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THE DISSOLUTION OF YUGOSLAVIA

◆ **Andrew Wachtel and Christopher Bennett** ◆

The violent breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s occasioned a great deal of writing, both popular and scholarly. By now, at least in the academic community, there is substantial agreement as to the causes and chronology of the dissolution, though this has not necessarily trickled down to the popular level (particularly in the independent states that emerged from the carnage). This chapter is not meant to add significantly to the scholarship on this topic. Rather, it sums up much research that has been done by other scholars and represents, we believe, a broad consensus within the profession. Insofar as it can claim originality, it is solely in the metaphor we will use to describe the process.

There is certainly no denying that Yugoslavia always faced multiple threats to its stability and longevity. Explaining its demise is, therefore, no simple task. A metaphor drawn from medicine will be helpful to understand our overall understanding of the issue. When a human being dies it is sometimes the case that a single cause of death can be established: heart failure, a stroke, for example. In other cases, however, multiple organ systems fail more or less simultaneously in a cascading series of disasters. Death, when it occurs, cannot be ascribed to loss of liver or kidney function but to the combination of interlinked failures whose origins can often be seen to stretch back relatively far into the past, well before the final crisis began. The collapse of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s is analogous to a case of multiple organ failure. The patient had been in delicate health for some time. Although its ailments were not necessarily terminal, its survival required constant attention and careful treatment by a devoted staff of caregivers.

Looking back, the historian can easily find chronic weakness in the Yugoslav body politic's political, economic, and cultural systems. That it survived without serious threat for its first four decades was due largely to the adeptness of Marshal Tito and the men who succeeded him. Their work was undone during the period 1985–1990 by a particular concatenation of circumstances that pushed the patient from a chronic to an acute stage of disease, leading eventually and seemingly inevitably to the equivalent of multiple organ failure and death.

Nevertheless, history is not teleology; death was not necessarily inevitable, for at various points interventions that could have been undertaken might have averted the eventual catastrophe, though there is of course no guarantee.

Admittedly there are those historians who believe in teleology (at least implicitly) and believe whatever aspect of history they study is the ultimate driver of events. This can lead to two problems that we will try to avoid here. First, working back from a particular moment (in this case the collapse of Yugoslavia, but we could equally be discussing the outbreak of World War I or the French Revolution), historians tend to show why that outcome was inevitable, ignoring the paths not taken and opportunities missed that potentially could have led to other scenarios. Second, like medical subspecialists, historians tend to give pride of place to their own objects of study. So although political historians may well recognize that many factors were involved in the demise of Yugoslavia, they will tend to conclude that, in the end, it was political failure that drove the state to its death, just as a cardiologist might tend to think that while multiple organs were affected, in the end it was the heart that stopped. In this chapter we will write like a pathologist, attempting on the basis of the research of a wide variety of “single organ specialists” to reconstruct the complex sequence of events that led to the death of the patient called Yugoslavia while simultaneously pointing out moments when other interventions could have been tried.

Our reconstruction will focus on three spheres whose long-term problems put the Yugoslav state in a vulnerable position entering the late 1980s: these can be called broadly the political (the perceived illegitimacy or at least ineffectiveness of the central state and rise of competing power centers within the country), the economic (the inability of Communist states in general and the Yugoslav state in particular to generate wealth and provide sufficient economic opportunity and prosperity for its citizens), and cultural (the inability or unwillingness of the Yugoslav state to create a sufficiently large group of citizens with a shared national identity and the existence and growth of separate national narratives that directly competed with, and eventually overwhelmed, the Yugoslav narrative). We also recognize that a series of endogenous and exogenous shocks in the late 1980s and very early 1990s drove the patient from a chronic to an acute and ultimately incurable state of disease. Among the latter we will point to a new geopolitical climate created by the weakening of the USSR and especially the strengthening of the EU, which spurred the ambitions and actions of leading local political and cultural actors.

In the case of state collapse, as in our analogy of death, there is always a tendency to try to understand the outcome by delving deep into the past, into the genetics of the state, as it were. One could, in principle, start from the murky moment when separate groups of Slavic invaders entered the Balkans in the sixth and seventh centuries AD. Although few writers have chosen to go that far back,

many commentators, particularly in the popular press, did try to explain the destruction of Yugoslavia through recourse to some variation of the “ancient hatreds” argument—Yugoslavia fell apart because its constituent peoples had from time immemorial disliked each other and had only been waiting for an opportunity to get at each other’s throats within the “artificial” creation of Yugoslavia. This explanation has generally been rejected by serious historians for two separate reasons. First, it is possible to find evidence of earlier animosity between or among a variety of groups within many existing states, yet these animosities do not inevitably lead to conflict in the present—think of the bloody battles between German-speaking Protestants and Catholics, for example, or the North and the South in the United States as recently as the 1860s. Second, at least in the case of Yugoslavia, it is difficult to find examples of sustained interethnic conflict before the modern period.

Although the “hatred” that drove Yugoslavia to its death may not have been ancient, this does not mean that its roots are to be discovered only in the very recent past. There is a good deal of scholarly consensus that the experience of the first Yugoslav state, which came into existence at the end of World War I, is relevant to understanding the prehistory of the disease that killed the patient in the early 1990s. Although the new state was born with high optimism, serious political problems surfaced quickly, particularly a tension between the Serbs’ vision of a tightly centralized, unitary state and the federal model sought by Croats and, to a lesser extent, by Slovenes.¹ These political problems, which plagued the state almost throughout its entire existence and which ultimately proved insoluble in the interwar period, were documented extensively by Ivo Banac in his classic study *The National Question in Yugoslavia*.² Of course, if South Slav unitarism irritated some Croats and Slovenes, nonconstituent peoples in the first Yugoslavia (like the Albanians, Muslim Slavs, Macedonians, Hungarians, and Germans) had even less reason to be satisfied with their lot. The political weakness of the interwar Yugoslav state certainly made its destruction at the hands of the Axis powers easier in 1941, and the distrust and hatred among ethnic groups within Yugoslavia was exploited by the occupying powers between 1941 and 1945.³

Important as the interwar period was to creating the background conditions for the formation of the post-World War II Communist state, the development of that state itself is far more crucial to understanding the bases for Yugoslav collapse in the 1990s. The Communist-led government that came to power in the aftermath of World War II was well aware of the savage intertribal fighting that had claimed at least one half of the total casualties sustained among Yugoslavs. They believed, and probably correctly, that the roots of this fighting lay in the failure of interwar Yugoslavia, particularly the constant conflict between Serbs and non-Serbs, which had been its most characteristic and tragic feature. In the political arena, there had certainly been ample cause for resentment, as the

Belgrade government had undoubtedly—sometimes with malice aforethought, sometimes not—slighted Yugoslavia’s non-Serbian citizens. In the cultural arena, the situation had been far less dire, but there remained a deeply held suspicion on the part of many non-Serbs that Yugoslav nation building, particularly state-sanctioned Yugoslav nation building, had in fact been nothing more than an attempt to Serbianize the country.

Tito and his followers were not about to repeat the mistakes of the royal administration, but neither were they prepared to give up control over the country as a whole. Their political solution was the paper creation of a federal system (as enshrined in the 1946 constitution) in which equal rights were vested in six national republics (Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia, with the latter including the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the autonomous region of Kosovo-Metohija). At the same time, central control was assured by reserving true political power in the country for the fully centralized Communist Party. Thus, as one historian put it succinctly: “A study of the formal constitutional provisions does not convey the reality of Yugoslav society in the early post-war years. Just as the autonomy of the republics and the communes was severely circumscribed by the centralised nature of the administrative hierarchy, so the structure of government was controlled by the Communist Party.”⁴

Regarding the “national question” the new government trod a fine line. Before the war, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had been a strong supporter of unitarist Yugoslavism, even before such a policy had officially been embraced by the government.⁵ And although the Communists’ attitudes toward unitarism wavered during the thirties, they never really abandoned it.⁶ However, the Yugoslavism envisioned by the Communists was, at least theoretically, quite different from that proposed by most other interwar unitarists. Interwar unitarism had been based fundamentally on a racial principle: the three constituent Yugoslav peoples were seen as one, and differences between them were ultimately inessential. The goal of the majority of the unitarists, therefore, was to effect a synthesis of the separate national cultures into a new Yugoslav culture, thereby recreating a unified Yugoslav people and nation. The Communists, on the other hand, “maintained that the creation of a new supranational ‘universal’ culture was fully compatible with the flourishing of individual ‘national cultures’ in a particular multiethnic country.”⁷ Such a supranational culture went beyond the national to the ideological, and it would overarch and connect the national cultures rather than eliminate them. As such it was potentially sympathetic to a variety of supranational strategies that had arisen during the interwar years as a challenge to the vision of a unified multicultural Yugoslavia.

