

*Antagonism and the Formation of the Nationalist Imaginary*

In this paper I assess the conditions which allowed for the emergence of what I call the 'nationalist imaginary' in the Israeli-Occupied Territories and Palestinian diaspora and in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (particularly in the region now called Serbia). I treat the nationalist imaginary as a specific modality of "imagined community" (Anderson 1991), seeing it as emerging when a group of people comes to conceive of itself as a 'we' through the process of mobilizing against forces its members recognize as threatening their individual and collective survivals. Their shared perception that their being is threatened by an aggressive outside agency - which I, following Laclau and Mouffe, call an "antagonism" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 93ff) - impels them to join in the project of forming a nation state to protect them from that menacing other. In analysing the formations of nationalist identities in Palestine and in what we now term 'Former Yugoslavia' I intend to show the part played by antagonism in constituting oppositional nationalist movements.

At the heart of this paper is the role 'constitutive violence' plays in identity formation. I show, through analysing the emergence of nationalist imaginaries, that violence is not simply a device nationalists of certain persuasions take up strategically in pursuit of ends (*cf.* Adam 1990), but something that plays a constitutive role in the formation of all nationalisms (see Bowman 2001b). The violence which engenders nationalism is not the violence the imagined community of the future nation turns against its 'enemies', but the violence members of that not-yet-existent nation perceive as inflicted upon them by others who make it impossible for them to exist in anything other than an autonomous state. An antagonism,

rather than threatening a pre-existing and self-conscious entity, brings the community it threatens into being through that threat, and gives shape and identity to what it threatens through placing it at risk. Perceptions of a violence afflicting a diverse range of persons give rise to a concept of a 'national enemy' and, through that concept, to the idea of solidarity with those whom that enemy opposes.

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I here investigate two processes of identity redefinition. I first look into the way the Palestinian people came into being as a result of the project of nation formation the Zionist movement successfully carried out on the land the Palestinians had occupied long before they thought of themselves as 'Palestinians'. Then I examine the way Yugoslavs came to see themselves not as citizens within an existent federal state but as members of opposed national communities unnaturally forced to co-exist under the tyranny of an imposed union. In both cases I stress that nationalism is an historical construct which emerges in certain conditions through individual and group reformulations of relations to social fields. Awareness of the catalytic role of perceptions of antagonism can help us to understand when (and where) nationalist movements arise and why they do not find expression at other times (or places).

Anthony Smith stresses the need for 'a sense of solidarity' to effect the bonding distinguishing an *ethnie* 'for itself' (an ethnic community emerging into self-interested national consciousness) from an *ethnie* 'in itself' (an "ethnic category" recognisable by outside observers but within which people are "largely unaware of their ethnic ties" [Smith 1988: 9]):

"the civic concept of a modern nation with its common territory, economy, citizenship and mass educational culture often lacks or omits the solidarity and homogeneity stressed by an ethnic concept; the modern nation, to become truly a 'nation', requires the unifying myths, symbols and memories of pre-modern *ethnie*" (Smith 1988: 11).

While it is undoubtedly true that 'myths, symbols and memories' circulate with increasing velocity as national consciousness develops, it is not clear whether these are causes or consequences of that growing chauvinism. Myths and symbols of ethnic endurance are certainly used by nationalist intellectuals and politicians to legitimate ethnic mobilization but, as John Breuilly notes, "it is very difficult to correlate their degree of success with the 'objective' importance of such myths and symbols" (Breuilly 1996: 1513). Not only are these mythic legitimations oftentimes falsehoods or fabrications, but they can - even when 'true' - seem somehow tangential or extraneous to the power (or lack thereof) of the national drive. This paper will suggest that it is a people's perception of an existence-threatening force – an antagonism – which impels nationalist activity which may involve, as an adjunct to the struggle to overcome that antagonism, the promotion of a corpus of ethnic myths. Without, however, the mobilizing disturbance of an antagonism people are unlikely to respond to the national agendas of politicians and intellectuals with the commitment Kamenka (1973: 15) sees as distinguishing 'national' from 'nationalist' identity; in the absence of a threat to what they perceive as their being people are likely, at best, to pledge erratic allegiance to a culturalist programme (see, for instance, Handler 1988).

In stressing the role perceptions of the violence of an other play in constituting nationalist identity, I also criticize the material determinism of nation theorists such as Ernest Gellner (1983) and Benedict Anderson (1991: 37-46) who argue that the emergence of a will to nationhood effectively reflects economic developments forced by modernisation. Although each offers intriguing elaborations of the processes whereby economic processes produce mental structures, neither pushes significantly beyond Lenin's analysis of nation formation in his 1914 essay "The Rights of Nations to Self-Determination" where he contends that "for the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the

home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated" (Lenin 1963: 598). One must ask 'when' and 'why' (if at all) specifically nationalist drives emerge in the midst of such homogenizing processes. Prior to the articulations of Palestinian, Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian nationalisms, Mandate Palestine and pre-dissolution Yugoslavia were sufficiently modernised - in terms of the development of trans-regional economies and a print culture - to support nationalist consciousnesses . Nonetheless, these nationalist movements did not emerge with popular backing until tensions and incompatibilities between groups occupying those territories were interpreted in ways which split the field of sociality into domains of the nation and its enemy. Palestinians, after the creation of the state of Israel drove a majority of them into diaspora, rarely became Arab nationalists despite sharing the Arabic language and the Arabic press with other Arabic-reading communities. They became anti-Zionists because they recognised the role of Israel and its precursors in dispossessing them. Serbs and Croats were not united in imagined community by their mutual use of Serbo-Croatian and their shared access to a Yugoslav press; despite (and through) that shared medium they came to conceive of each other as blood enemies who had to wage war for the defence of their respective national identities. In each instance, stories of violence carried through those media enabled members of the respective groups to recognise in those scenarios violences like those they suffered and enemies like those who tormented them. While the development of modes of communication enabling dispersed members of a community to conceive of others sharing with them a common language and a common territory is an essential prerequisite of being able to imagine an extended community, this is not in itself enough to promulgate nationalist consciousness. For nationalism to emerge one had not

only to see one's identity as integrally linked with that of a wider community but also had to sense that that community - and the identity with which it provided oneself - were at risk.

Identity, in other words, emerges from identification. The nationalist imaginary reifies as 'the nation' the imagined collectivity of all those who suffer 'the same' violence at the hands of a common enemy. It presents the world as divided between the good, but threatened, community of an 'us' and the evil community of a 'them', existing solely to destroy that 'us'. The nationalist imaginary draws together the multiplex strands of violence, risk and threat afflicting people's everyday lives to reveal at their origins a unitary antagonist. Although there tends, in the nationalist articulations discussed below, to be utopic futures imagined in which all of the other's antagonism will have been elided, the primary emphasis of the nationalist imaginary is on the contemporary struggle to expel or extinguish the sources of constitutive violence. It is a logic of mobilisation.

