper and some Serbs in Austria-Hungary rejected Illyrianism since they already had a well-

developed national identity as a result of the Serbian Orthodox Church acting as protector of

Serbian cultural identity during the era of Ottoman rule over the Serbs.

In the 1860s Illyrianism became Yugoslavism when it underwent a modified revival by

Josip Juraj Strossmayer and Canon Franjo Rački.  Like Illyrianism, central to Yugoslav ideology

was the idea that in order for the Croats to resist Austria-Hungary's denationalization efforts the

Croats would need the political, economic and moral support of Serbs in Serbia proper and

within the Austria-Hungarian Empire.  Furthermore, Strossmayer and Rački argued that the

South Slavs ought to unite under the umbrella of a common South Slav language and culture to

form a political unit within Austria-Hungary.[96]  However, unlike the Ilyrianists the Yugoslavs

stressed that the Croats had legitimate territorial claims to the western Balkans, precisely from

the Bojana River in the south to the Drina and Danube Rivers in the north, and thereby refused to

acknowledge the fact that the Serbs who lived in lands still occupied by the Ottoman Empire and

Austria-Hungary had a right to national self-determination.[97]  Strossmayer and Rački, in their

capacities as political philosophers, denied the Serbs in Austria-Hungary the right to national

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[94] According to Banac,  Kajkavian was spoken by Croats in the northwest, around Zagreb, from the Drava river to
south of the Kupa while Čakavian was spoken in Dalmatia.  All other South Slavs in Austria-Hungary spoke
Štokavian. *See* Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, 77.
[95] Ibid., 78.
[96] Ibid., 89.
[97] Djilas, *The Contested Country*, 91.

self-determination and argued that the former had a moral obligation to assist the Croats in their national struggle against Magyar supremacy and German centralization.[98]

Most Serbs in Austria-Hungary rejected Yugoslavism because they perceived it as a Croatian national movement with the goal of forming a Croatian political state within Austria-Hungary.  The Serbs already had well-developed sense of national identity due to the activities of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as mentioned in Chapter 2.  The Serbs in Austria-Hungary began to support Yugoslavism only in 1903 with the formation of the Croato-Serb Coalition.[99]

Ideologically competing with Illyrianism, and later Yugoslavism, the radical Croatian nationalist movement emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century.  The movement's standard-bearers were Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik. and they argued that due to Austria-Hungary the Croatian nation was in danger of disappearing and that the only solution to preserving Croatian national sentiment was the creation of a "Great Croatia" that would extend from the Alps to the Drina River and from Albania to the Danube River. [100]  Starčević and Kvaternik believed that all South Slavs who lived within these territories ought to become Croat nationalized, and recognized only the Croats and Bulgarians as belonging to a national race.[101] They argued that the Serbs were an "unclean race of various origins, dating to ancient times, which was bound together only by its servile nature" and that the Serbs in Austria-Hungary were not ethnic Serbs but Croats.[102]

Pan-Slavism originated as early as the sixteenth century with Croatian philosopher Vinko Pribojević however only to gain widespread significance only in the mid-nineteenth century

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[98] Ibid.

[99] The Croato-Serb Coalition was formed by an alliance of Serbian political parties in Austria-Hungary and an independent faction of the Progressive Youth, a group of youth who deemphasized the idea of Croatian political nation and the territorial claims espoused by Strossmayer and Rački and promoted Croatian and Serbian unification within Austria-Hungary.  *See* Ibid., 25.

[100] Ibid., 86-87.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Committed to this idea, Starčević sought to establish a Croatian Orthodox Church.  *See* Ibid.

when embraced by Russian intellectuals to promote Russia's foreign policy interests in the Balkans (see Figure 10). Pan-Slavism emerged from the idea that all European Slavs shared a common Slavic language and common customs which ought to unite the European Slavs politically and spiritually under Russia. In the Balkans Russia promoted the ideas of Pan-Slavism to spread its influence among the South Slavs with the goal of countering the geopolitical interests of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Pan-Slavism was more accepted by the Serbs than the Croats most likely because the Serbs shared a common religion and political ideology with the Russians, in the period.

The idea of forming a Yugoslav unit within Austria-Hungary became feasible only in 1903 when the Croato-Serb Coalition, under Croat Frano Supilo and Serb Svetozar Pribičević, linked together in mainland Croatia and the Dalmatian Coast with the goal of uniting all Croats and Serbs within a common political entity. In the early twentieth century the Serbian government under the Radicals and Karadjordjević monarchy lacked interest in forming a political state with the South Slavs in Austria-Hungary since any type of political unification would have threatened further Austria-Hungary. Despite the policy of the Serbian government towards the South Slavs in Austria-Hungary, Serbian intellectuals and youth nurtured a pro-Yugoslav sentiment organizing cultural events in Belgrade with the South Slavs in Austria-Hungary and transforming Belgrade into the cultural piedmont of the South Slavs. Unlike Serbia's intellectuals and youth, the Serbian rural population remained disinterested in ideas about Serbian kinship with the Croatians and other South Slavs because it nurtured local loyalties and interests. By 1914 the idea of forming a Yugoslav unit within Austria-Hungary became dead and the establishment of an independent South Slav political state appeared to be the only viable solution to ensure political independence for the South Slavs.

During World War I the Serbian military fought under the banner of Yugoslavism to liberate the remaining South Slavs, principally the Croats, from Austria-Hungary's rule and to enable the unification of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in an independent Yugoslav political state.[103]  In July 1917 it was stipulated in the Corfu Declaration that the Yugoslav state be named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and that it be a constitutional, democratic parliamentary monarchy with the Karadjordjević dynasty as the ruling house.  Nikola Pašić, Serbian Prime Minister, and Ante Trumbić, president of the Yugoslav Committee, both signed the Corfu Declaration.[104]

During the short life of the Kingdom, from 1918 until 1939, a constant tension existed between the Serbian and Croatian governments on the level of federalism that ought to exist within the state framework.  While the Croats argued that the level of federalism ought to be decreased principally out of fear that they would never be able to promote their national interests because of the Serbian majority population in the Kingdom, the Serbs argued that decreasing the level of federalism in the state political structure would cause political instability because of the numerous national minorities that lived in the Kingdom.  The Serbs feared that less federalism would divide the Serbian majority population into several different federal units, since the Serbs were populated throughout the entire Kingdom, which would lead to a loss of political representation for the Serb minorities in the Kingdom.