During World War II, of course, rather little could be done to establish a supranational organization. Although the central committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party continued to function during the war, the partisan groups that

did the bulk of the fighting were organized on the local, rather than the national level. This policy was dictated by the conditions of German, Italian, Bulgarian, and Hungarian occupation, which made reliable communications with any center difficult and at times impossible. It was also an effective strategy to rally members of the various nationalities, many of whom were suspicious of integrationist tendencies.⁸ Nevertheless, the Communists always envisioned the creation of a single postwar state rather than a collection of independent Yugoslav nations. Their slogan during and after the war embodied this dualism; they fought for “the brotherhood and unity of the peoples of Yugoslavia.”

This locution was clearly meant to be a replacement of the concept of the “three-named people” that had dominated the royal government’s attitude toward the national question, and it had a number of advantages. First of all, it could be interpreted as being more inclusive because the “peoples of Yugoslavia” were clearly a more diverse group than the Slovenes, Serbs, and Croats who had been the only recognized source for Yugoslavs in the interwar period. Certainly, the national idea had now expanded to include Montenegrins and Macedonians (officially recognized for the first time as a separate South Slavic people), and by the early 1960s it had expanded further with the recognition of the Bosnian Muslims as a national group. Even non-Slavic groups were theoretically included, although the retention of the country’s name called this into question.⁹ Second, the plural *peoples* rather than the singular *people* implied a recognition of and tolerance for diversity. No longer was the goal of the country to be the recreation of a unified ethnos. Rather, any unity would have to be created on some other basis, at least theoretically.

Examined closely, however, “brotherhood and unity” was no less problematic a formula than the Trinitarian one it superseded. After all, unless brotherhood and unity are understood to refer to separate things, the slogan is an oxymoron. Unity, if it could be achieved, would result in full agreement and synthesis, whereas brotherhood, although it certainly emphasizes closeness, implies difference and potential disagreements of all kinds. In addition, and in this respect there was little difference between the interwar and postwar formulations, the citizens of the country were still viewed primarily as members of a given people. The state was understood to be constituted by agreements among the peoples rather than as an aggregate of individuals each one of which had, in theory, a direct contractual relation to the state. In this context, personal and cultural realization was conceived as possible only within a national envelope. To be sure, the envelopes were more numerous than before, but the country was still oriented toward communitarian rather than individual values. This would prove a major problem in the 1960s, when federal structures weakened.

Throughout most of the 1950s, the authorities tried to make it appear that the centripetal force of brotherhood and the centrifugal force of unity were in equi-

librium, but this balance was more apparent than real. Particularly in the years after the split with Stalin when Yugoslavia felt itself to be entirely surrounded by hostile states, unity was the far more important element, and the central government tended to control all significant activities. What is more, even in the cultural sphere the expectation was that some kind of homogenization would eventually occur, even if it was not being forced and even if it did not require the elimination of the national cultures.¹⁰ Indeed, such an outcome was in keeping with the general principles of Tito and the men surrounding him who had from the very beginning “felt that Yugoslavia would be unified, solid, that one needed to respect languages, cultural differences, and all specificities which exist, but that they are not essential, and that they can’t undermine the whole and the vitality of the country.”¹¹ Nevertheless, and this is crucial, the maintenance of central control was made a great deal easier by the presence of an attractive new national formula that helped convince Yugoslavia’s citizens that the government was not merely replaying prewar unitarism.

Any discussion of the basic conditions leading to Yugoslavia’s breakup must truly begin from the moment when the balance of power began to shift from unity to brotherhood. Depending on a given scholar’s set of interests and point of view, the effects of this change can be felt in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. They can also be seen to have released previously suppressed (or repressed, depending on one’s point of view) underlying visions of the Yugoslav state and its premises that were held by the various national groups within the state. Let us start with cultural issues and then move on to political and economic ones.

States experience economic and/or political collapse, but they do not always fission into their various constituent parts. Yugoslavia did so. In great measure this occurred because sufficient numbers of people holding Yugoslav citizenship stopped thinking of themselves as Yugoslavs (if they ever had done so) and saw themselves instead as Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Macedonians, and so forth. To be sure, even the most seemingly homogeneous states, when examined closely, turn out to have significant potential differences, be they regional, dialectical, confessional, class, or other. But when crisis comes, a sufficient number of citizens (never all, to be sure) decide that “we are all in this together” and choose to overlook those differences in favor of the nation as a whole. There are two main reasons why this did not happen in the 1980s in Yugoslavia—historical (members of the various sub-Yugoslav groups had held competing national identities for long periods of time) and educational/cultural (the Yugoslav state had always been ambivalent about the project of creating a Yugoslav national identity and by the 1960s had pretty much abandoned the project, hoping that ideological and economic integration would break down particularist identities over time).

Scholars have offered a number of additional insights about why the expected class-based solidarity envisioned by theoreticians of Communism was eventually trumped by particularist nationalism. In the specific case of Yugoslavia, part of the problem was in the initial design of the country, which, as Audrey Helfant Budding points out, was organized in contradictory ways: “no single criterion guided the Partisans’ decisions either in creating federal units or in drawing their borders. Considerations of historical precedent, ethnonational demarcation, economic development and political reliability all played their parts.”¹² Even so, most of the Yugoslav republics and provinces were in fact constituted around an ethnic majority (Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its mixed population of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, was the great exception). As long as the state was governed by a centralized Communist Party, these decisions were not particularly important, but a series of power struggles in the course of the 1960s saw centralists (as represented by Aleksandar Ranković and others) lose out to decentralizers (led by Slovene Edvard Kardelj). In discussing the constitutional changes that provided the legislative structure for the decentralization, Helfant Budding notes: “Yugoslavia’s constitutional decentralization occurred on the *territorial* level. Republics and provinces, not nations, gained greater independence in their own actions and greater control over decisions taken at the federal center. The process was legitimated, however, with reference to *national* rights and *national* equality.”¹³

The political fragmentation of the country was mirrored in its economy, where republicanization took place rapidly from the late 1960s on. As John Allcock put it: “The steady republicanization of the economy, however, meant that the commitment of liberals to widening the scope of market forces came increasingly to be posed in terms of a conflict of interests between the federation and the republics. As republics were readily conceptualized in national terms, the dispute over economic modernization came to be represented (certainly in popular and journalistic discourse) as a matter of the adverse effects of the power of ‘Belgrade,’ working together with the ‘backward South’ (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro), upon the economic development of the ‘advanced’ North (Croatia and Slovenia). Economic modernization thereby came to be linked generally to the forces of nationalism which the Tito regime had worked so hard since 1945 to defeat.”¹⁴

Dejan Jović has done important work to explain why the decentralizers eventually won the day. He focuses on the need for the Yugoslav state to distinguish itself on the one hand from the USSR and on the other from the interwar “bourgeois” Yugoslav state. “Kardelj’s main argument linked the ideology of anti-statism with identity and sovereignty of Yugoslavia. He argued that Yugoslavia would not be different from the two antipodes (inter-war Yugoslavia and Soviet socialism) unless it was further decentralized. The main goal of socialism was

that everyone decided upon the results of their labour. This principle applied to nations as well.”¹⁵ Kardelj’s victory, however, as enshrined in the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, was pyrrhic. In Jović’s view, then, the Yugoslav state “withered away” to be replaced by republican governments, which became increasingly in thrall to nationalist sentiment. The central state was so weakened that it became unable to compete with the much stronger Republican governments, particularly after the death of the great centralizer Tito in 1980.

It is important to recognize that these processes (political and economic) of fragmentation along republican lines took place in the context of a state that had never been economically self-sustaining. As Michael Palairet points out: “Ever since 1945, the economic ambitions of the Yugoslav regime had consistently out-run the resources that its socialized sector could generate. Therefore, this sector had to draw on resources external to it, mainly resources external to Yugoslavia.”¹⁶ As long as ready sources of external cash were available (which took the form of foreign aid, borrowing, and/or remittances from Yugoslavs working abroad) to help float the economy, economic problems could remain under the radar screen. By the mid-1970s, however, international credit tightened, remittances declined as the European economies faltered, and real economic strains began to become apparent.

Thus, by the middle to late 1970s, Yugoslavia had changed from a country marked by brotherhood and unity with the emphasis on the latter, to a society with very little unity and with brotherhood more in principle than in fact. Indeed, as Sabrina Ramet showed in her important book *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia*, from the 1970s forward, the separate Yugoslav republics behaved in great measure as if they were independent entities whose priority was to maximize the well-being of their inhabitants, regardless of the effect that this might have on the country as a whole.