In the following pages I will show when and how popular movements were variously able to constitute concepts of communal identity around imaginings of antagonistic others in Palestine and Former Yugoslavia. My use of these two examples reflects my fieldwork experiences during which I observed the build up to and outbreak of initial nationalist uprisings (see Bowman 1986, 1987, 1990, 1993a, 2001a). Those eruptions were, however, the culminations of long sequences of historical transformations and reformulations of identity, and, to present the argument I here intend, it is important to relate and analyse processes extending well beyond the ethnographic moment. I will, where appropriate, refer to my, and others', field research, but for the most part my sources and my perspective are historical and text-based.

*The Articulation of a Palestinian National Movement (1881-1994)*

Rashid Khalidi, in *Palestinian Identity: the Construction of Modern National*

*Consciousness*, sidesteps the issue of the late emergence of an explicitly 'Palestinian' identity by arguing that Palestinians all along knew who they were:

"several overlapping senses of identity have been operating in the way the Palestinians have come to define themselves as a people, senses that have not necessarily been contradictory for the Palestinians themselves, but can be misunderstood or misinterpreted by others" (Khalidi 1997: 19).

Issam Nassar has, however, recently problematised what Khalidi suggests is a straightforward process of a nation 'making itself visible' by stressing that not only did "Zionist denial" (Nassar 2002: 25) make it difficult to talk of Palestinian national identity but also that its articulation was impeded by "internal contradictions inside the Palestinian discourse itself, partly because the discourse emerged out of historical processes that were often intended precisely to prevent its emergence" (Ibid). Nassar here implies that assertions of identity are not only made against others' alternative formulations but also that those assertions are often blocked or confused by being made *in terms of* alternative, often antagonistic, formulations.

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In the early years of the twentieth century, there were neither 'Palestinians' nor a Palestinian national movement. This was not because Arabs only emigrated into Palestine from surrounding countries after 1920 to take advantage of economic opportunities opened by Zionist settlement (Peters 1984)<sup>ii</sup> but because the indigenous occupants of the region the British conquered in 1917 and named Palestine had no conception of themselves as a single community. The Ottoman *millet* system had functioned by juridically dividing the population into autonomous religious enclaves which, while providing occupants with legal

identity and social support (see Asali 1989: 206, Abu-Jaber 1967 and Cohen and Lewis 1978), "precluded concern for, or even interest in, any people but those of one's own religious community" (Betts 1975: 112). *Qays* and *Yaman* affiliations<sup>iii</sup> divided the landscape into distinct and oftentimes feuding units:

"the banners of *Qays* and *Yaman* united Muslims and Christians as well as Bedouin, town dwellers, and *fellahin* (peasants). But they divided clans, villages, and districts in the interests of competing local lords" (Schölch 1993: 194).

Urban families and clans perceived friends and enemies in terms not only of sectarian affiliation or alliances in long-running feuds but also of the heated debate between Ottoman loyalists and Arab nationalists (see Muslih 1988: 47-54 and 58-68, Lesch 1979: 23-74, Antonius 1938: 79-148 and Hourani 1991: 258-262). The multiplicity of available categories of identity served to articulate the disparate social and economic interests of relatively autonomous groups and thereby ensured that the community of 'Palestinians' neither functioned as nor could recognise 'itself' as a community.

The development of a sense of a specific land, and of a people whose identity devolved from their residence within its borders, needed a powerful impetus to free itself from the domains of familial, sectarian, regional and economic identities and become amenable to integration within a national discourse. That impetus was provided by the movement of substantial numbers of Jewish immigrants into the region following intense anti-Semitic persecutions in Russia (1881-1882). Jewish immigration changed the face of the land; between 1881 and 1922 the Jewish population more than tripled (rising from 24,000 to nearly 84,000) and immense tracts of land were bought up by the Jewish colonies, often from absentee Arab landlords (Aaronsohn 1983, Abu-Lughod 1971 and Ruedy 1971). The settlers'

programmatic insistence on *avodah ivrit* (Hebrew labour) meant Jewish property could not be worked by non-Jews (see Shafir 1996: 45-90) and "settlers refused to let neighboring villagers and bedouin tribes continue customary pasture rights on their lands" (Lesch 1979: 28). As early as 1886 villagers of al-Yahudiyya, disputing grazing rights, attacked the Jewish colony at Petah Tikva (Muslih 1988: 71-72) and other clashes broke out between peasants and settlers in Tiberias (1901-1902) and 'Affula (1911) when local Arabs discovered the land they lived on had been sold out from under their feet (Ibid: 72). The Hope Simpson Report indicated that by 1930 29.4% of the rural population of the Mandated area was landless (cited in Ruedy 1971: 131). Many peasants emigrated to urban slums where there were few opportunities for employment. Anti-Jewish rioting frequently broke out in the cities throughout the twenties - particularly on occasions when religious festivities generated crowds - and these disturbances often spread to the countryside where villagers, incited by rumours of Jewish attacks, would take up arms against local Jewish settlements (see Lesch 1979: 206).

Yet while there was a general sense of being threatened by 'the Jews' among the rural peasantry and urban lumpenproletariat this perception remained inchoate and situational. Similarly the disquiet felt by small merchants and craft producers about the incursion of Jewish competitors into their economic domains (Scholch 1989: 243-245) was voiced among restricted circles and remained un-politicized. Palestinian elites, which had traditionally provided political leadership, also failed to forge a discourse designating Zionism as a common threat. Even when individual urban notables recognised the need to resist the steady expansion of Zionist settlement and immigration, they articulated that threat in terms drawn from earlier enunciations of identity and antagonism, thus re-igniting hostilities between themselves and potential allies with whom they had struggled in those terms in the



past. Mandate officials' arguments to Palestinian notables that "the Arabs' position in Palestine was not as severely threatened as they had initially feared [and that they should therefore]...grasp the available levers of power" (Lesch 1979: 99, see also Porath 1974: 241f) served merely to fuel internecine struggles for power and influence between elite families (Nashashibi 1990, Shepherd 2000).

The failure of the urban notables forced the peasantry to express its fears and its will to resist 'Jewish' violence in terms drawn from the idiom of its own traditions. In 1929, after the political initiatives of the urban leadership had collapsed in a fracas of factionalisms, major rioting broke out in Jerusalem when Jewish militants celebrating the Jewish fast of *Tisha Bav* (the destruction of the Temple) on the eve of the Muslim feast of *Mawlad al-Nabi* (the birth of the Prophet Muhammad) asserted claims to the Wailing Wall. The consequent riots were legitimated in Islamic terms. Islam, however, provided a banner under which to fight not because of a deep investment of peasant subjectivity in religion but because religion was the only idiom able to unite a peasantry fragmented by regional, factional, kin and clan allegiances:

"there is no doubt that the idea of *national* interests - even the idea of nation itself - were foreign to the Palestinian peasantry. The very name 'Palestine' was new and uncomfortable, as witnessed by the references to 'Southern Syria' as an appellation for the country in this and earlier periods. Ties of faction, clan and religion remained of greatest importance to the mass of Palestinians. Of these, faction, kin and clan ties had no utility as a symbolic armature on which to mold an ideology for mass resistance. If anything, they were a hindrance....Islam, however, was highly appropriate; faced with a

foreign enemy of two different religions who sought domination over the second holiest land of the Faith, Islam provided the cultural categories, in the conceptual field of *jihad* [holy war], to encompass and organize resistance"

(Johnson 1982: 57, see also Tamari 1982).