Constant tension between the Serbs and Croats, but also the Slovenes, resulted in the collapse of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes  in the early days of World War II.

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[103] In December 1914, Nikola Pašić, Prime Minister of Serbia, obtained the approval of the Serb Parliament on a statement that Serbia's principal war aim was the liberation and unification of all Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. *See* Dragnich, *The Development of Parliamentary Government in Serbia*, 5.

[104] The Yugoslav Committee was an organization committed to the unification of the South Slavs and was headquartered in London and consisted of twelve Croats (eight of whom were from Dalmatia), three Serbs, and one Slovene. *See* Ibid.

Serbian and Croatian politicians in the Kingdom were unable to strike a balance between the appropriate level of federalism and decentralism due to the complexity of how the South Slavs were situated within the Western Balkans as a result of predominantly Ottoman but also Austrian occupation. Nonetheless, despite the failure of Yugoslavism as an ideology to promote nation blindness in the Kingdom, Yugoslavism again provided the ideological underpinning for the formation of the Communist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945.

**Conclusion**

Post-independence Serbia underwent a period of intense political change in the late nineteenth century during which the Serbian rural population transformed the underlying political system from one that was patriarchal and elite-based to a socialist-populist system that rested on the ideas of communalism and egalitarianism. As stated in Chapter Two, the zadruga social structure played a significant role in shaping Serbian political culture in that its internal organization promoted communal and egalitarian values. Inspired by "narodism", Svetozar Marković introduced populist ideology to Serbian intellectuals after which populist-socialist, but also Marxist, ideas trickled down to the Serbian rural folk. The Radical Party tapped into Serbian political culture and used symbolism to present socialist-populist ideology to the Serbian peasantry, which the peasantry accepted and widely supported.

The relationship between Serbia and the Great Powers, namely Russia and Austria-Hungary, shaped post-independence Serbian constitutionalism. Both the Russian and Austria-Hungarian Empires sought an active role in the drafting of Serbia's constitutions, despite Serbia's status as a de jure independent state, in order to promote their interests in the region and as a result influenced the level of rights and freedoms that were to be given to the Serbs.

Serbia's plan of westward expansion, that would enable the state to obtain an outlet to the Adriatic Sea, was hindered by Austria-Hungary which received rights to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 and to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 while it sturdily held on to the Sandzak of Novi Pazar to prevent Serbia from joining a common union with Montenegro and establishing an outlet to the Adriatic Sea . Since Serbia could not expand westward it began expanding southward and southwestward at the expense of former Ottoman territories. Serbia turned to Russia for support and protection from Austria-Hungary. Its territory almost doubled after the Balkan Wars.

The early twentieth century represents the birth of Yugoslavism, a pan-South Slav political movement that originated from the ideas of Illyrianism and Pan-Slavism. Yugoslavism served as the founding ideology for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1917 and the Communist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945

**Introduction**

In this Chapter I examine the ideological underpinnings of the Yugoslav communist system to shed light on the causes behind the collapse of Yugoslavia.  Despite the failures of Yugoslavism to unite ideologically the South Slavs in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, many South Slavs fought together during World War II under the banner of Yugoslavism to liberate the Balkans from the fascist powers (see Figures 10 and 11).  The ultimate goal was the establishment of a Yugoslav communist state.  Perhaps under the influence of the political and ideological challenges of the Kingdom, the CPY installed an array of different policies and programs aimed at eliminating the national and cultural differences among the South Slavs and promoting Yugoslavism.  Ideas of brotherhood and unity, workers' self-management, and international non-alignment all served to promote Yugoslavism.  The Serbs readily accepted communism perhaps due to the communal and egalitarian nature of Serbian political culture since the Battle of Kosovo.

However, while the Serbs in Serbia proper largely approved of the Yugoslav communist political and state framework, in the early 1960s Croats and Slovenes began to lobby against it. They claimed that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia sabotaged their own national interests, which doctrinally were prohibited from existing, due to the Serb majority in the Yugoslav state. Croats and Slovenes proposed that the Yugoslav state be decentralized.  In 1963 Yugoslavia decentralized resulting with the various nationalities, or ethnicities albeit, being represented by the Republic in which they resided and no longer by the national group that they belonged to. While this new set-up strengthened the political position of the Croats and Slovenes, it politically hurt the Serbs who were scattered throughout the Yugoslav Republics and were minorities in

each Republic except for Serbia.  Still dissatisfied, Croats and Slovenes pushed for further

decentralization.  In 1974 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia divided the Republic of Serbia

into three separate political entities, the Republic of Serbia became Serbia, the Autonomous

Province of Kosovo and Metohija, and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.  The two new

Autonomous Provinces received the right to succeed from the Republic, resulting in another

political loss for the Serbs.

        With new transparency laws in the late 1970s, Serbian intellectuals became increasingly

vocal about the gradually weakening position of the Serbs within the Yugoslav state framework.

Nonetheless, despite the apparent anti-Serb policies of the Yugoslav communist party, most

Serbs remained loyal Yugoslavs.


**"Brotherhood and Unity" and Paternalism**

        Central to Yugoslavism was the idea of "brotherhood and unity" which had originated

with the South Slav youth in Austria-Hungary, as described in Chapter Four.  After World War II

many South Slavs, in particular those who suffered under the genocide of the Croat Ustaša

regime, remained divided on national grounds.  To unite ideologically the South Slavs in

Yugoslavia the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) promoted the idea of "brotherhood and

unity".  The Yugoslav state framework embodied the very idea of "brotherhood and unity" in

that the single Yugoslav federal unit of government represented the "unity" aspect of the slogan

while the six, and later eight after the 1974 decentralization process, republic level units signified

the "brotherhood" factor.