In this environment, the various peoples of Yugoslavia began to remember (or were encouraged to recall) a series of grievances that they interpreted in national terms. For although the call to rebuild the country in the spirit of socialist cooperation had succeeded for a few decades in convincing people to ignore their differences, it could not completely overcome the fact that the various peoples of Yugoslavia held varied and often incompatible stories about the state and their involvement in it. The absence of a federal education system after 1948 and the fact that important topics relating to history and culture could be and were taught quite differently in the different republics meant that these various national points of view were never harmonized in a coherent way during the existence of Communist Yugoslavia.¹⁷

In the case of the Serbs, the national narrative centered around the “sacrifices” they had made in creating Yugoslavia after World War I and about their

supposedly disadvantaged position in the Communist state. These concerns fed into a longer-term Serb narrative that focused on Serbian suffering and heroism, which in some quarters was traced all the way back to the fateful Battle of Kosovo in 1389.¹⁸ Drawing on folk poetry in which the loss of this battle was depicted as an apocalyptic choice of the Kingdom of Heaven over the Kingdom of Earth, Serbian thinkers and writers created the image of Serbia as a martyr nation that was constantly being asked to spill its blood for the sake of others without receiving the benefits that should accrue for such heroism.

The popular novel *Knjiga o Milutinu* (*A Book about Milutin*, 1985) by Danko Popović provides an excellent example of this sort of thinking.¹⁹ The majority of the novel consists of a monologue by the title character. Imprisoned after World War II as a kulak, although merely the owner of a small farm, he tells his life story in a thick peasant dialect. He recounts the deaths of his father and brothers in the Balkan Wars, his experiences as a soldier during World War I, the hard lot of his life as a farmer in interwar Yugoslavia, and his efforts to save his son, who is eventually killed during World War II. The novel ends with a short section in which a prison comrade describes Milutin's death.

A Book about Milutin is, however, little more than a pretext on which to string a litany of complaints and questions, most of which have to do with Serbia's alleged tendencies to sacrifice its own interests for the sake of others, and the ungratefulness of those for whose sake the sacrifices were made. Milutin's suspicions about the wisdom of the Yugoslav idea date from before the beginning of World War I, but his common-sense opposition to unification is shown to be opposed by intellectuals—in this case, the village teacher. After hearing about the “heroic” assassination of Franz Ferdinand, our hero says: “It just don't seem right to me. I don't like this empty heroing of them Bosnians, killing off princes and their wives, and afterwards hiding their asses so our peasants have to pay the piper, ain't that it? . . . But the teacher just went on. There, he goes, in Bosnia and the other places where our brothers, the Southern Slavs live the uprising has all but burst into flames up. ‘From your mouth to god's ears, teach’—and I go out into the fields, but I don't believe in no Slavs. . . . I hear, our brothers, but my brother already died for some ‘our brother.’”²⁰

Milutin's rambling monologue provides plenty of fictional ammunition for the standard Serbian anti-Yugoslav claim: that the other South Slavic nations are happy to allow the Serbs to do their fighting for them, something that the naive and idealistic Serbs have continually done to their own detriment.²¹ Furthermore, it brings to the surface an even more inflammatory issue: the behavior of the Croatian Ustasha during World War II. “Well in those days, my boys, refugees came to our village. . . . I remember that one day Lazar and Vasilij came. They had taken in refugees and had heard what was happening to the Serbs in Croatia.

They told me, but I didn't want to hear. Don't you guys tell me this, I say. Pašić and Prince Aleksandar, Colonel Garašanin and Mladen should hear this. It's they built this big country."²²

By the mid-1980s, however, the dissatisfaction of Serb intellectuals and political figures with the state of affairs in Yugoslavia revolved ever more frequently around the issue of Kosovo. The population of this territory, the incorporation of which had been Serbia's national obsession in the nineteenth century, had become increasingly Albanian in the course of the existence of the Communist state. Although there were a number of reasons for this demographic shift, many Serbs tended to believe in a variety of conspiracy theories and to focus on a few incidents of mistreatment of Serbs in the region. The most notorious expression of these theories was the draft memorandum written by a number of members of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU). Though not immediately published, the text was leaked to the press in 1986 and became a cause célèbre. Although the memorandum was ostensibly written to find a way to preserve the integrity of Yugoslavia, its authors spent most of the document proving that Tito's Yugoslavia had discriminated against Serbs in a variety of ways, supposedly permitting Serbia's economic subjugation to Croatia and Slovenia as well as the "genocide" perpetrated by the Albanians against the Serbs of Kosovo.²³

By contrast, Croatian discourse tended to reject or minimize Serb suffering, substituting its own narrative of victimization. Although the list of grievances stretched as far back as the unwelcome Serb colonization of Croatia's Krajina frontier in early modern times, they crystallized around the charge that Yugoslavia had been merely a mask for Serbian hegemony. From the adoption of the first Vidovdan Constitution in 1921 to the abrupt cancellation of the constitutional compromise of 1939, Serbia had employed every means to impose its hegemony over the interwar kingdom. Still, Croats had not been disloyal to that state; rather they had insisted that it live up to its promises to be equitable to all its citizens (or at least all of its South Slav citizens). Whereas Serbs focused their discussion of World War II around the massacres of Serbs by the Croatian fascist state (NDH), Croats tended to minimize the extent of wartime persecutions of Serbs in Croatia (and sometimes even hinted that the NDH, while not a paragon of virtue, was a not completely unreasonable response to Serb bullying in the interwar period), to point out that the Serbs had their own collaborationist state, albeit not an "independent" one, and to note that the Serbian Chetniks were hardly free of guilt for the intercommunal massacres that took place during the war.²⁴ Turning to the Communist period, Croats cited the overrepresentation of Serbs and Montenegrins in the police and military hierarchy, as well as the flow of federal taxes from Croatia (and Slovenia) to support failed development projects planned in Belgrade.²⁵

In the Communist period, one of the most significant cultural attempts to foster Croatian national feeling, and one of the first public signs of the so-called Croatian Spring movement, was the publication of the “Declaration Concerning the Name and the Position of the Croatian Literary Language” in March 1967. This document was a direct repudiation of the 1954 Novi Sad agreement on the Serbo-Croatian language that had been signed by leading Serbian and Croatian intellectuals, and it illustrates how far the country had moved from the “unity” of the initial postwar period; equally important, in demanding recognition of the Croatian literary language as an independent entity, it undermined the only remaining historical connection to the original Yugoslav movements of the nineteenth century (as far back as the Illyrian movement of the 1830s and 40s). For however relations between Serbs and Croats may have fluctuated in the ensuing years, the goal of an integrated literary language had remained intact (with the notable exception of the World War II period). By opening the door to full linguistic separation, the Croatian cultural nationalists thus called all other types of Serbian/Croatian cooperation into question.

In the literary arena, leading Croatian publications did everything possible to stress the autochthonous nature of Croatian culture: “The emphasis was on things Croatian and on the revival of Croatian national consciousness.”²⁶ It was no coincidence that the cultural society *Matica hrvatska* began its ambitious publication of a series of books titled *Five Centuries of Croatian Literature* at this time. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that the Croatian revival was spearheaded by cultural figures rather than Croatian politicians, who until early 1970 were divided on this issue.²⁷

Few Croatian intellectuals hid their support of separatist ethnic national feelings at this time. A particularly strident presentation of Croatian intellectual opinion can be seen in the proceedings of a conference that was held in Zagreb in 1970.²⁸ Attended by most of Croatia’s leading intellectuals, the conference amounted to a full-scale attack on the previous school program for the teaching of literature and a call to arms to use literature and culture to create specifically Croatian citizens. “The duty of Croatian schools is to make available to the Croatian student, the future Croatian intellectual, the basic works of value of Croatian literary culture and of Croatian culture in general.”²⁹ This required the separation of Croatian literature from the “literatures of the Yugoslav nations,” a sharp reduction in the number of Serbian writers being taught (in this respect, Croatian intellectuals hoped to bring their education program in line with that of the Slovenians, who were admired for basically all but ignoring the literatures of the other Yugoslav peoples), as well as the elimination of any attempt at demonstrating that such a concept as a unified Yugoslav literature had ever existed.

The suppression of the liberal Croatian Spring movement in 1971 was taken by many Croats as evidence that the Communist state was no more willing to

tolerate Croatian desires for more autonomy than the interwar state had been, even though the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution incorporated much of what had been demanded by Croats. As Jill Irvine puts it: “The end of the Croatian Spring ushered in a period of bitter quiescence in which Croatia was often described as the ‘sullen republic.’ But the significance of the Croatian Spring was much wider than simply its effect on Croatia. It signified, in important ways, the beginning of the end for Yugoslavia.”³⁰ Irvine points to three important outcomes that helped to pave the way to dissolution. First, the 1974 constitution, the promulgation of which was meant to prevent outbursts like the Croatian Spring movement, enshrined a weakened federal center and devolved ever more power to the republics. Second, the sidelining of popular leaders in both Croatia and Serbia in response to the events of 1968–1971 provided an opening for renewed political power on the part of religious institutions, particularly the Catholic Church in Croatia. And finally the suppression of the Croatian Spring helped to deligitimize the Partisan legacy on which the postwar Yugoslav state was based.