The identity of the peasantry that rose up in 1929 - and later during the bloody Arab Revolt - was organised to eradicate the antagonism it experienced as a consequence of British and Zionist colonisation: "Palestinian nationalism was essentially nihilist in the sense that it contained no concept of the shape of future society but was concerned first and foremost with the destruction of European hegemony" (Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, cited in Waines 1971: 220). In other words, the first widespread manifestation of what later commentators have come to call 'Palestinian nationalism' was neither Palestinian nor nationalist but purely oppositional.

The Arab Revolt (Kalkas, B. 1971, Swedenburg 1995 and Shepherd 2000: 189-215) lacked a coherent programme and a unified leadership and, while lasting more than three years, frequently fragmented into local skirmishes against Palestinians on either side of the *Qays-Yaman* divide. It faced a well-organised enemy; British forces defeated the revolt, killing and wounding between 4,007 (Government of Palestine 1946: 34-58) and 19,792 (Khalidi 1971: 846-849, see also Waines 1971: 234), while destroying rural and urban centres of resistance through aerial bombing, collective demolitions, and 'slum clearance' programmes. Despite this victory the British, weakened by the Second World War and the subsequent anti-British liberation struggle of Zionist irregulars, pulled out of Palestine in May 1948. A year of war between Arab and Israeli forces followed resulting, by July of 1949, in the new State of Israel occupying 73% of what had been Mandate Palestine (the remaining territory - Gaza and the West Bank - was subsequently commandeered by Egypt and Jordan

[see Hilal 1992]). 711,000 (82.6%) of the 861,000 Palestinian Arabs who had lived on the territory which became Israel were forced into exile outside its borders (Morris 1987: 297-298).

The *nakbah* ('catastrophe' in Palestinian Arabic) initiated nearly a decade's surcease in the elaboration of Palestinian identity. "Military defeat and the destruction of the fabric of their society forced Palestinians to adjust either to varying degrees and forms of statelessness or to citizenship in the new Israeli state" (Waines 1971: 207). Underlying this was the loss of familiar reference points around which to reconstitute identities. In the refugee camps this experience was perhaps most radical; loss of lands and dispersal of families and communities left exiles in a virtual limbo. Rosemary Sayigh described the experience of refugees in Lebanese camps of exile from any familiar *habitus*:

The village - with its special arrangements of houses and orchards, its open meeting places, its burial ground, its collective identity - was built into the personality of each individual villager to a degree that made separation like an obliteration of the self. In describing their first years as refugees, camp Palestinians use metaphors like 'death', 'paralysis', 'burial', 'non-existence', etc.... (Sayigh 1979: 107).

Urban Palestinians sought refuge within a network of well-to-do expatriate communities scattered throughout the Middle East, Europe and the Americas (see Tamari 1982: 180, Lustick 1980: 48, Brand 1988: 1-21 and Gonzalez 1992: 62-76). Palestinians who remained in Israel proper experienced radical disruptions of their previous ways of living under a severe regime of military control which strove to enforce upon resident Palestinians even more extreme forms of factionalization than those which had prevailed before the upsurge of anti-colonialist mobilization (Lustick 1980, Cohen 1965, Asad 1975 and Morris 1987). As a

result of these diverse experiences communities in the various milieu of Palestinian life began to reconstitute themselves in relation to their settings rather than with reference to a shared 'Palestinian' identity (Bowman 1994a); as Yezid Sayigh writes, "the equalizing impact of *al-nakba* had not so much destratified Palestinian society as disarticulated it" (Sayigh 1997: 665).

Curiously, it was after the destruction of any shared 'Palestinian' existence that the idea of a Palestinian identity *per se* came into play (see Bowman 2002: 448-449 on identity as an attribute of exile). The focus of this identity - the emblem which gave it coherence - was the Palestine Liberation Organisation. This extra-territorial organisation had been established by the Arab League as a "gathering of traditional and influential notables" (Brand 1988: 28) capable of voicing Palestinian interests in the councils of the League, but the debacle of the 1967 war - during which the rest of what had been Mandate Palestine was lost to Israel and another 200,000 Palestinians were forced into exile - put paid to the illusion that Palestine could be redeemed by other Arab states. *Fatah*, a political-commando group which had initially come together to resist Israel's occupation of Gaza during the Suez Crisis (Brand 1988: 26; see also Cobban 1984 and Gresh 1985 on the origins of the PLO), 'hijacked' the PLO and transformed it into a guerilla organisation dedicated to military attacks on the State of Israel and its allies. As such, the PLO could stand for Palestinians in exile and under occupation as a representation of their own desires to fight back against the forces which had dispossessed them (Sayigh 1997: 668-673). For the first time there was an objective correlate to Palestinians' disparate desires for restitution.

The fundamental reason the PLO was able to serve as an icon of Palestinian identity was that it presented itself as representative of all of the diverse 'Palestinian' constituencies disinherited by the creation of the Israeli state. 'Palestinians' could recognise themselves as

addressed by the oppositional rhetoric of the PLO insofar as that rhetoric did not attribute any identity to its addressees other than that of having been stripped of their birthrights by the antagonism of the 'Zionist entity'. The PLO's programme was solely that of reinstating a Palestinian national entity on the territory of Mandate Palestine - it made no effort to articulate the nature of that future entity save to say that it would be 'Palestinian'.

Representing the 'Palestine' the PLO promised to redeem would have been difficult insofar as any accurate evocation of communal life before Zionist colonization would have recalled the inter-communal conflicts which had helped to bring about Palestinian dispossession (cf. Shyrock 1997). Furthermore, the nation which had lost 'its' territory had not existed before the land's expropriation. The lost homeland could only be conjured through imagining a space in which the Palestinian people *would have* lived as a community if the enemy whose violence had created that community *had not existed*.

This is not to imply that Palestinians had forgotten individual and social life before 1948; Ben-Ze'ev (2000) and Slyomovics (1998) clearly demonstrate that Palestinians today treasure narratives of personal, familial and local lives before the *Nakbah*. Ben Ze'ev, however, contends that there is a radical incommensurability between the narratives of individuals remembering what life was like before their displacement and political discourses which represent a collective Palestinian identity before 1948. She shows that the latter mute the former, effacing details and translating the particularities of lived experience into political allegory; "within the national context the villagers were expected to conform to 'the process of ironing out the specific details of an event, to make it general to the whole population'" (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 290-291, citing Peters 1977: 72). Sa'di suggests, however, not a simple tension between individual and collective memories (in which the personal is left intact but subordinated to an "urge to tell the 'national story'" [Ben-Ze'ev: 291]) but a

traumatic rupture profoundly scarring personal and social being:

"*Al-Nakbah* is the violent moment which also created an unbridgeable break between the past and the present. It represents an end to normality...at both the individual and collective levels...*Al-Nakbah* represents a decisive breaking point between two qualitatively different realities, with different rules that govern before and after" (Sa'di 2002: 186 and 195).