"Nation blindness" represented one of the main features of "brotherhood and unity". It promoted a collective Yugoslav national identity while also recognizing the various different nationalities that existed within the federal state.[105]

The CPY incorporated the idea of "brotherhood and unity" into the Yugoslav framework largely by promoting the principles of "brotherhood and unity" in the Yugoslav educational system. Moreover, the CPY featured the "brotherhood and unity" theme in educational textbooks and promoted it in school activities, such as in plays and through class excursions throughout Yugoslavia. For example, CPY created a Yugoslav student exchange program that encouraged elementary school students to visit throughout the different Yugoslav republics. In the name of "brotherhood and unity", the CPY formed sister schools to promote cross-national bonding. Despite the erosion of federalism with the decentralization processes, CPY continued to promote the idea of "brotherhood and unity" in the Yugoslav educational system indoctrinating the South Slav youth with the ideals of Yugoslavism.

The Yugoslav communist system survived so long in South Slav society in part because the CPY relied on paternalism to maintain their legitimacy among the South Slavs. After living under either the Ottoman Empire or the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, most South Slavs grew accustomed to the paternalism of these Great Powers, which includes the Serbs despite their brief encounter with socialist-populist ideology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To gain legitimacy, CPY leaders tapped into the political culture of the South Slavs, presenting its leadership as the only viable political solution to the Yugoslav state. As discussed earlier, the CPY easily gained legitimacy among the Serbian rural population due to the pre-existing patriarchy in Serbian political culture.[106]

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[105] Djilas, *The Contested Country*, 160.
[106] Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 433.

The CPY relied on paternalism to promote Yugoslavism vis-à-vis the Yugoslav educational system.  In 1942 the already active CPY established the Union of Pioneers of Yugoslavia after the Young Pioneer Organization of the Soviet Union to indoctrinate Yugoslav youth with principles of "brotherhood and unity" with Tito as the father of the homeland. Yugoslav children became Tito's Pioneers at the age of seven on the first day of elementary school when they took the following official oath:

> *Today, as I become a Pioneer,*
> *I give my Pioneer's word of honor-*
> *that I will study and work tirelessly,*
> *respect my parents and elders,*
> *and be a loyal and honest comrade.*
> *That I will love our homeland the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia under*
> *workers self-management.*
> *That I will spread brotherhood and unity,*
> *and the ideas for which comrade Tito fought.*
> *And that I will value all peoples of the world who respect freedom and peace!*[107]

After taking the oath, the children received a blue "Titovka" hat, or "Tito's Hat", with a red metal star brooch and a red handkerchief signifying the colors of the Yugoslav flag and marking their initiation into the Union of Pioneers of Yugoslavia.

Unlike the paternalism of "brotherhood and unity", the program of workers self-management rested on communal values since it conferred decision-making power to each Yugoslav industrial worker.  Workers self-management emerged in 1948 after the Tito-Stalin split as part of CPY's effort to differentiate Yugoslav from Soviet communist ideology by transferring power from the federal level to the local level and giving Yugoslav workers enough control over their activities of their respective firms.  Tito believed that while workers self-management chipped away at the political framework of the Yugoslav state it also strengthened Yugoslavism to the degree that Yugoslav ideology would continue to exist even with the

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[107] Translation taken from wikipedia.org, *Union of Pioneers of Yugoslavia.*

dissolution of Yugoslavia (see Figure 12).[108]  The system of workers self-management rested on

the slogan of "factories to workers" and widely appealed to Serbia's rural folk because it

promoted communal and egalitarian values.[109]  However, workers self-management also

influenced the Serbian rural population to believe that democracy was the unchallenged rule of

the majority class.[110]

Learning from the experiences of the South Slavs while under the occupations of the

Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary, CPY based Yugoslav foreign policy on the principle of

remaining non-aligned in relation to the US and the USSR during the cold war.  Tito believed

that the South Slavs could avoid their legacies of foreign domination only by pursuing a more or

less politically neutral foreign policy.  Although the South Slavs remained free of foreign

influence well into the mid-1980s, they were subject to communist ideology and indoctrination.

**Decentralization**

Decentralization destabilized the Yugoslav political framework.  In the late 1950s the

Croats and Slovenes began to advocate that the Yugoslav political system ought to become less

centralized so that each Yugoslav Republic could receive more power to control its internal

affairs.  In 1963 the Yugoslav federal structure underwent the process of decentralization

whereby Yugoslavia's various nationalities, or ethnicities albeit, no longer received

representation according to their national group but in accordance with the Republic in which

they resided.  The decentralization process of 1963 most affected the Serbs who resided as

minorities in all six Republics and as a result lost the opportunity to be represented by the

Republic of Serbia but by the government of the Republic where they resided.  Due to the

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[108] Djilas, *The Contested Country*, 177.
[109] Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 436.
[110] Ibid., 435.

undemocratic nature of the communist system, Serb minorities often lacked representation. Serbs in the Republic of Croatia suffered most from the new political system due to the lingering anti-Serb sentiment among many Croats, particularly those involved in Ustasha war activities during World War II.[111] Most vocal of anti-decentralization CPY members was Aleksandar Ranković who argued that decentralization threatened Yugoslavism as the state's underlying ideology because it destabilized the position of the Serbs as the state's largest national group.

The Croats, on the other hand, saw the Yugoslav federalist structure as an effort by the Serbs to keep the Croatian nation hostage due to the large Serbian minority in the Krajina region of the Republic of Croatia.[112] Also Croat and Slovene CPY leaders feared Serbian hegemony in Yugoslavia due to the Serbs being the largest national group in Yugoslavia. In addition these actors believed that decentralization would allow their respective Republics to transform their economies from workers self-management to capitalist free market.[113]

The decentralization process of 1974 further decreased the power of the Serbs in Yugoslavia. In 1974 the CPY revised the pre-existing Constitution giving the Autonomous Provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo almost identical political powers as the Republics enjoyed and further fragmented the Serbs as a political group.[114] In the late 1970s Serbian intellectuals posed an array of philosophical questions regarding the decentralization processes such as, why the CPY denied autonomy to the minority Serb population in the Krajina region of the Republic of Croatia but granted it to Vojvodina which was inhabited largely by Serb nationals; and, also, why the CPY declined to give autonomy to the large Albanian minorities in the Republics of

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[111] Croatian animosity towards the Krajina Serbs is visible in a speech given by Milovan Žanić of the Independent State of Croatia in 1914 where he declared: "This country can only be a Croatian country, and there is no method we would hesitate to use in order to make it truly Croatian and cleanse it of Serbs, who have for centuries endangered us and who will endanger us again if they are given the opportunity. *See* Johnsen, *Deciphering the Balkan Enigma*, 38.
[112] Dragovich-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, 29, 34.
[113] Klemenčić, *The Former Yugoslavia's Diverse Peoples*, 205.
[114] Unlike the Yugoslav Republics, Kosovo and Metohija, and Vojvodina, did not have the right to succeed from Yugoslavia.