Slovenes’ concerns about Communist Yugoslavia were similar to those of Croats. Though undoubtedly less rancorous in their views, they nevertheless felt economically exploited by a system that they believed used the surpluses generated by their labor to support development projects in other parts of the country. Furthermore, even more than their Croatian counterparts, Slovene intellectuals feared creeping denationalization. They resented the fact that their children were forced to learn Serbo-Croatian while no one else was required to learn Slovene. These tensions came to a head during discussions of a core curriculum program that was proposed in the early 1980s as a way to ensure that all Yugoslav school children possessed at least some common cultural knowledge despite the lack of a national system of education. Even though the core was to constitute at most 50 percent of the literature curriculum with the rest being left to the discretion of republic-level authorities, Slovene intellectuals protested stridently. In August 1983, the Slovene writer Ciril Zlobec wrote an emotionally loaded critique of the core curriculum in the official Slovene newspaper *Delo*. He claimed that “the proposal offers a state education instead of the conscious knowledge of one’s own national and personal essence . . . It is an anti-cultural, anti-pedagogic, anti-educational and anti-ethical document.” And he wondered what would happen to the spiritual, cultural, and historic identity of Slovene children after their twelve-year “journey through the desert of spirit” that was embodied in this document.³¹ Another Slovene writer, Janez Menart, calculated that according to the core proposal a Serbo-Croatian speaking primary school pupil would read only three Slovene poems, whereas a Slovene-speaking pupil would read more than thirty-five Serbo-Croatian poems. “What a bad trade!” he concluded.³²

Defenders of the core noted that it was to cover only half of the literature curriculum. The rest was to be at the discretion of republics and provinces, thereby

allowing ample room to present individual national traditions.³³ Nevertheless, at a public meeting in Ljubljana organized by the Slovene Writers Union on 19 September 1983, leading Slovene writers (Ciril Zlobec, Rudi Šeligo, Janez Rotar, Bojan Štih) rejected the proposed common core out of hand. By this point they were not so much concerned with the raw numbers of writers or texts included or even the language in which they were presented but rather the entire idea of whether a national core curriculum was necessary. A Belgrade newspaper summarized the basic attitude of all the speakers in one sentence: “We Slovenes will alone decide about our schools, and nobody should dictate to us.”³⁴

Although less important for the weakening of the Yugoslav body politic in the period before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the unofficial narratives of other groups in the state, including Bosnian Muslims and Kosovar Albanians, also contributed to the sense that Yugoslavia was a country in which centrifugal forces were becoming ever more powerful.

Because the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) are Slavic speakers whose ancestors converted to Islam during the long period of Ottoman rule, they were always a bone of contention between Serbian and Croatian nationalists, who tended to think of them as “really” Serbs or Croats respectively. A separate Bosnian Muslim identity was slow to develop. In the period before the creation of the first Yugoslavia, as Xavier Bougarel notes, “The Muslim secular intelligentsia was divided into pro-Croat and pro-Serb factions, which both equally rejected the name ‘Muslims,’ preferring to declare themselves Croats or Serbs ‘of Islamic faith.’”³⁵ According to Bougarel, the founding of the Movement for the Autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina “constituted the first organized manifestation of a nascent Muslim nationalism.”³⁶

In the immediate post-World War II period, the Yugoslav Communists, in keeping with their antireligious ideology, abolished many traditional Muslim organizations. Nevertheless, they made serious efforts to balance the various ethno-religious groups in the newly created Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. If Serbs were overrepresented in the 1950s, by the mid-1960s a fairly strict “affirmative action” program ensured representation more or less equal to the population of the republic. Although no Bosniak category was available on census forms in the 1950s, the category of Muslims in an ethnic sense was added in 1961, and they were officially recognized as a national group in 1974.

Nevertheless, there were still areas of friction between at least some members of the Bosnian Muslim population and the state. In 1983, thirteen Bosnian Muslims, including Alija Izetbegović (who would later become the first president of an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina) were imprisoned for “endangering the fraternity and unity of the Yugoslav nations” through their publication of an Islamic declaration that, the prosecution insisted, called for the creation of an “ethnically pure” Bosnia-Herzegovina.³⁷

The extent to which the concerns of even nonreligious Bosnians tended to be ignored in Yugoslavia can perhaps best be felt in an exchange between a school teacher named Mubera Mujagić and a number of leading Yugoslav academics and journalists in 1984. At a public meeting sponsored by the Writers' Organization of Sarajevo to discuss proposed revisions to the nationwide core, Mujagić hinted at what had hitherto been a taboo topic: the anti-Ottoman and anti-Muslim messages in Petar Petrović Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath* (*Gorski vijenac*) as well as Ivan Mažuranić's *The Death of Smail-Aga Ćengić* (*Smrt Smail Age Ćengića*). She suggested that these canonical works be excluded from the Yugoslav primary school core curriculum because they might "evoke national intolerance." This led to a series of responses and counterresponses in the Belgrade biweekly *Intervju*.³⁸ Although not disputing Njegoš's position as a great writer and thinker, Mujagić, who publicly identified herself as a Yugoslav, asked: "What kind of spirit can these works offer us? Can they evoke catharsis in the reader, a feeling of unity, Yugoslavism, accord, solidarity, toleration, and cosmopolitanism, or do they create bile, poison, and hatred towards anyone who belongs to another belief or nation?" Mujagić's critics responded to her allegations in a couple of ways. Some defended Njegoš as a great thinker and writer whose thought soars above all petty local differences and forms an indelible part of the national legacy that should not be censored just because it might offend someone in the present (Miroslav Egerić). Others insisted that the characters and times described in Njegoš's work had nothing to do with the nations of contemporary Yugoslavia (Milorad Vučelić). All agreed that only poor teaching could possibly allow any student to come away from the text with an incorrect impression. No one responded directly to Mujagić's claims, which were backed up by a teacher named Jakov Ivašević, who, like Mujagić, reported that students did indeed interpret *The Mountain Wreath* in a nationalist vein.

Kosovar Albanians had always had issues about their inclusion in an avowedly South Slavic state. Although rarely stated in terms of a wish for a Greater Albania, there was nevertheless a strong feeling that the inclusion of a large number of Albanian speakers in both the first and second Yugoslavias was somehow illegitimate.³⁹ Despite the Serbs' tendency especially after 1985 to focus on purported Albanian attempts to seize demographic control over the province, Albanians tended to point out that at a variety of times (particularly during the interwar period as well as between 1946 and 1966) there had been heavy-handed attempts by the authorities to colonize the region with Serbs and that Albanians had been noticeably underrepresented in political bodies during these periods. Although things had clearly been significantly better for the Albanian population between 1974 and 1986, Albanians still felt marginalized and underrepresented. Riots in 1981, which were brutally suppressed by the Yugoslav authorities, were a hint that despite Kosovo's greater autonomy, tensions between

the Albanian majority and the Yugoslav state had not been eliminated. Further, the abrogation of Kosovo's autonomy by the Milošević regime in 1989 led to a virtual state of war between the Serbian authorities and the population at large (though at this point and through 1995, largely under the influence of Ibrahim Rugova, the Kosovar Albanians employed a strategy of passive resistance rather than military action to oppose the Yugoslav state).⁴⁰

At the same time, in parallel to these various nationalist narratives, there always existed and continued to exist up until and even beyond the collapse of Yugoslavia a variety of supranational or nonnational discourses that Sabrina Ramet has helpfully labeled "cosmopolitan":

In the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context, cosmopolitan narratives have included liberal, feminist, social democratic, and socialist/Communist narratives, each having its own view of the past, its own understanding of the challenges which history has thrown up. In none of the cosmopolitan narratives is history cast as the struggle of one's own nation against hostile neighboring nations. In the Yugoslav context, "Yugoslavism" (or sometimes, "Yugoslav socialist patriotism") was seen as signifying the subscription to precisely such a cosmopolitan narrative.⁴¹

It is difficult to gauge the level of support for narratives such as these at various points in Yugoslavia's existence, particularly because a number of surveys undertaken in the late 1960s and early 1970s revealed that many Yugoslav citizens expressed both national and supranational identities.

Nevertheless, by the middle of the 1980s, Yugoslavia was in serious straits. In the economic and political spheres there was an ever-increasing tendency toward republicanization, which was linked with particularist nationalism. Simultaneously, the opinion leaders of the various constituent peoples were increasingly telling themselves and their conationals incompatible stories about the past and present of the country. Despite these serious danger signs, the country might well have limped along from crisis to crisis had not two important exogenous factors coincided with the appearance on the political stage of a number of ambitious figures who had a vested interest in the country's breakup.