Its violence created the Palestinians - individually and collectively - as a people marked by "obsessive preoccupation with the past; a constant dealing with speculative questions such as what would have happened if...?; and, a struggle to return to normality" (Sa'di 2002: 186).

The PLO provided a space of identification for all those who felt their lives had been violated, disrupted and displaced as a result of Zionism's successes by presenting its project as the inverse of that of the Zionist state builders. People could see in the PLO's project the negation of the negation which had opened them to the various violences which afflicted them. In this national imaginary all Palestinians were 'the same' insofar as all of them could recognise their true selves as mutilated and denied by the violence of the Zionist enemy (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 129-130, and Bauman 1989: 26-27). Nevertheless, Palestinians in the various locales of their dispossession experienced the impossibility of Palestinian identity in diverse ways and the particular forms of violence through which Zionism's generalised antagonism was manifested led Palestinians in various sites to elaborate strategies of survival and resistance specific to those violences (Bowman 1993b and 1994a). The strategies of the *fedayeen* (guerillas) of the Middle Eastern refugee camps differed in method and motive as substantially from those of the *samidin* (those who 'stood fast' on the land) of the Occupied Territories as they did from those of the bureaucrats, businessmen and cosmopolitan intellectuals of the urban diaspora. All worked to 'negate' the activities of the

enemy and its allies, but the forms of negation (from terroristic 'erasure' through passive resistance to intellectual and diplomatic revisionism) were formed in response to the specificities of the violences their formulators encountered. The PLO subsidised and supported this diversity of communities and maintained their respective organisations (see Cobban 1984: 26 and Bowman 1994a: 147) and was thus able to claim a wide range of 'defensive' responses to Zionism as its own. Thus the actions of each community and its representative organisations answered to respective needs to resist specific antagonisms while serving, for other communities in different situations, as signs of a generalised Palestinian resistance to the enemies of Palestine. Dispersion meant that the actions each group carried out did not, in any immediate way, interfere with the interests of other groups.

Concrete moves towards a settlement with Israel effected by the success of the first *intifada* shattered that general consensus by bringing into view the possibility of an actual state of Palestine. During their long their exile, Palestinians had diversely imagined what their nation would be if the antagonisms which prevented it were to disappear. Whatever the specificities of these redemption images, every Palestinian saw a place for himself or herself in a 'reborn' state of Palestine. As the project of Palestinian positivity appeared to near fruition, however, the abstract concept of 'Palestine' began to take on discernable form in the shape of a 'statelet' in the rump of what had been Mandate Palestine. PLO negotiations with the Israeli state over which territories would be 'Palestinian' and which permanently surrendered to Israel left many Palestinians from the diaspora and the territories feeling betrayed. A prominent diasporic spokesman has accused the PLO of betraying "the diaspora Palestinians, who originally brought Arafat and the PLO to power, kept them there, and are now relegated to permanent exile or refugee status" (Said 1993: 5).

Others within the Israeli-Occupied Territories who had been crippled by Israeli 'rubber bullets' or had seen friends and family members die fighting for Palestinian freedom came to believe that they, and the country they suffered to bring into being, was being sold out by the leadership and felt (at least until the recent outbreak of the *al-Aqsa intifada*) that Arafat's 'returning' cadres were doing little more than policing the Palestinian population for the Israeli state (Usher 1995: 61-83, Bowman 1999: 73-75). For them one set of occupiers had simply been replaced by another; the occupation, in effect, continued .

When the boundary dividing the antagonist from the objects of its violence breaks down, consensus on identity discursively structured around that antagonism loses its coherence. The wide field of Palestinian experience had been 'fixed' by an antagonism which made the various experiences of those who occupied it coherent in nationalist terms. When perceptions of the nature of that antagonism were transformed by the Oslo agreement and what followed, various occupants of the formerly 'sutured' field found that enemies had become allies while others discovered that former allies were now antagonists. Between Oslo and 28 September 2000 (when Ariel Sharon sparked the *al-Aqsa intifada* by 'visiting' the *Haram al-Sharif* or Temple Mount with a substantial armed guard) those in and affiliated with the PNA in large part acted as though the antagonism with Israel had ended. They operated a new and differentiated social mechanism they believed would generate a state of Palestine alongside of and working with the state of Israel. Simultaneously others, in the Occupied Territories and the Palestinian diaspora, saw them as traitors collaborating with the still virulent antagonist.

#### *The Genesis of 'Former Yugoslavia' (1918 - 1992)*

In the Palestinian instance we have seen how the violence of an other prompts both



the 'invention' of a national identity and the articulation of a national politics capable of promoting that identity; in the instance of Former Yugoslavia we can observe how the politics of an already established state are discursively transformed through the elaboration and promulgation of stories of the violence of 'others' previously perceived as neighbours.

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The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (*SFRJ*) was an explicitly anti-nationalist state formed in response to the crises nationalisms had forced on Yugoslavia before and during the Second World War. Between December 1918 and the Nazi invasion of April 1941, an earlier 'Yugoslavia' - known as "The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" - had brought Slovenes, Croats and Serbs together within a single state. This formation was highly unstable; the three *narods* ('nations' or 'peoples') who joined to create it had different and in large part incompatible reasons for uniting. Slovenes wanted a state guaranteeing political autonomy to Slovene-speakers formerly under the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Croats wanted self-determination for Croat-speaking Catholics entailing independence from that same empire and protection from the expansionist nationalism of their Hungarian neighbours; Serbs wanted all Serbs - especially those living outside the borders of the Serbian kingdom established after Ottoman dominion was overthrown in 1867 - to enjoy union under a single state<sup>iv</sup>. The kingdom's twenty-three years were scored with assassinations, coups and the violences of nationalist movements fighting to seize the state for their own respective peoples, but the union survived until the Nazis broke up Yugoslavia, diversely promoting incompatible national aspirations within the fragments. Slovenia and the Dalmatian coast were ceded to Italy which attempted to integrate them by promoting fascism in lieu of nationalism (Clissold 1968: 209), but in the 'Independent State of Croatia' the German administration promoted the vicious nationalism of Ante Pavelić's

anti-Serb and anti-Jewish *Ustaša* while in Serbia it bolstered a loose confederation of Serbian nationalists led by Milan Nedić and Dimitrije Ljotić. The consequences were dire: massive numbers of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies and Croat communists and democrats were brutally slaughtered in *Ustaša*-operated death camps; within which, *Ustaša* and *etnici* ('Chetniks') respectively massacred Serbian and Muslim civilians; and the anti-Nazi communist partisans 'executed' thousands of 'Chetnik' Serbs and Croat and Slovene 'traitors':

"During the Second World War the conquerors not only destroyed the state, but they set its components against each other in an unprecedented way, for never before had there been physical conflict among the Yugoslav peoples as such" (Pavlowitch 1988: 14).