Macedonia and Montenegro but granted it to the Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija. These questions can be answered in a multitude of ways, however, perhaps the most compelling answer being that the Croats and Slovenes feared Serb hegemony within Yugoslavia due to the size of the Serbian state after 1945, the large number of the Serbs who were scattered throughout six different Republics, and the very fact that the Serbs were the first to gain national independence and to free the Croats and other South Slavs from Austria-Hungary which gave the Serbs a sense of increased pride.

**The Serbian Intelligentsia**

In the late 1970s Serbian intelligentsia established numerous theories as to why the CPY diminished the power of the Serbs as a national group in Yugoslavia. Members of the Serbian intelligentsia argued that while the Croats unfairly accused the Serbs of centralism and unitarism they overlooked the fact that centralism in fact had been implanted after the war 'in order to prevent the raising of the question of national responsibilities for the genocide that had been carried out against the Serbs' during World War II".[115] The idea of a communist Yugoslav state emerged before World War II had ended and the CPY never condemned the crimes of the Ustaša in explicitly national terms. Furthermore, the Serbian intellectuals argued that the CPY's lack of action in condemning the Croats for their activities against the Serbs, Jews, and Roma absolved them from forming a collective guilt for their crimes.[116] Moreover, the intellectuals further

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[115] Dragovich-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, 44.
[116] The genocide of the Croat Ustaša committed against the Serbs, Jews, and Roma shocked the conscious of even German police officers. The following is noted in a 1942 German police report:

> "The Ustaša units have carried out their atrocities not only against [ Eastern ] Orthodox males of military age, but in particular in the most bestial fashion, against unarmed old men, women and children . . . innumerable Orthodox have fled to rump Serbia, and their reports have roused the Serbian population to great indignation."

*See* Singleton, A Short History of the Yugoslav Peoples, 178.

claimed that the Croats planned to create an independent national state immediately after World War II that would be exclusively for Croats, as was represented in the drafted constitution for the planned state.

After Tito's death in 1981 the Serbian intellectuals lamented on how the CPY's federal policies under Tito ruined the position of the Serbs in Yugoslavia. These intellectuals concluded that beginning with the very formation of the Yugoslav state Tito believed that the federal state framework could be preserved only under the condition that the Serbs be stripped of their political power as the most numerous national group in Yugoslavia.[117] Furthermore, they argued that the CPY failed to acknowledge the courageous efforts of the Serbs for liberating their South Slavs brothers from Austria-Hungary's grip during World War I and for fighting under the banner of a common Yugoslav state in great numbers in order to free the South Slavs from the Nazis and the Ustaša regime during World War II. While the Serbians partisans played an important role in providing a "clean slate" for the establishment of the Yugoslav state, the CPY tailored its federal policies against the Serbs.[118]

Serbian intellectuals established that the Serbs were "stabbed in the back" by the CPY and that they were the victims of the Yugoslav state and nation-building projects. This sentiment re-introduced the ideology of victimhood that the Serbs so often nurtured under the Ottoman Empire.

In post-Tito Yugoslavia, Kosta Čavoški, Ljubomir Tadić, and Dobrica Cosić were the most vocal members of the anti-CPY Serbian intellectuals. These intellectuals argued that the Yugoslav state served as a vehicle for the individual nationalities of the six Republics to become each independent nation-states based on the theory that the Serbs were oppressing the other

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[117] Dragovich-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, 80.
[118] Ibid., 80.

Yugoslav nationalities. [119]  While each CPY member advanced the interests of his national

group, the Serbs were busy defending themselves from these allegations.  The primary goal of

Yugoslavia was the creation of a multitude of individual nation-states, while communism

represented solely the means to independent statehood for these nations.  Furthermore, Čavoški,

Tadić, and Cosić argued that the practice of workers self-management represented a cover-up of

"bureaucratic nationalism" which in fact did not promote Yugoslavism but destroyed it, and that

should the Serbs had expressed any opposition to "bureaucratic nationalism" they again would

have been perceived by the other Yugoslav nationalities as "hegemonic and unitarist".[120]

     Čavoški, Tadić, and Cosić turned much of their focus to the political future of the

Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.  These intellectuals stressed that the territory of

Kosovo represented the spiritual, cultural and historic heart of Serbia and the Serb nation, and

that because of this it ought to remain an integral part of Serbia and that its autonomy and that its

legal status as an autonomous Republic ought to be reversed to pre-1974.[121]  It was necessary

that the reintegration of Kosovo and Metohija into Serbia occur promptly in order to reverse the

effects that the multiplying birthrate of Kosovan Albanians was having on the Province.  Finally,

in regards to the granting of Autonomous Province status to Kosovo and Metohija and

Vojvodina, Čavoški, Tadić, and Cosić argued that CPY policies brought Serbia's borders back to

what they were before the I and II Balkan Wars in 1912, with the exception of two provinces

formerly held by the Bulgarians, and 1913 and that, *summa summarum*, the Serbs were the

biggest losers of the Yugoslav project. [122]

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[119] These Serb intellectuals belonged to the Praxis School, which was a movement of Serbs and Croats who studied humanist Marxist philosophical thought and argued that communism prevented the South Slavs from democratizing, stressing that the freedom of speech was central to marxism.  Also, the Praxists played an important role in de-legitimizing Tito's despotism and demystifying Yugoslavia's elite.  *See* Ibid., 87-88.
[120] Ibid., 40.
[121] Ibid., 41.
[122] Ibid., 85.

**Conclusion**

Despite the failures of Yugoslavism to unite ideologically and politically the South Slavs in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, many South Slavs fought together during World War II under the banner of Yugoslavism. To establish, and later preserve, unity in Yugoslavia CPY installed an array of different policies and programs aimed towards eliminating the national and cultural difference between the South Slavs. Central to these policies and programs was the idea of "brotherhood and unity", as well as workers' self-management and intentional non-alignment. "Brotherhood and unity" served as the central idea for promoting Yugoslavism in the Yugoslav education system. The Serbs in Serbia proper readily accepted communism perhaps due to the communal and egalitarian nature of Serbian political culture since the Battle of Kosovo.