The two exogenous factors were the weakening of the USSR and the expansion of the EU. While neither of these two processes was undertaken with an eye toward destabilizing Yugoslavia, both had that effect. The belief that a large state was a necessary precondition for military and economic security had been an important factor in holding Yugoslavia together from the beginning. Indeed, one of the reasons that Croats and Slovenes had been willing to join the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in the first place was the realization that failure to do so would have meant the incorporation of significant portions of their territory into Italy, which had been promised most of Dalmatia and Istria by the allies for its assistance during the Great War. The willingness of Hungary, Italy,

and Bulgaria to effectively annex portions of the country during World War II certainly worked to reinforce the idea that Yugoslav unity was necessary to fend off rapacious neighbors. After the Tito–Stalin split of 1948, fear of the USSR had been an important unifying factor for Yugoslavia. Yugoslav military planning was focused primarily on repelling a Soviet attack, which, given the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, did not seem at all far-fetched. However, the unwillingness (or inability) of the USSR to intervene directly in Poland to stop the growth of the Solidarity movement in the early 1980s was an early sign that the danger of external military invasion was waning (fear of an invasion from the capitalist West had already dissipated by the 1960s). Mikhail Gorbachev's elevation to the position of general secretary of the Communist Party and his almost immediate announcement of the need for *glasnost* and *perestroika* was a strong sign that the USSR was confronting a major crisis of its own. By the end of the 1980s it had become clear that the USSR would not intervene to prevent democratization in its East European satellites, and the pressure for an end to monopolistic Communist Party rule became ever stronger.

As the need for a large Yugoslavia to provide for defense lessened in the course of the 1980s, the parallel (though unrelated) process of European expansion began to make it more imaginable that a large state was no longer necessary for economic security and prosperity. The slow expansion of the EU to include Ireland (1973), Greece (1981), and Portugal (1986) was an indication that smaller countries with per capita incomes and economic prospects not significantly better than those of at least some areas of Yugoslavia could be economically viable independent states as members of a larger bloc.

The final death knell for Yugoslavia occurred when the new possibilities engendered by a changing external world combined with ongoing republicanization and nationalization of the country opened the door inside Yugoslavia for a generation of political leaders able and willing to exploit the situation for their own purposes. To be sure, certainly since the death of Tito in 1980, real power in Yugoslavia had been held by republican-level politicians. They had, however, managed recruitment and advancement through the undemocratic structures of the Communist Party. As pressures for democratization grew in the course of the 1980s, canny political figures came to recognize that public support would be necessary to retain power. The obvious basis of support for all such politicians was nationalism, and in each of the republics the most powerful political parties to emerge were formed on the basis of ethnic affiliation. In some cases their foundations were laid by the former Communist elites, in others by those who had been sidelined earlier for nationalist tendencies.

Even before this process had achieved its final form, its basic attributes had been worked out by the Serbian Slobodan Milošević, who came to power af-

ter ousting his erstwhile mentor Ivan Stambolić in 1987. Although an enormous amount of scholarship has focused on Milošević's role in the destruction of Yugoslavia, there is little evidence to indicate that he came to power with a developed plan to destroy the country. Unquestionably, he recognized that in a democratizing situation in a country organized as Yugoslavia was, an appeal to Serbian interests would be necessary to garner the support he needed to control Serbian politics. Specifically, Milošević appealed to Serb worries over the emotional issue of the status of Kosovo. Nevertheless, initially at least, it appears that his goal was not the destruction of Yugoslavia but rather the recentralization of the country under his own leadership. Only after it became clear that no such project was realistic did Milošević recalibrate and turn to a policy of uniting all Serbs in a single state, which could only be achieved by changing the republican borders of Croatia and Bosnia.

Nevertheless, whether his actions were entirely deliberate or simply opportunistic, Milošević must shoulder a great deal of blame for the final destruction of Yugoslavia. There will, of course, always be historians who say that the country was in dire straits and that had there been no Milošević another equivalent figure would have come along to deliver the coup de grace. Perhaps this is so, but the historical record shows that it was Milošević and no one else whose actions pushed the country over the brink. It was Milošević who purged, recentralized, and revamped Serbia's Communist Party with nationalism; it was also Milošević who systematically overturned the Titoist settlement in such a way that bred fear among Yugoslavia's non-Serbs; and it was Milošević, more than anyone else, who undermined the eleventh-hour attempts of Yugoslavia's last prime minister, Ante Marković, to reform Yugoslavia and thereby to find a way out of the crisis into which the country had descended.

That Milošević was able to have so great an impact was in large part a result of the structures for social control built into Communist societies in general, the so-called nomenklatura system that he inherited in 1986 when he became president of Serbia's League of Communists. By controlling patronage in the League of Communists, Milošević was able to stamp his authority on Serbian society, moving apparatchiks, whose primary qualifications were personal loyalty, into key posts and edging out independent thinkers until he was powerful enough to move against his mentor. Indeed, the decisive battle in Yugoslavia's disintegration was, in many ways, fought not in 1991 but in 1987. The struggle was not between Serbs and non-Serbs but between two wings of the Serbian League of Communists, between advocates of Yugoslavia's restructuring in such a way that Serbs would reassert themselves at the expense of the country's other peoples and those who clung to Tito's concept of a multinational state. The principal protagonists were Milošević himself, on the one hand, and Dragiša Pavlović,

president of Belgrade's League of Communists, representing the Stambolić wing, on the other. The battlegrounds were the Serbian League of Communists and the Serbian media.

The danger to Yugoslavia's stability presented by any attempt to reconstruct the country on the basis of Serb domination was obvious in terms of demographics. Although Serbs were the most numerous people in Yugoslavia, with 4.9 million living in inner Serbia, 1.3 million in Kosovo and Vojvodina, and close to 2 million outside Serbia, they formed only 36 percent of the population according to the 1981 census, and that proportion was declining. Serbs therefore formed a sufficiently great proportion of the population to destabilize Yugoslavia but not to dominate it.

During 1987, Milošević and Pavlović slugged it out within the media organs that each man controlled. However, the odds were stacked against Pavlović and, by extension, Stambolić, because of Milošević's control of the Communist apparatus. The power struggle within Serbia's League of Communists came to a head at the eighth plenum in September 1987 when Milošević called for Pavlović's expulsion. Milošević had prepared the ground well and came to the plenum with the backing of senior Communists for a return to strict party discipline before launching his final offensive. Like his meetings, the plenum was stage-managed, and Milošević was inundated with telegrams and messages of support from Serb Communists the length and breadth of Serbia, Kosovo, and Vojvodina. At the end of September the battle was won and Pavlović expelled. Three months later, Stambolić resigned as president of Serbia, and Milošević replaced him with one of his allies. In a book published a year later in Zagreb (because no Serbian publisher was prepared to touch it), Pavlović wrote prophetically: "If a nation adopts the right to be angry, how can it deny the same right to another? A confrontation of two nations leads to a war."⁴²

With Pavlović out of the way, Milošević further purged Serbia's League of Communists and media to silence all remaining dissenting voices. The purges were part of the so-called antibureaucratic revolution that was supposed to weed out corruption in the League of Communists but, in practice, served to root out all potential opposition. Meanwhile, the campaign against Yugoslavia's prevailing structure went into overdrive in the media and at Milošević's rallies or meetings as they called them. Rabble-rousing tactics that had started in Kosovo were extended throughout Serbia and beyond. Momentum was sustained by paying unemployed young men to go around the country from meeting to meeting while Serbs from all over Yugoslavia, including Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, were encouraged to attend. Demonstrators carried pictures of Milošević, waved nationalist flags, sang nationalist songs, and habitually called for the execution of Kosovo's Albanian leadership at the meetings that the Serbian media hailed as the

“third Serb uprising.” (The first two uprisings had occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century against Ottoman rule).⁴³

In the course of 1988, the rallies spread first to Vojvodina and then to Montenegro. Steadily, Milošević ratcheted up the pressure on the leaderships of both Vojvodina and Montenegro, which were already unpopular, until toward the end of the year tens and even hundreds of thousands of demonstrators regularly surrounded the parliaments, demanding the resignations of the governments. In the absence of any support from the federal authorities, both governments caved in, Vojvodina in October 1988 and Montenegro in January 1989. As soon as the governments resigned, they were replaced with Milošević supporters who proceeded to carry out a thorough purge of society, the party, and the media.

While Milošević was dismantling Tito’s Yugoslavia piecemeal, the federal authorities were at a loss how to react. At the height of the assault on Vojvodina, federal President Raif Dizdarević warned that he might have to impose a state of emergency, but backed down rather than risk open conflict as more than 350,000 people rallied in Belgrade. Quite simply, Yugoslavia’s federal government was not equipped to deal with so determined an assault on its authority. This was partly the fault of the Titoist system because the center lacked sufficient authority to bring Serbia into line, but it was also the result of a malaise in the rest of the country. Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo were bankrupt. Bosnia-Herzegovina’s leadership was embroiled in the Agrokomerc scandal, the collapse of Yugoslavia’s twenty-ninth largest company with debts of \$900 million. And Croatia was still governed by the generation of conservatives whom Tito had installed in the early 1970s in the wake of the Croatian Spring.