At least 1,014,000 of a pre-war population of 17,186,000 were killed with eighty percent of deaths inflicted by Yugoslavs (Banaji 1992: 18, Garde 1992 and Allcock 2000: 157-159).

Tito, who had mobilised wartime resistance through "a National Liberation Anti-Fascist Front of all the peoples of Yugoslavia regardless of party or religion" (Clissold 1966: 216), continued to promote *bratstvo i jedinstvo* ('brotherhood and unity') in the post-war period. When Tito first used the phrase in 1942 it was not simply 'brotherhood and unity' but 'armed brotherhood and unity' (Godina 1998), and throughout his long rule Tito stressed that the space of Yugoslav federation was a good space endangered by an antagonistic outside. That the border between inside and outside was Titoism's essential ideological plank is made clear by the fact that, as in Orwell's *1984*, the external threat continuously shifted its character and its source. After the initial opposition to fascism which gave the partisans power, Tito oscillated over the years between emphasising "the Soviet threat" and the threat of "the capitalist West" (Auty 1966: 247). While the interests of the state - and of the various peoples who constituted it - were always presented as threatened by the

conspiracies of a labile set of enemies located outside Yugoslavia's territorial, and ideological, borders (Pavlowitch 1988: 22-25), there was no indeterminacy about what threatened Yugoslavia from within. Nationalism provided internal evidence of the attempts of external enemies to subvert the integrity of the federal space; it was a symptom of what the deconstructivists refer to as a "constitutive outside" (see Derrida 1974: 39-44 and Staten 1985: 16-19).

Communist policy, within Yugoslavia and outside, did not outlaw national identity; it kept the 'nation' alive as an identity category at the same time as it worked to disarm its political power (Verderey 1991 and 1996). The federal state protected the rights of *narods* (nations) and *narodnosti* (national minorities), but saw nationalism as a malignity through which "one society aspires to dominate, exploit or despoil the others" (Ramet 1992: 55). Titoism strove, through differential policies of appropriation and distribution of resources, to lift the poorer republics up to the economic level of the wealthier ones. It worked to dissolve nationalist aspirations through simultaneously devolving economic power to the community level - where worker's collectives would cohere around desires for mutual economic betterment (see Simmie 1991 on self-management) - and breaking up the political and economic power blocs of the dominant 'republics' (particularly Serbia) by creating new nationalities (such as the 'Macedonians', 'Montenegrins' and 'Muslims' enshrined in the 1974 constitution - see Allcock 1992: 278-283) and devolving authority to autonomous regions such as Vojvodina and Kosovo.

The system could only work "as long as the communist system in Yugoslavia retained its revolutionary dynamic, or was perceived to be imperilled from without" (Shoup 1992: 52). In the 1980s - with Tito's death and the collapse of the Yugoslav economy - that dynamic collapsed and the external threat which consolidated the inside came to be

interpreted as the threat of the state's policies to the good interior of the nations themselves. In the popular imagination Tito had been "a symbol of a Yugoslav style that had less to do with socialism, self-management and non-alignment than with freedom of movement, the advent of the consumer society, and fending for oneself" (Pavlowitch 1988: 27). His death coincided with the collapse of the debt-ridden economy which had artificially maintained that style of living. International debts were called in and harsh IMF policies imposed in the early eighties, and by 1984 unemployment had surged to fifteen percent, inflation was topping sixty two percent and the standard of living had dropped thirty percent from its 1980 level (see Pavlowitch 1988: 31 and Mencinger 1991: 76-79). The declining standard of living afflicted all Yugoslavs while increasingly clumsy moves by state agencies (particularly the Yugoslav National army [JNA]) to enforce cultural and economic homogeneity seemed to people, regardless of ethnic affiliation, as attacks on their ways of life (Ramet 1996 and Monroe 1999). A wide range of assertions - expressed in idioms ranging from the economic and political to those of art and culture (Mastnak 1991) - began to be heard, articulating the antagonism of *the state to the people*.

These expressions did not fall 'naturally' into nationalist idioms; citizens had to learn to which people they belonged. Tito's anti-nationalist policies and the modernization processes which had accompanied them had, to a large extent, submerged the idiom of national identity beneath a flood of contending discourses on selfhood. His 'invention' of nationalities had succeeded in dispersing identities across a wider national field than had operated before 1945 (see Duijzings 2000 on the 'identity play' of Yugoslavian censuses) while the ethnic isolation characteristic of rural Yugoslavia prior to the foundation of the communist state had in large part been dispelled by rural migration to the cities and by *gasterbeiter* work outside Yugoslavia (Pavlowitch 1988: 22, Allcock 2000: 161-165). A

trans-Yugoslav cosmopolitanism had developed in the cities around work, education and cross-marriage (Cottrell 1990).

It was through the often accidental interaction of the ploys and assertions of a congeries of diverse interest groups that nationalist discourse emerged. Politicians, intellectuals, priests and media figures struggled - oftentimes against each other - to invent platforms from whence they could launch bids to increase their privileges and powers in a state characterised, after the death of Tito, by a vacuum at the centre (Silber and Little 1995: 29-97, Lampe 1996: 325-356). An audience - 'the people' - had to be conjured to address from these platforms, and, as Serbia illustrates, this production involved not only the elaboration of themes of internal and external enemies whose antagonisms defined the people but also viscerally powerful stories of victimization which allowed them to recognise themselves in the torments of others.

Jasna Dragović -Soso's recent *'Saviours of the Nation': Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* demonstrates the way apparently incompatible strategies interacted to fertilize a 'Serbian' discourse on national interests threatened by an antagonistic other. The theme of out-migration from Kosovo of Kosovar Serbs was variously elaborated after the eruption, in Prishtina in March 1981, of a number of anti-Belgrade demonstrations. While dissident intellectuals used Kosovo as a launchpad for attacks on state policies repressing minority rights and freedom of speech (Dragović -Soso 2002: 121), other interest groups - in particular the Serbian Orthodox clergy and the 'new historiographers' (able, after the breakdown of official historiography, to speak 'silenced' histories [see Dragović -Soso 2002: 65-77]) - focussed on the plight of the Kosovar Serbs as emblematic of the situation of Yugoslav Serbs in general. The confluence of these antithetical discourses - some attacking the state for promoting nationalism and others attacking it for not protecting the interests of

a national community - produced Kosovar Serbs as personifications of victimage, and the Kosovar Albanians (with the federal state behind them) as a malignant cabal.