The decentralization processes of 1963 and 1974 brought about the gradual disappearance of Yugoslavism among the South Slavs. The 1963 decentralization process split the political representation of the Serbs so that Serbian minorities received political representation from the government in the Republic in which they resided. The 1974 decentralization process further decreased the political power of the Serbs in Yugoslavia since it divided the Republic of Serbia into three separate political bodies and gave the two new provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija, succession rights from Serbia proper. The two decentralization processes destabilized the Yugoslav federal framework.

Beginning with the later 1970s Serbian intellectuals criticized CPY policies claiming that the Party strengthened the political position of the other nationalities, particular those of the Croats and Slovenes, while it weakened the political position of the Serbs. Nonetheless, despite the cautionary and reactionary position of the Serbian intelligentsia most Serbs remained loyal Yugoslavs.

**CHAPTER SIX:**

**SERBIA UNDER SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ**

**Introduction**

In this Chapter I examine the impact of particular events and institutions in Serbian society that swayed the Serbs towards the option of intense nationalism as opposed to a peaceful journey of national revival in the post-communist period. In addition, I analyze the role of the United States in shaping Serbian political reality in the 1990s and bringing about the demise of Slobodan Milošević and his regime.

In the late 1980s Milošević tapped into the political culture of the Serbs and reawakened patriarchal values in Serbian society in order to gain political support. He took advantage of the demise of communist values and the existing ideological power vacuum in Serbian society and introduced a modern version of the myth of the Battle of Kosovo to the Serbs. Moreover, Milošević revived the old fear, and reality, of Kosovo being "lost" and the martyrdom that came along with the Serbian national myth. Milošević took advantage of the Serbs' growing distrust towards the other Yugoslav nations as Yugoslavia was on the brink of collapse. Instead of undergoing a process of peaceful post-communist national revival, the Serbs under Milošević experienced more than a decade of intense religious nationalism.

After the United States perceived the collapse of Yugoslavia as a threat to the fragile stability of Eastern Europe it intervened in the Balkans. Since the early 1990s the United States initiated a campaign targeted to remove the Milošević regime from power and to promote the democratization of Serbian society. Moreover it pumped large sums of money into the bank accounts of Serbia's political opposition parties and non-for-profit organizations. The most

financial and technical support went to Otpor, which began as a small student-led movement but became the moving force of Serbia's opposition movement.

**Milošević Nationalism: Patriarchy Revisited**

Milošević gained political legitimacy in Serbian society by tapping into the patriarchal but also communal elements of Serbian political culture. In the late 1980s Milošević advocated that Yugoslavia remain a unitary, federal state. For example, in a speech given in 1988 during a "Brotherhood and Unity" rally in Belgrade Milošević stressed that the Yugoslav federal structure ought to be preserved and to accomplish this the South Slavs ought to commit their energies to defending Yugoslavism from anti-Yugoslav forces, as done by Tito with the communist revolution.[123] Despite the gradually spreading collective national sentiment of victimology due to the perceived injustices of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) under the communist regime, Milošević knew that the majority of Serbs still supported Yugoslavism and an integral Yugoslavia, primarily because of Serbian political culture.

Nonetheless, Milošević realized that in order to stay in power he would need to tap into the patriarchal aspect of Serbian political culture to reawaken the collective memories of the Battle of Kosovo and the Serbian national myth. In a paternalistic tone, Milošević argued that the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija, but also Vojvodina, ought to be politically reintegrated into the Republic of Serbia. Milošević tapped into the political culture of the Kosovan Serb population, now a marginalized minority in the Province, and in April 1987 he addressed a crowd of frightened Kosovan Serbs with "No one shall dare beat you." after a

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[123] Ibid., 212.

number of Serbs complained that the Kosovan Albanians were beating.[124]  Milošević's

paternalism signaled the beginning of a tidal wave of nationalism in Serbia.

Milošević was aware that arousing Serbian national sentiment over the possible "loss" of

Kosovo would re-awaken Serbian claims to the region.  As Čolović argues in The Politics of

Identity in Serbia, Milošević tapped into the concept of Serbian "mythological genetics", which

is based on the idea that the talents and qualities of Serbia's medieval warriors were transferred

from one generation to another.[125]  "Mythological genetics" supported the idea that the Serbian

national myth of the Battle of Kosovo flowed in the blood of every Serb.  As a result Serbian

national claims to Kosovo and Metohija stemmed not only from Serbian political culture but also

from genetic predeterminism.[126]

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, Milošević tapped into the warrior-like qualities of Serbs

during his speech on Vidovdan at Gazimestan where he stated that the Serbs may resort to arms

if they are unable to "reclaim" their collective property right to Kosovo by engaging in an

economic, political, social and cultural battle.  Interestingly Milošević received the support of

both the Serbian intelligentsia, perhaps due to the Serbs sour experience decades ago under

communism, and the Serbian rural population in his position on Kosovo and Metohija.[127]

Milošević relied on paternalism to stay in power.  Paternalism sprang from patriarchy, a

value deeply embedded in Serbian political culture, and the Serbian rural folk had become

accustomed to being led by their nation's *pater*, as they were in the semi-independent Serbian

state and later under the communist regime.  To win the support of the Serbian rural population,

Milošević used the Serbian peasant as an example of the "ideal Serb".  He argued that the "ideal

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[124] Dragovich-Soso, *'Saviours of the Nation' Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, 208.
[125] Čolović, *The Politics of Identity in Serbia*, 16.
[126] Ibid.
[127] In 1989 Milošević, in his capacity as the President of the Republic of Serbia, reintegrated the Autonomous Provinces of Kosovo and Metohija and Vojvodina into Serbia and withdrew both Provinces' status of autonomy.