As Milošević moved against Kosovo, an increasingly forlorn federal League of Communists of Yugoslavia decided that its best tactic was to sacrifice the recalcitrant province. Non-Serbian Communists were concerned by the upsurge of nationalism in Serbia but convinced themselves that by sacrificing Kosovo they might satisfy Milošević’s ambitions while simultaneously hoping that Kosovo might yet prove his undoing. In this way, Kosovo’s Albanian leadership was dismissed in November 1988 and replaced with Milošević appointees. The dismissals provoked demonstrations among the province’s Albanians, and by February 1989 the demonstrations had escalated into a general strike as well as an underground hunger strike by 1,300 miners from the Trepča lead and zinc mines. When Kosovo’s new, pro-Milošević leadership resigned on 28 February it appeared that the strikers had won the day; victory, however, was short-lived.

In Belgrade, Milošević organized fresh and even larger rallies at which he promised that the organizers of Kosovo’s general strike would be punished. Once again, the federal authorities acquiesced. The resignations were withdrawn, a partial state of emergency imposed, and the military moved in. On 23 March, Kosovo’s assembly was coerced into accepting a new constitution returning authority

to Serbia. Five days later, the Serbian parliament incorporated the constitutional changes to the status of Kosovo and Vojvodina into the Serbian constitution and introduced a new interpretation of the concept of sovereignty, that is sovereignty within the nation. Whereas republican leaders hitherto had represented all people living in their republic irrespective of their ethnic identities, Milošević claimed the right to represent all Serbs throughout Yugoslavia. Because large Serb communities lived in six of Yugoslavia's eight federal units, this direct appeal to them above the heads of their republican leaderships was an extremely powerful weapon that he set about using to undermine authority in the governments of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In response to the changes, Albanians took to the streets to defend the old constitution; demonstrators clashed with police and twenty-eight people were killed.⁴⁴

The balance of power within Yugoslavia had shifted decisively toward Milošević following his victory in Kosovo. By this time, he controlled four of Yugoslavia's eight federal units and was strong enough to ignore federal opposition. Indeed, he was now able to use his own newly acquired federal muscle to extend his power base further. Thus far, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia had remained united and had acquiesced in the face of Milošević's onslaught. That changed in the aftermath of the Kosovo clampdown when, under pressure from their domestic public, Slovenia's Communists broke ranks.

The Slovene Communist leadership was aware of the perception of many Slovenes that their separate cultural and linguistic identity was threatened by Yugoslavia's Serbo-Croat-speaking majority and pandered to it. At the federal level, Slovenia's Communists worked to retain as much autonomy as possible, whereas at home they attempted to promote a sense of Slovene national pride, including a publicity drive around the theme "Slovenia My Homeland" in the mid-1980s. In addition to promoting pride in Slovenia, the Slovene Communists used Slovene media to articulate their own vision of Yugoslavia's future, and as the Yugoslav economy disintegrated in the 1980s, they became increasingly prepared to use the media to blame other republics and the federal government in Belgrade for the country's economic ills, making it clear that they were tired of subsidizing poorer federal units when living standards were also declining at home.

Despite obvious attempts by Slovenia's Communists to court popularity at home, in the long run the growth of opposition to the Communist state was a more significant factor in the evolution of Slovene nationalism. Traditionally, Slovenia's Communists had tolerated a far broader spectrum of views with many more dissenting voices than any other part of Yugoslavia. But in the 1980s, as the failings of the Communist system became too great to conceal, a new generation of activists began to mold a political opposition around specific issues and via alternative art forms.

The issue that galvanized Slovene public opinion was the court martial of Janez Janša, a senior *Mladina* writer on military affairs (and candidate for president of Slovenia's Youth Organization), and three others. On 31 May 1988, Janša was arrested on suspicion of betraying military secrets. Soon after, two other *Mladina* journalists and a noncommissioned officer were also charged with offenses relating to the disclosure of military secrets after classified documents were found at *Mladina*'s offices. The documents in question were believed to be plans for a military takeover of Slovenia. The arrests followed shortly after a series of articles had embarrassed the federal defense minister, Branko Mamula, into an early resignation. The population at large considered the arrests and trial nothing short of an attack on Slovenes and Slovenia. Almost immediately, *Mladina* journalists founded a Committee for the Protection of Human Rights to monitor the trial, and Slovenes took to wearing *Janez Janša* badges to demonstrate solidarity with the accused.

Whether or not the four defendants had committed an offense had ceased to matter as far as most Slovenes were concerned. The four were widely viewed as martyrs who had been framed by a military that *Mladina*'s investigative reporting had already discredited. Meanwhile, the *Jugoslovenska narodna armija* (JNA, Yugoslav People's Army) further incensed Slovene public opinion by insisting that the trial be held in Serbo-Croat. The result was a remarkable homogenization of Slovene society and national mobilization behind the accused. When all four were found guilty and sentenced to terms of between five months and four years, more than 50,000 people surrounded the courthouse in the center of Ljubljana, a remarkable number in a city of only 300,000.

In the aftermath of the Janša trial, relations between the JNA and Slovenia continued to deteriorate amid persistent rumors of a military coup d'état. Although Slovenia's Communist leadership still hoped to appease Milošević, the republic's increasingly vociferous opposition made it clear that its sympathies lay with the Kosovo Albanians. When the Albanian miners began their underground hunger strike, the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights began collecting money for them and their families. When the federal presidency sent the military into Kosovo, more than 1 million Slovenes—half the total population—signed a petition against the state of emergency, 450,000 in one day. On 27 February Slovenia's opposition organized a rally at Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana's cultural center, to demonstrate solidarity with Kosovo's Albanians. In the face of intense public pressure, the republic's Communist leadership decided belatedly to join the protest. In this way, leading Communists, including President Milan Kučan, shared the platform with the non-Communist opposition. The rally was broadcast live on television and radio, and for the first time, Slovenia's Communists openly defied the federal League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Soon after the Cankarjev Dom meeting, Slovenia withdrew its police contingent from Kosovo.⁴⁵

The decision to break ranks was not taken lightly. At the time, Milošević's star was in the ascendant. He controlled Serbia, Vojvodina, and Montenegro and was in the process of cementing his control over Kosovo. Moreover, he had already begun to extend the same rabble-rousing tactics to the Serb communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. Kučan was aware of the risks involved in both standing up to Milošević and in doing nothing. To be sure, Slovenes generally looked upon Kosovo's Albanians in a condescending fashion as a result of the gulf in development between Kosovo and Slovenia. However, the bloodshed in Kosovo, which had a population comparable to Slovenia's, had shocked Slovenes and made them fear for their own security. At the same time, like Communists throughout Eastern Europe, Slovenia's Communists were unpopular, and the opposition was growing increasingly confident. For Kučan, Kosovo was as much an opportunity as a threat. By taking a firm stance, he calculated that he would be able to rejuvenate the Slovene League of Communists and boost his own popularity at home even if that meant a head-on collision with Milošević.

In the wake of Slovenia's volte-face, Milošević attempted to pressure Slovenia into submission. The Serbian media turned on Slovenia; Serbia, Vojvodina, and Kosovo began to boycott Slovenian products and nationalize the assets of Slovenian companies; and a meeting to "present the truth" about Kosovo to the Slovene public was scheduled for 1 December 1989. Faced with the prospect of several hundred thousand Serbs descending on Ljubljana for the "Meeting of Truth," as it was called in Serbia, Kučan banned the rally. The "truth" about Kosovo had already been displayed on 28 June 1989, the six-hundredth anniversary of the battle of Kosovo Polje, when more than a million Serbs descended on Kosovo to hear Milošević tell them: "Six centuries [after the battle of Kosovo Polje], we are again engaged in battles and quarrels. These are not armed battles, but the latter cannot be ruled out yet."