From 1985 on a series of publications "pour[ed] from the printing presses of Belgrade... presenting the whole history of the Serbs as an unending chronicle of ethnic martyrdom" (Malcolm 1998: 338). These texts, widely reviewed in a fervent popular press, lamented the 'loss' of the Serbian homeland and its magnificent monasteries to the 'invading' Albanians (emotively equated with the Ottoman Turks who had defeated a 'Serb' army and conquered Kosovo in 1389 [Darby 1966: 96-102, Malcolm 1999: 58-80]) and graphically corporealized the Kosovar assault on the 'body' of Serbia. Albanians were said not only to rape Serbian girls in their houses and Serbian nuns in their monasteries but also to drive Serb families from their homes (taken over to house the fast-breeding Kosovar population as well as the illegal Albanian immigrants the regional government encouraged [Salecl 1993: 79-81]) and desecrate and raze Orthodox churches and monasteries so they could be replaced by mosques.

Such stories of antagonism to the intimate spaces - family and religion - of Serbian life were received with morbid fascination in the atmosphere of disquiet and anxiety generated by the collapsing of the order which had stabilized the Yugoslav system and its structures of expectation for the previous half century. One story which spoke to mass audiences (I heard it again in 1999 as legitimation for the war in Kosovo) was that of Djordje Martinović who, on 1 May 1985, was treated in a Prishtina hospital for severe lacerations caused when a beer bottle inserted in his anus had broken (see Cvii 1993, Malcolm 1998: 338-340, Bracewell 2000 and Dragović -Soso 2002: 132-134). Although doctors and an official investigative team reported that Martinović had injured himself while masturbating, he claimed two masked Albanians had attacked him while he was working on his farm. The

story, originally published in the Belgrade political weekly *NIN*, was twice debated in the Yugoslav Federal assembly (July 1985 and February 1986) and a 485 page hardback, *Slučaj Martinović* (*The Martinović Case*), elaborating the case and its implications quickly sold out despite an unprecedented initial print run of 50,000 copies (Malcolm 1998: 338). Two hundred prominent Belgrade intellectuals signed a petition, submitted to both republican and federal assemblies on 21 January 1986, claiming that

"The case of Djordje Martinović has become that of the whole Serb nation in Kosovo. Even among crimes it would be hard to find a crime like this; but the fact that the entire legal-constitutional order of a country has been harnessed to hide such a crime is surely without precedent. The enemy is being encouraged" (quoted in Magas: 1993: 51).

The notorious *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts* - which, after being leaked to the press in September 1986, served as a clarion call to the Serb nation - cited the Martinović case amongst other evidence of "the physical, political, juridical and cultural genocide" of the Kosovar Serbs as being particularly evocative of "the blackest periods of Turkish impalings" (quoted in Malcolm 1998: 340).

This rhetoric effectively suggested that Albanians 'inside' Serbia made it impossible for Serbian individuals to live - as Serbs or at all - on Serbian ground; it also suggested that Kosovar Albanian attempts to mutilate or eradicate the Serbian presence in Kosovo were only successful because - intentionally or because of the structure of the federal government - they were assisted by the Yugoslav state. Slobodan Milošević, whose initial rise from director of *Technogas*, the state fuel company, to chief of the Serbian Communist party had depended on the patronage of Ivan Stambolić (for whose murder he has recently been arraigned), forged a more powerful support for his ambition in welding these two

antagonisms into a single anti-Serb bloc. At Kosovo Polje, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1987, he told an angry crowd of Kosovar Serbs whose anti-Albanian demonstration was being broken up by baton-wielding policemen that "no one should dare to beat you" (see Silber and Little 1995: 36-39). Although Miroslav Šolević, one of the demonstration's organisers, subsequently joked that Milosević - an *apparatchik* who had previously been neither nationalistic nor interested in Kosovo - had addressed the police rather than the demonstrators (Ibid: 37), Milosević's promotion of himself as a political figure willing to speak (in front of television cameras) for Kosovar Serbs against both the Albanians and the state police "turned him into a 'national leader', a role which enabled him to quell all opposition to his takeover of the Communist Party machine" (Malcolm 1999: 342).

Milošević legitimated 'Serbia' as a locus of identity and 'Serbian interests' as a focus of concern. Kosovars were, however, only the internal agents of an external enemy. Their assault against Serbia and Serbians was, according to Milošević, backed by a 'Vatican-Comintern conspiracy' (Ramet 1992: 230) which linked the communist state (which had 'stolen' the Serbian homeland of Kosovo from Serbia) with the Catholic Church (which was said to have sponsored the *Ustaša*). Deftly linking an historical experience of antagonism with the current situation, Milošević characterised 'his' struggle to save Kosovo for Serbs as another "battle for Kosovo [which]...we shall win despite the fact that Serbia's enemies outside the country are plotting against it, along with those in the country" (speech given by Milošević on 19 November 1988, quoted in Ramet 1992: 230). By reminding Serbs of the Greater Serbia which had been 'stolen' by the nation's enemies, Milošević legitimated and popularised his drive to 'recover' Serbia by stripping Montenegro and Macedonia of their republican independence and outlawing the autonomy of the Vojvodina (these regions, like Kosovo, were parts of the Serbia Tito had dismembered in his anti-nationalism project -



see Aspeslagh 1992, Canak 1993, Cegorovic 1993, and Poulton 1991: 39-56). Through the evocation of the nation's loss and the people's enemies Milošević constituted a Serbian positivity - a repertoire of Serbian traditions and an agenda of Serbian aspirations grounded in a former wholeness - and garnered mass support from people who found indicators of the real causes of their sufferings and directions on their eradication in his words (*cf.* Gordy 1999 and Thomas 1999).

Milošević's rise to power coincided with the mobilisation, in Slovenia and Croatia, of 'democratic oppositions' contending for republican power in the first Yugoslav multi-party elections. The ground for nationalist opposition in Slovenia had already been prepared in the previous decade by clumsy attempts by the Yugoslav state, through the agency of the *JNA*, to bring this wealthiest and most liberal of the Yugoslav republics under control. Generalized impressions of relative deprivation and persecution had been focussed, in March 1988, by the prosecution of the 'Ljubljana Four' - three journalists of the Slovene socialist youth paper, *Mladina*, and a source - for publishing a leaked *JNA* report hypothetically detailing preparations for the imposition of martial law. Their trial, which took place in Ljubljana, was held *in camera*, without defense lawyers and in Serbo-Croatian rather than Slovene (see Silber and Little 1995: 50-59). "What began as a case of 'the state versus the press' turned into a case of 'the Federation versus the Slovene Republic" (Magas 1993: 116). When, in the spring of 1990, elections for republican offices were called and candidates were invited from outside the echelons of the Communist Party, a number of oppositional parties announced platforms signally lacking in policy statements and heavily imbued with highly nationalist rhetorics declaring - in effect - that the communist state was destroying the Slovene nation. In March 1990 I saw in Ljubljana campaign booths bedecked with pictures of caves (*foibe*) filled with the bones of persons massacred by partisans at the