Serb" was an honest, hard-working man who refrained from questioning political authority and minded his own business.  This type of paternalistic mindset also surfaced in communist Yugoslavia when an old man once commented on how he was just a worker and how he was disinterested in the political process because he trusted his nation's political leader to make the correct decisions without his input.[128]

According to Eric Gordy in The Culture of Power in Serbia, Milošević stayed in power for such a lengthy period precisely because he destroyed all viable political and cultural alternatives to his regime.[129]  Milošević's paternalism assured Serbian rural folk that his regime was the only viable regime for Serbia and discouraged the existence of any political parties who would oppose his leadership.

Nonetheless, Milošević's paternalism towards the Serbs, following forty-five years of a one-party political system, along with the Yugoslav Wars that many Serbs were dragged into and the subsequent sanctions that were imposed by the various international actors, precisely made the Serbs believe that no alternative existed to their political reality.

**Foreign Relations and Communalism: the United States, Otpor, and Serbia**

Since the early 1990's until Milošević's fall in 2000 United States' foreign policy under the Bush and Clinton Administrations called for the displacement of the Milošević regime and the building of democracy in Serbia.  Until the late 1990s the United States promoted it foreign policy in Serbia via legal international instruments and mechanisms, such as political and economic sanctions, by putting pressure on the Milošević regime to democratize Serbian society.  As early as July 1990 Milošević yielded to a degree to pressure exerted by the United States and enacted the "Act on Association of Citizens in Associations, Social Organizations and Political

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[128] Čolović, *Politics of Identity in Serbia*, 229.

[129] A Serb politician had commented once how Serbs would learn how to vote only when they learn how to choose.

Parties" giving Serbia's citizens the right to form and associate freely with political parties and non-governmental organizations.  Legislation allowing media pluralism followed shortly afterwards.[130]  Despite the attempts of the Milošević regime to seal off Serbian society from the political effects of globalization, Serbs became informed on the post-communist movements in other Eastern European states and educated about the political and economic alternatives that Serbia's opposition parties offered leading them gradually to support the opposition parties.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a democracy-promotion vehicle of the United States government, actively promoted programs allowing for the democratization of Serbian society.  NED claims to be a "private, non-profit, grant-making organization that receives an annual appropriation from U.S. Congress through the Department of State" to promote democracy around the world.[131]  Since 1988 NED had been active in the former Yugoslav Republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia as it provided funding and leadership for sustainable democracy building programs.[132]  In Serbia NED began its activities in the early 1990s by supporting the establishment of trade unions, independent media houses, such as radio B-92, and various non-governmental organizations, particularly those that dealt with human rights, youth leadership, research, and cross-regional networking.  Only during the years of 1999 and 2000, NED's "democracy-building campaign" in Serbia cost an estimated $41 million.[133]

NED channeled its democracy-building activities in Serbia by making the National Democratic Institute responsible for strengthening Serbia's opposition-based political parties and

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[130] Tunnard, *From State-Controlled Media to the Anarchy of the Internet*, 106.

[131] ned.org, *About the NED*.

[132] Ibid*., Hearing of the Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe "The Milosevic Regime Versus Serbian Democracy and Balkan Stability"*.

[133]Using its soft power, the United States exerted its economic power to remove the Milošević regime, and to promote the spread of democracy and a free market economy in Serbia.  The United States used its hard power parallel to its soft power in 1999 wherein it bombed Serbia for almost three consecutive months with the purpose of removing the Milošević regime, establishing a military base in Kosovo, and securing the independence of Kosovo in 2007.  *See* Washington Post, *The US Guided Milosevic Opposition*.

by engaging the International Republican Institute (IRI) in the civic sector.  IRI provided the ideas and mechanisms allowing for the further growth of the student-led anti-regime grassroots movement which began in 1988 when Serbian college students protested against proposed government legislation to place Serbia's universities under strict government control and supervision.  Under IRI the student-led movement became known as Otpor, or resistance, adopting a black on white, or white on black, fist as its symbol in its fight against the Milošević regime.  In the late 1990s Otpor became a multigenerational, though primarily youth-based, organization with district offices throughout Serbia proper.  It enjoyed the support of Serbia's citizens and today receives credit as the moving force in Serbia's widespread anti-regime movement.[134]

According to NED's website, Otpor received its first grant of $143,210 in 1999 "to enable the student movement to continue organizing public events around the country by providing material and organizational support."[135]  From 1999 until 2002 Otpor received more than $825,000 of disclosed funds from NED.[136]  Otpor used NED funds to train its members on non-violent resistance methods, to print and distribute leaflets with anti-Milošević regime messages, to purchase spray paint for anti-regime graffiti writing, and finally to pay for rent and other expenses.

Otpor relied on the communal aspect of Serbian political culture to garner support from the public for its anti-regime activities.  It organized festivities with public theatre and other performances during which Otpor members demonstrated the injustices of the Milošević regime and anti-regime protesters congregated in large numbers to express their general discontent with their political reality.  Otpor called on Serbs to resist the regime by collectively returning to their

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[134] Bieber, *The Serbian Opposition and Serbian Society*, 84.
[135] ned.org, *Description of Grants*.
[136] ned.org, *Description of 2002 Grants*.

moral values.  Otpor likened the Milošević regime to the backward and uncivilized nations of the

East, really alluding to the Ottoman Empire, and asked the Serbs to determine whether they

desired to live in an uncultured, primitive society that the regime promoted.  To illustrate this

point, Otpor members argued that Serbian cultural identity stemmed from two different roots-

one of the East, as a result of being dominated by Islamic culture for centuries, and the other of

the West, which was the Serbs "natural" medium of belonging.[137]  Otpor sought to demonstrate

to the Serbs that the Milošević regime promoted Serbia's Eastern heritage through its political

powerstructure and because of this was unpatriotic and treacherous towards the Serbian nation.

Like Serbia's nineteenth century intelligentsia, mentioned in Chapter Three, Otpor represented a

progressive force in Serbian politics that called for the democratization and liberalization of

Serbian society.  It was aware that the communal values instilled in the Serbs generationally

would eventually surface to support a common cause as an undivided nation against a dictator.