Developments in Slovenia had hitherto been broadly in line with the rest of Eastern Europe, where Communism was rapidly disintegrating. Slovenia's Communists decided that they could not stem the democratic tide and opted for a multiparty system. However, any move toward Western-style democracy in Slovenia would be scuppered if Milošević succeeded in recentralizing Yugoslavia. As a result, Kučan began to espouse a confederal arrangement in which each republic could choose its own form of government. According to Kučan's vision of Yugoslavia, republics desiring to remain Communist could do so, whereas those wishing to evolve into multiparty democracies would also be free to abandon Communism. On 27 September 1989, Slovenia's parliament passed fifty-four amendments to the constitution formally renouncing the League of Communists' monopoly on political power and including the explicit right to self-determination, that is secession from Yugoslavia.⁴⁶

Despite the disintegration of Communist rule elsewhere, Milošević still hoped to use the League of Communists to extend his political influence throughout Yugoslavia and called an extraordinary fourteenth congress of the LCY for January 1990 toward this end.⁴⁷ The congress was billed as the clash of alternative visions of Yugoslavia's future development. Milošević intended to use it to impose on the federal party his model of a Serbian League of Communists, regenerated through unity, discipline, and the exclusion of dissenting voices. Kučan hoped to expand local autonomy within Yugoslavia by turning the LCY into a loose association of separate Communist Parties. In the event, Kučan was shouted down by Milošević's supporters and unable even to present his proposals, let alone discuss the future shape of Yugoslavia. As it became clear there would be no discussions, the Slovenian delegation walked out. In the absence of the Slovenes, Milošević attempted to resume the congress, but when the Croatian delegation walked out as well, the Bosnian and Macedonian Communists were no longer prepared to continue, and the meeting was suspended.

For almost forty-five years, Communism had been the glue holding Yugoslav society together. In its absence, Yugoslavia remained intact, though the country Tito had built was no more. In a climate of goodwill it likely would have been possible to erect a third Yugoslavia out of the ruins of the Titoist state because it is difficult for any country actually to fall apart. In effect, the demise of Communism had merely reopened the debate that had preoccupied Yugoslav politicians during the 1920s as to the best form of government for their common state. As Sabrina Ramet has observed,

Certainly, the years of relative internal peace in socialist Yugoslavia, 1945–1985, were sufficient time in which the country could, with a more wisely developed political formula, have constructed a system capable of overcoming such economic and political storms as would come its way. Among many citizens of the SFRY there was a genuine commitment to building a common life—but the minimal demands which Yugoslavs had included the chance for a better life, fairness, respect for human rights, and a legitimate state. Had these things been achieved, collapse and war could most certainly have been avoided. This means, of course, that democratization would have had to be undertaken *before* the country's crisis of legitimation became overwhelming.⁴⁸

And there were still forces at work to save the patient. In March 1989, Ante Marković, Yugoslavia's last prime minister, came into office and, having formed a government of technocrats, began addressing Yugoslavia's economic ills. Marković reasoned that because the political crisis that had brought the country to the brink of disintegration was rooted in the economic downturn of the 1980s, the solution, too, would be found in the economy. Moreover, despite the ongoing trade war between Slovenia and Serbia, the Marković reforms, which involved

both a wage freeze and price liberalization, generated impressive results, slashing inflation from more than 2,000 percent at the end of 1989 to below 10 percent in just two months and overseeing a doubling in the country's foreign currency reserves.

Marković aimed to capitalize on his economic successes by founding his own non-Communist political party, with which he hoped to contest as yet unscheduled federal elections. He reasoned that if he could organize nationwide elections he might just be able to give the federal government a democratic mandate and legitimacy that the republics, all still governed by Communists, lacked. For the initiative to have any chance of succeeding, Marković needed to hold federal elections before any of the republics went to the polls. But because Slovenia's Communists had already committed themselves to multiparty elections in April 1990, he needed to persuade them to delay their poll, something they were unwilling to do.

As far as Slovenia's Communists were concerned, any move aimed at increasing the authority of Yugoslavia's federal center was a potential threat, and they were not prepared to commit Slovenia's future to the outcome of elections that had not yet been organized and that might evolve into another vehicle for Serb nationalism. Indeed, the atmosphere of fear that Milošević had created through mass rallies, hysterical media reporting, and police rule in Kosovo was driving events. Because Slovenia's population was overwhelmingly Slovene, the choice of electoral system was not especially controversial. Nonetheless, by holding multiparty elections at a republican as opposed to a federal level, Slovenia's Communists were setting a precedent the consequences of which would be felt elsewhere.⁴⁹

In Croatia, where elections took place two weeks after Slovenia, the choice of electoral system was extremely important, given that some 25 percent of the population was not Croat, that nearly 12 percent of the population was Serb, and that Serb political representation had been a prominent feature of the Communist system. In retrospect, therefore, the system that was selected, namely a majoritarian, first-past-the-posts system, was not best suited to the republic. It was, however, deliberately chosen by the Communists, now calling themselves the Party of Democratic Change, in the mistaken belief that they would be its beneficiaries. In the event, although the former Communists polled well, the system worked against them and handed an ethnically based party, the *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (HDZ, Croat Democratic Union), led by Franjo Tuđman, a Partisan and Titoist general turned nationalist dissident, an absolute majority in parliament on a minority poll.⁵⁰

Whether or not different electoral results in Croatia based on a more appropriate electoral system would have made any difference in the evolution of Yugoslavia's disintegration is debatable. What is clear is that the advent of de-

mocracy as represented by multiparty elections transformed the relationship between Croats and Serbs in Croatia. Whereas the Communist system had for good reason bent over backward to make Serbs feel secure in Croatia, political power had now been transferred to a political party that represented exclusively Croat interests, had won most votes by promising to stand up to Milošević's brand of Serb nationalism, and would rapidly alter the republic's constitution to change the status of Croatia's Serbs from one of the republic's nations to that of a minority.⁵¹ The issue of Serb rights in a democratic Croatia was real, even if Belgrade's actions ostensibly on behalf of Croatia's Serbs were anything but constructive and only exacerbated the situation.

As Communism was defeated in multiparty elections in Slovenia, Croatia, and then Bosnia-Herzegovina, the *Jugoslovenska narodna armija* (JNA, Yugoslav National Army), which was constitutionally committed both to preserving the "gains of the revolution" and to a unitary state, attempted to disarm the territorial armies of each republic in turn and was largely successful with the partial exception of Slovenia. The JNA then formed a Serbian alliance by default because only Milošević appeared faithful to Communism and eager to maintain a unitary state. Indeed, in the run-up to the December 1990 election in Serbia, which Milošević could not avoid, hard-line Communists including Milošević's wife, Mira Marković, and senior JNA officers created a new Communist Party, *Savez Komunističke Partije—pokret za Jugoslaviju* (SKPJ, League of Communists—Movement for Yugoslavia), and endorsed Milošević's newly renamed Socialists as the only party to vote for.⁵²

Milošević's Socialists held on to power in a contest in which the main opposition, Vuk Drašković's *Srpski pokret obnove* (SPO, Serb Renewal Movement), appeared, if anything, even more nationalist. Milošević succeeded where other former Communist leaders failed by maintaining tight control of the media, using a first-past-the-posts electoral system (requiring only a relative majority of votes for an absolute majority of seats), and by a healthy electoral bribe in the form of massive wage and pension increases on the eve of the elections. This was achieved through an illegal loan from Serbia's main bank to the Serbian government. The bank printed whatever money Milošević felt he needed to get elected, effectively stealing 18 billion dinars, or \$1.7 billion at prevailing exchange rates, from the rest of the country. This move ended the Marković reform program and triggered a return to inflation as soon as the size of the "loan" became clear. Although the vote was not overtly rigged, the opposition felt cheated, alleged fraud, and organized street protests against the biased reporting of state television. These culminated in a Belgrade rally attended by more than 150,000 people on 9 March 1991, that degenerated into street fighting, required the deployment of the JNA to restore order, and cost the lives of two people, one protestor and one policeman.

The events of 9 March 1991 were significant on several levels. Firstly, they revealed how determined Milošević was to hang on to power. Secondly, they led to renewed attempts by Milošević to create crises elsewhere in the Yugoslav federation and especially in Croatia to divert attention from the situation within Serbia and paint the opposition as unpatriotic. And thirdly, they confirmed to Slovene minds the need to extricate Slovenia as quickly as possible from the quagmire into which the rest of Yugoslavia was headed.

Dejan Jović makes clear that attitudes toward secession in both Slovenia and Croatia were divided and evolving in response to events elsewhere in Yugoslavia. In addition, he shows that although the two republics presented a joint confederal proposal to the rest of the country on 2 October 1990, they were actually watching each other's moves. Slovenia wished to distance itself from the conflicts brewing in Croatia and elsewhere in order to be in a position to negotiate directly with Serbia. Croatia did not wish to be left behind in a rump Yugoslavia. However, both republics remained cautious because neither wished to be blamed by the outside world for the breakup of Yugoslavia. The confederal proposal itself was, according to Jović, "a genuine attempt to achieve first a *de facto* and then a *de jure* independence without violence." Indeed, it would later form the basis of internationally brokered attempts to hold Yugoslavia together in some form, but only after the outbreak of hostilities. At the time it was presented, the confederal proposal was rejected by all other republics and federal units.⁵³

On the same day that Milošević's Socialists were elected, 23 December 1990, Slovenes went to the polls in a referendum in which 88.2 percent of the electorate backed independence, although the actual question included an option that once independent Slovenia could enter into an association of Yugoslav states, should they wish to form a confederation. Three days later the Slovene parliament declared its intent to secede from Yugoslavia in six months' time. The intervening period was to be used to negotiate models of independence. The JNA's 1989 intervention in Kosovo and the ongoing suppression of the province's Albanian majority had a huge impact on Slovene attitudes toward the rest of the Yugoslav federation, stoking fears of a similar scenario within Slovenia itself. Moreover, events in Croatia, where a Serb revolt began in the immediate aftermath of the April 1990 election, appeared increasingly to be heading in a similar direction.