close of the Second World War as they fled the victorious communists' advance. Although the victims were ethnically and politically mixed (*Ustaša, / etnici*, Slovene collaborators, and their families and camp followers as well as civilians of all ethnicities caught up in the panicked retreat), the captions on the photographs said simply "This is what *They* did to *Us*". All three of the signifiers - 'this', 'they' and 'us' - were left open as were the connectives which linked those signifiers of persons and activities in the past to persons and practices in the present. The ambiguity of the message served, if anything, to make it clearer and its audience broader (cf. Paine 1981: 13-18 and Parkin 1984: 353-354 on *enthymeme*); the people, as Slovenes, were called to recognise communist violence towards Slovenes in the past as the same as the state's activities towards them in the present. The message - 'just as the communists killed Slovenes *en masse* as they came to power, so too have subsequent communist state policies continued national genocide by other means' - barely needed elaboration. The nation, neither defined, described, nor qualified, was here constituted as a good thing because the enemy wished to deny it to the people. Slovenia, which had never previously moved to establish itself as an independent state, henceforth committed itself to a programme of nationalist realisation.

In Croatia Franjo Tudjman's Christian Democratic Community party (the *HDZ*) also paraded pictures of bone piles, asserting these were not the skeletons of 'Nazis' or 'quislings' but of 'Croatian victims' of communist brutality. Tudjman, however, in constituting a nationalist position for Croatian identification, drew upon a more salient articulation of the 'us' which opposed the communist 'other'. Croatia had had a recent national positivity which had been destroyed by the communist state, and Tudjman reclaimed the quisling *Ustaša* 'Independent State of Croatia' as an "expression of the historical aspiration of the Croatian people for its own independent state" (Tudjman, 1990, quoted in Denich 1994: 6). Tudjman

and the ideologues of the *HDZ* campaigned for the republican leadership (and later for Croatian independence) with the - not inaccurate - assertion that the Yugoslav state had existed to prevent Croats from enjoying their nationhood. The sufferings of contemporary Croats was a result of a long campaign by the Yugoslav state to unjustly 'punish' the Croatian people for their previous attempt to realise themselves as a nation.

Yugoslavia was not, however, simply a state opposed to nationalism but a Serb-dominated state organised to destroy the Serb's national enemies, the Croats. To fight back against Serbian 'aggression' against the Croatian people Tudjman and the *HDZ* adopted the same anti-Serb rhetorics and programmes their *Ustaša* predecessors had utilised to defeat the 'Serbian threat'. The *HDZ* programme called for an independent Croatia expanded to Croatia's 'historical borders' (the *Ustaša* state borders, encompassing most of Bosnia-Herzegovina) flying a national flag on which the red star of Yugoslavia was replaced by the 'chessboard' pattern (*šahovnica*) which had graced the flag of 'Independent State of Croatia'. The language - Croatian - would be purged of the 'pollution' of Serbian words.

The *HDZ*'s nationalist programme, articulated almost exclusively in anti-Serb terms, panicked the Serbs of the *Krajina* who saw in the resurgence of the gestures and policies of the *Ustaša* a threat to inflict on them a genocide analogous to that they had suffered in the war. They too had their bone caches<sup>vi</sup>. *Krajina* Serbs invited local and Serbian journalists and photographers into caves where the skeletons of Serbs massacred by *Ustaša* had been cached. These monuments to the fate of Croatian Serbs under the *Ustaša* functioned locally to legitimate resistance to the new Croatian order and attempts to constitute a Serbian mini-state. In Serbia the fate of the *Krajina* Serbs under Ante Pavelić was obsessively recounted (after 45 years of official silencing):

"genocide became a central theme in the media, and particularly in the yellow press, using explosive language, vast generalisations and reproducing photographs from the war showing dead and mutilated bodies for full shock effect" (Dragović -Soso 2002: 113).

I remember multi-volumed texts, opened to grainy photographs of mutilation and torture, displayed in Belgrade bookshops windows in the spring of 1991 (among them Milan Bulajić 's four-volumed *Ustaški zlo in genocida*, which argued that in Jasenovac, but one of their several concentration camps, the *Ustaša* exterminated 1,700,000 persons). Denich suggests that the consequent ethnic hatred of Croats by Serbs in Serbia was based on identification with these images and narratives rather than on historical memory:

while the rebellions of Serbian communities in Croatia were motivated by their own memories of the Ustasha regime, now eerily reincarnated in the declarations and symbols of the new nationalist government...the inhabitants of Serbia itself had not experienced the Ustasha terror, and their wartime suffering had come at the hands of the Germans and other foreign occupiers, rather than Croats (Denich 1991: 11).

Serbs in Serbia, already inflamed by tales of the violence inflicted on fellow Serbs within the borders of the Serbian republic, were now offered - in the form of horrific stories from the past - evidence of what future fate ethnic enemies had in store for the Serbian people outside. Milošević 's apocalyptic rhetoric of 1988 about the Albanian threat to a Serbian presence in Kosovo ("the latest genocide of the twenty-first century" [quoted in Dragović-Soso 2002: 211]) made it possible for Serbs to think in terms of a Serbian homeland (albeit one made palpable only through the evocation of its loss); the conjuring of the atrocities *Krajina* Serbs would suffer at the hands of the reincarnated *Ustaša* enabled Serbs to imagine, through the

evocation of that people's extermination, a Greater Serbia unifying the 'Serbian people'.

Benedict Anderson, describing the process of 'imagining community', posits that one imagines one's own situation (as, for instance, a newspaper reader) reproduced in that of thousands - or millions - of others. One is able, through that imaginative extension, to conceive of a nation of others 'like oneself' (see Anderson 1991: 35-36). In the Yugoslav republics the imagining of community came about instead through imagining oneself as like others. Audiences, addressed in terms marked as 'ethnic' by diacritics of language, script, cultural and historical reference or site of address, were 'interpellated' into national subject positions by their recognition they were being addressed (see Althusser 1971: 152-165). The addressee was then 'worked on' by narratives focussing diffuse and oftentimes inchoate anxieties upon powerful and graphic images of violences inflicted by the members of other communities on the bodies and properties of fellow 'Serbs', 'Croats' or 'Slovenes'. Here the violences the addressee encountered in his or her life are equated with those the national enemy inflicted on the bodies of the tormented objects of the discourse. Recognition that one's own apparently minor sufferings were in fact premonitions of the greater violence the enemy intended to inflict on all who shared one's national identity impelled the addressee to join *defensively* in inflicting violence on that other under the charismatic leadership of politicians who 'recognised' the real nature of past and present violences.