On October 5, 2000 Slobodan Milošević fell from power after several hundred thousand

people stormed into City Hall in Belgrade demanding that he hand his presidency over to

Vojislav Koštunica, who received over fifty percent of the vote in the September 24th

presidential elections.  The political overthrow of Milošević began with a strike of civil

disobedience of mine workers at Kolubara who threatened to shut down Serbia's largest power

plant unless Milošević conceded political power to Koštunica.  On October 5th, several hundred

thousand Serbs from Serbia's rural and urban areas gathered in Belgrade and stormed into

Serbia's Parliament building demanding Milošević's resignation and recognition of Koštunica as

winner of the presidential elections.  Unlike previous anti-regime protests in Serbia, Milošević

failed to order a large scale police crackdown on the protestors perhaps due to his belief that the

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[137] Marković, *The Elements of Neoliberal and Orientalist Ideologies Incorporated in the Process of the Development of a Civil Society*, 4.

Yugoslav Army would turn against him.  On October 7, 2000 Milošević conceded power to Koštunica and resigned.

**Conclusion**

Milošević came to power in Serbia by tapping into the political culture of the Serbs at a time when communism was in decline and national revival seemed like the logical next step. Moreover, Milošević recognized not only the communal character of the Serbs but also the lurking patriarchy that would enable him to use paternalism to win political support from them. He revived the Serbian national myth, created under the Ottomans and now promoted by the Serbian Orthodox Church, and spread nationalism in order to stay in power.  After more than four decades under the Yugoslav communist political system, the Serbs grew accustomed to not having a political alternative to the regime in power.

The United States became politically active in the Balkans in the late 1980s after perceiving that the collapse of the Yugoslav state would threatened the fragile stability of the Balkans.  Beginning with the early 1990s the United States the exerted a great deal of pressure on the Milošević regime to democratize Serbian society via networks developed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).  NED supported the formation of Otpor, a student-led opposition movement, to remove the Milošević regime from power.  Otpor's ideology rested on principles of non-violent resistance and it promoted a liberal pro-Western Serbian society while relying on the communal principles of Serbian political culture.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:**
**CONCLUSION**

In Serbia the historic past of the Serbian people reflects in the present. It remains alive in Serbian national, cultural, and historic identity and manifests itself through the political culture of the Serbs. A pillar of Serbian national and cultural identity remains the myth of the "Battle of Kosovo" which continues to shape Serbian national consciousness. Since the late fourteenth century the myth of the "Battle of Kosovo" has been used by the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbia's political leaders to consolidate Serbian national identity, particularly during times of national struggle and triumph. The "Battle of Kosovo" dictates to the Serbs their national and historic past through a false pretext of the defeat of the Serbian Christians by the Ottoman Muslims in the late fourteenth century. The event emerges as a context for divine revelation, that the Serb's are God's chosen people and that as such they must endure all threats to their possible extinction.

Aside from the "Battle of Kosovo" serving as the Serbs' raison d'être during the period of Ottoman colonization, this myth largely shaped the Serbian national revival movement of the nineteenth century and Serbian nationalism under the regime of Slobodan Milošević in the late twentieth century. The "Battle of Kosovo" continues to give the Serbs a sense of national, cultural and historic identity despite overwhelming historical evidence that exposes its fallacies.

The myth of the "Battle of Kosovo" and the social organization of Serbian society under the Ottoman Empire socialized Serbs to have little input on the political and economic decision-making processes making the Serbs vulnerable to paternalism. Decision-making was left to omnipotent rulers, those personifying heroic martyrs of the Battle of Kosovo, who promised to rule in the best interests of collective Serb society. Paternalism impeded the spread of democracy, the implementation of the rule of law, and the development of constitutionalism in

nineteenth century Serbian society and later in the late twentieth century under the Milošević regime. Nonetheless, Serbian political culture allowed for the spread of communist ideology and the installment of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Serbian society.

Paternalism, but also foreign power influence, led the Serbs to develop a collective sentiment of victimhood. Under the Ottoman Empire, the Serbian Orthodoxy relied on the good will of the Porte to practice their religion and customs and to maintain economically viable living conditions. Collective Serbian sentiment of victimhood extended into the mid-nineteenth century despite Serbian state independence. In this period, Serbia's geopolitical interests clashed with those of Austria-Hungary which prevented Serbia from expanding its borders westward and southwestward and developing its economy independent of Russian or Ottoman protection. National victimhood mentality led Serbian policymakers to unite politically with the other South Slavs in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1917 and the Communist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945.

During the cold war, Serbian sentiment of helplessness over its nation future due to foreign power influence greatly decreased as the Yugoslav communists maintained a non-aligned posture in Yugoslavia's foreign relations, staving off the political influences of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Nonetheless, this sentiment returned in the early nineties as the United Nations Security Council imposed political and economic sanctions on Serbia under the Milošević regime due to the activities of the Serbs in the Yugoslav wars. The West, most significantly the United States, continued to promote its influence on Serbia after the disappearance of the communist regime by investing millions of dollars in Serbia's opposition parties and non-profit organizations. The future of the Serbs largely depended on the foreign policy of the United States. Most Serbs continue to feel helpless about the direction of their

country's future most likely because of the West's pressure on Serbia to become a member state of the European Union.

After the fall of Milošević Serbs enthusiastically embraced Serbia's process of democratization and its accession into the European Union however only to become discouraged by the European Union's persistence on Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the recognition of its member states of Kosovo as an independent state. In 2001, Serbia, within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, began its ongoing journey towards becoming a European Union membership state by signing the Stabilisation and Association Process. Under this Process, Serbia must meet the Copenhagen Criteria, as expressed by the 1993 European Council, in order to become a signatory to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), which would make Serbia a potential candidate for European Union membership.[138] A central demand of the EU in the SAA has been that Serbian government cooperate with the ICTY and extradite all outstanding alleged war criminals. Less than six months after Serbia's October Revolution, the Serbian government under Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić arrested and extradited Milošević to the ICTY on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity while in July 2008 the Serbian government extradited alleged war criminal Radovan Karadzić to the ICTY also on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.[139] The extradition of Milošević and Karadzić were a priority for the ICTY because of the graveness of their charges; with their extradition Serbia has made a good faith effort to comply with the ICTY.

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[138] *The Copenhagen Criteria are political and economic, and call for the following: the implementati*on of the rule of law, the respect of human rights, the protection of minorities, the development of a functioning market economy and Serbia's capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the European Union, and the full adoption of the *acquis communitaire*, the total body of European Union law.

[139] icty.org, *Case Information Sheet*.

In April 2008 Serbia's potential candidacy status for EU membership was granted prematurely in order to stave off increasing anti-EU sentiment among the Serbs following the recognition of EU member states of Kosovo's independence in February 2008. After the EU's political maneuver, general Serb feeling towards the EU became one of distrust and resentment since the Serbs realized that potential candidacy status was a trade-off for Kosovo's independence. Furthermore, the EU's position on Serbia reinforced Serbian sentiment of victimhood and powerlessness making the Serbs indifferent to their country's accession to the EU.

Nonetheless, despite political setbacks and prevailing apathy, Serbia has made significant political and economic strides in its fulfillment of the Copenhagen Criteria as reported in the EU Commission's "Serbia 2009 Progress Report". According to the Report, in the area of democracy and the rule of law, Serbia has been successfully cooperating with the ICTY and consolidating the rule of law and democracy; improvement still remains necessary in the effective implementation of Serbia's laws and the decrease of corruption in public administration, procurement, and privatization.[140] The Report notes, however, that greater improvement also remains necessary in human rights and the protection of minorities, particularly in improving legal mechanisms that allow greater access to justice through free legal aid, prison reform, the freedom of expression- prohibiting hate speech and increasing media transparency, and in promoting gender equality and the protection of women and children from violence, and in promoting anti-discrimination against minorities.[141] Moreover, the Report delicately advises that "Serbia and Kosovo need to reach pragmatic solutions enabling key regional *fora* to continue fulfilling their role in advancing regional cooperation and development.[142]

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[140] ec.europe.eu, *Serbia 2009 Progress Report Conclusions*, 1.
[141] Ibid., 2.
[142] Ibid., 3.

Despite Serbia's progress towards becoming a member of the European Union, the Serbs continue to cling to their nation's past as they stress the greatness of the medieval Serbian Empire and the independent Serbian state in the nineteenth and early twentieth century while they denounce communist Yugoslavia for fragmenting the Serbian nation and dividing the Republic of Serbia, and the United States for its NATO bombing campaign and support of Kosovo's independence.  To demonstrate the injustices of the NATO bombing campaign, the democratically elected Serbian government left standing the ruins of the Yugoslav National Army building on Kneza Miloša street in downtown Belgrade.  Many Serbs believe that the United States' foreign policy on the Balkans rests on the idea that Balkan stability can only be achieved with an economically weak Serbian state.  As with the Yugoslav communists, most Serbs feel that since the early 1990s the United States consistently promotes anti-Serb foreign policy.  The Serbs again perceive themselves as victims.

Figure 1. A Scene From the Battle of Kosovo

Figure 2. Serbian Orthodox Monasteries in Kosovo and Metohija



Figure 3. Serbian Orthodox Monastery Studenica



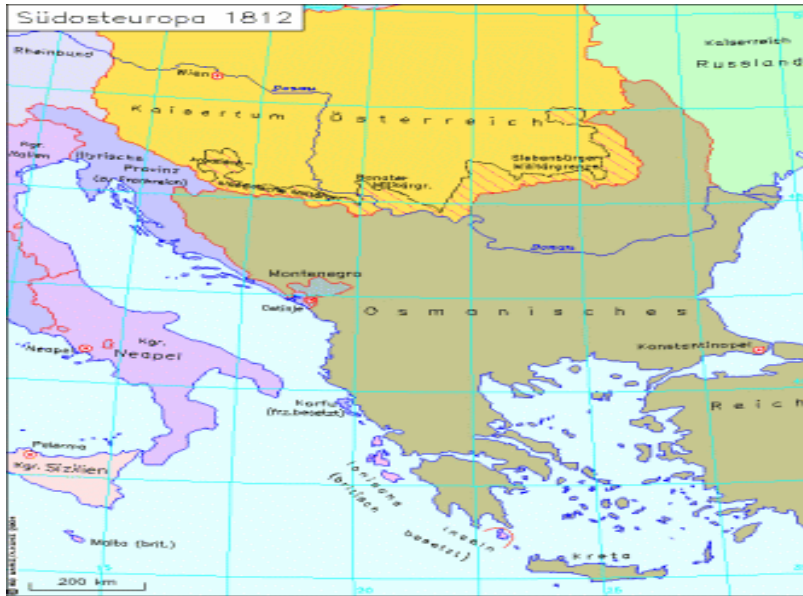Figure 4. Vidovdan Celebrations During World War I

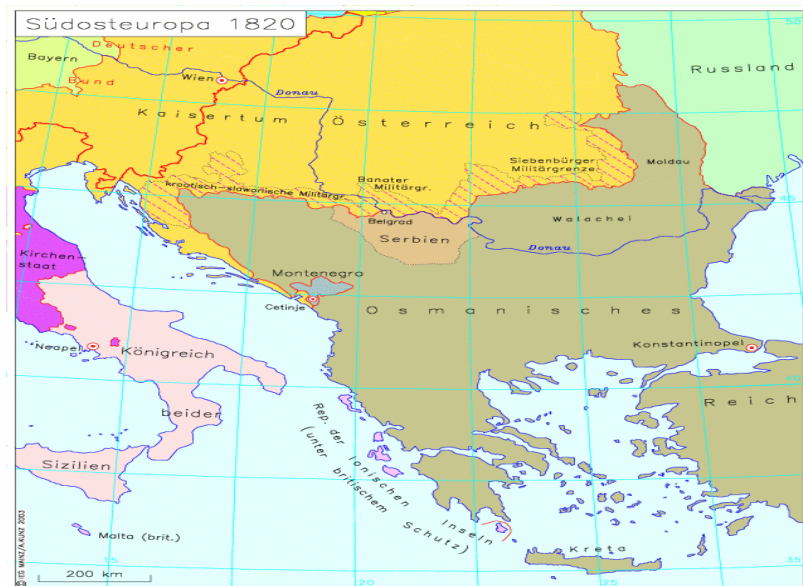Figure 5. Southeastern Europe in 1812



Figure 6. Southeastern Europe in 1820

Figure 7. Southeastern Europe in 1878



Figure 8. Southeastern Europe in 1914

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Figure 9. Southeastern Europe in 1923

Figure 10. The Effects of Pan-Slavism in Europe



Figure 11. Southeastern Europe in 1947

Figure 12. The Collapse of Yugoslavia

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