*Conclusion: Not a Model but a Chart of Forces*

The two case studies recounted above differ significantly. Most obviously, while the sophistication of the Yugoslav media (developed under the aegis of the Yugoslav state) meant narratives of antagonism and identity circulated with relative ease in forms accessible not only to a wide public but also to subsequent academic recall, the powerful forces

working to prevent the emergence of a Palestinian entity ensured that - except during brief interludes - Palestinian narratives have travelled covertly by word of mouth, graffiti, broadsheets, illegal video and audio tapes and the friable like<sup>vii</sup>. However, in addition to differences between what people identify *through* there are also significant differences between what they can identify *with*. Communist policy in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia had, through its nationalities policies, promoted markers of national difference even while attempting to empty them of significant content. When communist hegemony began to collapse, anti-statist feelings could be channelled without difficulty into those containers which - though filling with national imaginings differing to greater or lesser degrees from earlier formulations - remained nominally the same. Charges of attempted "nation theft" (see *đi* ek 1990) against the enemies of the people were not so easily levied in the Palestinian instance. There the violences involved in the establishment and consolidation of the Israeli state were inflicted upon a diffuse and fragmented field of communities which lacked a unifying designator signalling national communality. Only with the emergence of the PLO was a Durkheimian "blank banner" (Ardener 1971: xliii-xlvi) raised which - evoking a Palestine denied - enabled Palestinians in various sites and states to imagine their differences subsumed within the programme of liberating 'Palestine'. Such banners of the nation, in Palestine as in the states replacing Yugoslavia, outlive the nationalist communality they putatively represent; once the nation is "baptized" (Kripke 1980) with the "rigid designator" (Ibid) of a name 'it' perdures, the name capable of standing for both the state hegemonic nationalist elites are establishing and, in the eyes of those dissatisfied with and disenfranchised from the emergent order, for the hijacked nation still to be realized (cf. *đi* ek 1989: 95-99). In contemporary Palestine *Hamas* and the Palestinian Authority both

advocate the establishment of a state of 'Palestine', but because of their different imaginings of what that state will be and who it will represent they fight each other in pursuit of the 'same' end. Similarly in today's Serbia populations and politicians are lethally divided over what 'Serbia' will prevail.

I claim, regardless of the differences between these two examples, that the foundation stones of nationalist imaginaries are 1) perceptions of antagonism and 2) the construction of defensive solidarity linking actual and potential victims of the antagonism's violence through identification. Despite this claim I do not propose a cross-cultural model to be analytically imposed on all instances of emergent nationalist identities (*pace* McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001); the differences these two cases alone throw up demonstrate the impossibility of positing a fixed and universally discernable connexion between antagonisms and ways populations respond to them. We should instead conceive of the relationship between antagonism and identity as like that between objects which, impelled by quanta of force, collide. An antagonism strikes a community from its 'outside' (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 146, n. 20) and the damage to that community, as well as the resistance with which that community responds to the assault, depends not only on the degree of violence with which the antagonism has struck but also on the resources the assaulted community can muster in its defence. Palestinians, subjected in the early part of the last century to a well-funded and co-ordinated nationalist movement intent on expropriating Palestine for itself, had few commensurate resources available with which to respond, and the length of time it has taken them to mobilize a powerful counterforce is indicative of the work of self-invention, organization and alliance they have had to carry out to mount what may in time prove a successful resistance (cf. Chatterjee 1986 on the staged development of anti-colonial resistance in India). The Ex-Yugoslav republics not only had well-established

communicative and military systems but also communalist identities which could be turned with little difficulty from latent fraternalism towards overt fratricide. Developed international connections were able to serve as powerful tools of resistance and aggression. Social trauma, triggered by the collapse of the Titoist system, rapidly voiced itself in nationalist identity assertions which, amplified by the media and politicians, were interpreted as antagonistic by neighbouring republics. The speed with which the various republics were able to consolidate collective nationalist solidarity (Bosnia-Herçegovina was an exception) and launch brutal wars against 'the other' surprised a world which had not thought a thoroughly modernised secular state could plunge so quickly into ethnocide.

Common to these cases, and to other articulations of nationalist movements, is the perception - 'real' or illusory (but nonetheless effective) - of an enemy's violence driving those endangered by that exterminative threat into defensive solidarity (cf. Rabinowitz 1997). Without perception of that 'constitutive violence' identities - 'national' or 'ethnic' - remain mere markers of communities' actual or intended engagement in the workings of assimilation or state governance - that is, if they are politically articulated at all.

#### ENDNOTES

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**Notes on Contributors:** Glenn Bowman's fieldwork on Jerusalem pilgrimage (1983-1985) prompted his interest in Palestinian communities under occupation and led to ongoing research in Beit Sahour, a mixed Christian-Muslim town outside Bethlehem. In 1989 he began fieldwork on nationalist mobilization in Yugoslavia and this, though disrupted by the war in 1991, has evolved into his current work on contemporary art production in Belgrade.

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**Precis:** this paper examines the processes through which nationalist movements developed among both the Palestinian people and those national communities which made up the late Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia so as to examine the role played by 'antagonism' in what the paper terms the 'nationalist imaginary'. Fundamental to the text's respective analyses of nation formation and state dissolution is the concept that the imagined violence of a national enemy is at the core of the 'defensive' mobilisations we call nationalisms. It posits that the 'inside' of identity formation is not only shaped by but also grounded on the 'outside' of the perceived antagonism of an other.

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<sup>ii</sup> Palestine's population in 1922 was 744,431 (excluding occupying British forces): 589,177

Muslims (including Bedouin); 71,464 Christians; and 83,790 Jews (including immigrants) (Palestine 1946: 141). Peters' thesis, elaborating Golda Meir's claim that "Palestine is a land without a people for a people without a land", has been widely contested (Finkelstein 1988: 61-63).

<sup>iii</sup> This mythic opposition of Arabs of southern and northern origin was important in the first two centuries of Arab-Islamic history but by the end of the nineteenth century was moribund everywhere but in Greater Syria (Tamari 1982: 181-185, Hourani 1991: 30 and Lapidus 1988: 363).

<sup>iv</sup> At issue was the *Krajina* ('borderland') of Eastern Croatia into which the

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Austro-Hungarian empire had, after 1689, invited Serbs to provide a *cordon sanitaire* against the Turks (Hammel 1993: 37, see also Allcock 2000: 154ff). Many Serbs settled in (or were settled in) Bosnia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (Malcolm 1994: 71-73).

<sup>v</sup>. The embodiment of this anti-Serb cabal was Tito, himself a communist and a Croat.

<sup>vi</sup>. See Ballinger 2003: 129-168 and Verdery 1999: 95-127 on the *foibe*. The wealth of bones in Yugoslavia was as fortuitous as their origins were indeterminate; as Bloch's Madagascar work on funerary practices indicates (Bloch 1982 and 1989: 170), bones emblemize undifferentiated community as they are all that remains after individuating characteristics have rotted away.

<sup>vii</sup>. Word of mouth communications were, of course, immensely powerful in the Yugoslav case as well. Tone Bringa's "We Are All Neighbours" (Bringa 1993) shows that in Bosnia-Herzegovina rumours of violence brought to 'Dolina' by refugees fleeing neighbouring villages catalysed the transformation of neighbours into blood enemies. See also Feldman, Prica and Senjković 1993.