To be sure, the advent of multiparty democracy and the possibility of the fragmentation of Yugoslavia opened genuine questions about how to regulate relations between communities and develop appropriate mechanisms for autonomy and cultural rights that needed to be addressed. However, the way in which Milošević set about resolving these questions on behalf of the Serb communities in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina could only exacerbate the situation, alienate the country's other peoples, and be detrimental to the longer-term interests of the very people he claimed to represent.

MPs from the *Srpska demokratska stranka* (SDS, Serb Democratic Party) in Croatia formed the Union of Communes of Lika and Northern Dalmatia out of the constituencies they had won in the election with its own parliament, the Serb National Council, in Knin. The Knin parliament's first move was to proclaim the sovereignty and independence of the Serb nation. It then permanently severed relations with Zagreb and announced a Serb referendum on autonomy to be held over a two-week period in August and September 1990. Croatian government attempts to intervene and halt the referendum were blocked by the JNA.

The majority of Croatia's Serbs and especially the urban population had largely ignored Milošević's propaganda offensive, which had started in the 1980s with ceremonies commemorating Serb war dead at sites of *Ustashe* atrocities during World War II, and voted for the reformed Communists in the 1990 election. They were acutely aware of their vulnerability in the event of conflict with the Croat majority and would have preferred not to have to choose camps. In the event, however, they had little choice because of a tit-for-tat escalation in hostilities and an increasingly intense media war over which they had minimal influence. The Serb revolt was at first confined to shooting at trains and harassing foreign tourists in the region around Knin. But each month it intensified, non-Serbs moved out, shooting incidents became more frequent, and bombs began going off elsewhere in Croatia. By autumn 1990, Croatia was locked in a spiral of violence that was pushing the republic steadily toward bloodshed. The first victim would be a Serb in the Croatian police killed by Serb militants on 23 November for being on the wrong side.

As the security situation in Croatia deteriorated, Milošević tried repeatedly together with Borisav Jović, the federal president and head of the country's armed forces during the critical year between 15 May 1990 and 15 May 1991, to have a state of emergency imposed on the entire country. Following the 9 March demonstrations in Belgrade, Jović called a meeting of the federal presidency that was also attended by military leaders for this purpose. Representatives of the four federal units controlled by Milošević voted for the imposition of a state of emergency but needed one more vote to put it into effect. They anticipated that the vote would come from the Bosnian member of the presidency, Bogić Bogičević, who happened to be a Serb. However, Bogičević refused to succumb to their intense pressure.⁵⁴

On 15 March in the wake of his failure to impose a state of emergency, Jović resigned together with the representatives of Montenegro and Vojvodina, claiming that the balance of power within the presidency was leading to the breakup of the country but actually inducing the constitutional crisis himself. Jović returned to the presidency a few days later without any explanation. The night of the resignations, Milošević went on Belgrade television to state that Serbia would no longer obey the federal presidency and was mobilizing police reservists to avert

rebellion in Kosovo and the Sandžak. He also urged Serbs to unite behind him to defend themselves. The next day, the Serb National Council in Knin proclaimed the secession of the heavily Serb-populated Krajina from Croatia, and Serbia's prime minister informed his assembly that Bosnian and Croatian forces were preparing an offensive against Serb-populated towns.

As important as what was actually happening in Yugoslavia during 1990 and the first half of 1991 were perceptions of what was taking place. These perceptions depended not on real events but on the atmosphere created by political rhetoric and rival media because a climate for war existed months and possibly years before anyone was killed. The first showdown took place in Pakrac, a Serb-plurality town in western Slavonia, where on 2 March armed Croats and Serbs faced each other with the JNA in the wings. This was the culmination of several weeks' struggle over control of the police station. Media were also there in force, and though shots were fired, both militias backed down, and the day passed without casualties. Nevertheless, Radio Belgrade reported that six Serbs had been killed.⁵⁵

In Pakrac, both the Serb and Croat militias were made up of people from the town itself. Many had lived their entire lives there and knew their adversaries personally. A sense of community persisted, and neither side could demonize the other to the level necessary for fighting to break out. Indeed, had territorial disputes been left to the locals, they probably could have been worked out because all sides had too much to lose in the event of war. But outsiders who did not have the same sense of community or of the potential losses involved increasingly dictated the pace of events.

In the next showdown on 31 March a Croatian policeman and a Serb rebel died as the Krajina militia clashed with Croatian police over control of the Plitvice national park. After a day's fighting, the Croatian police had the upper hand and had captured twenty-nine Serb fighters. That night, the federal presidency met in emergency session and, at Jović's insistence, ordered the JNA to take control of the situation and to prevent further bloodshed. It was the beginning of a pattern that was to last until autumn, when the JNA gave up all pretence of neutrality.⁵⁶

Three days before the Plitvice clashes, Yugoslavia's six republican presidents began a series of monthly summits aimed at resolving the crisis. Though Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia were eager to agree to anything that might hold Yugoslavia together and their presidents presented a compromise model for Yugoslavia to their peers on 3 June the gulf between the Serbian position and that of Slovenia and Croatia was too great to be bridged. Meanwhile, the situation on the ground in Croatia continued to deteriorate as the pattern of Serb provocation and Croat reprisal acquired a self-sustaining momentum. On 2 May twelve Croatian policemen were killed in Borovo Selo, a Serb village just outside Vukovar

in eastern Slavonia, and several of their bodies were mutilated by paramilitary forces loyal to Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Šešelj in the first atrocity to be committed in the conflict. That night, after another emergency session of the presidency, JNA units were again deployed to separate factions. The next day, Tudjman went on television to announce that war had begun.

Borovo Selo was the last occasion when Jović could use his position as president to direct federal policy. His mandate ran out on 15 May, when he was due to hand over power to Croatia's representative on the presidency, Stjepan Mesić. The handover should have been a formality because every year on that date a new president was appointed, with the office rotating among the federal units. However, though it was Croatia's turn to head the presidency, the Serbian bloc rejected Mesić's appointment. The presidency was divided; Mesić was not elected; and the body that was Yugoslavia's head of state and commander in chief of its armed forces left in limbo.

The toxic combination of escalating violence in Croatia and political deadlock added to the resolve of Slovenia's leaders to distance themselves from the rest of the country and spurred their preparations for independence. Fearful of being left behind, Croatia's leaders decided to follow Slovenia and hastily organized an independence referendum on 19 May, which they formally presented as a choice between a federation and a confederation. In the poll, 84 percent of the Croatian electorate voted, of whom 93 percent, that is 78.1 percent of those eligible, supported the proposal "that the Republic of Croatia, as a sovereign and independent state, which guarantees cultural autonomy and all civic rights to Serbs and members of other nationalities in Croatia, can enter into a union of sovereign states with other republics." Because the Serbs of *Krajina* had organized their own plebiscite two months earlier and voted unanimously to remain part of Yugoslavia, Tudjman was aware that an independence declaration appeared to play into Milošević's hands. However, he viewed it as the least of many evils, deciding that the risk of remaining part of a rump state without Slovenia was greater than that of declaring independence. The date set for the formal declaration was 29 June, three days after Slovenia's proposed date, which would give Tudjman time to see how Serbia and the JNA reacted to it.⁵⁷ In the intervening month, Croatia joined Slovenia in intensive lobbying of international opinion.

Hitherto, the international community had played no direct role in the Yugoslav drama and had no intention of becoming involved. Although the major powers were aware that the country was disintegrating, they could see no easy solutions and felt no obligation to try to resolve the internal problems of another country. When the cold war ended, Yugoslavia lost its strategic importance as a buffer state between East and West. Moreover, other regions of the world had superseded Yugoslavia in the pecking order of international importance. Eastern Europe's emerging democracies became the focus of diplomatic activity and for-

eign investment in the region while events in the Middle East, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and the Gulf War, eclipsed all others.

Nevertheless, international opinion mattered greatly. Yugoslavs looked abroad, and especially to the European Community, for help in the transition from Communism. The European Community may or may not have been in a position to help. However, one of the European Community's requirements for assistance was that Yugoslavia stay together. The European Community was loath to see Yugoslavia fragment into ministates because fragmentation was likely to be messy and risked setting a precedent for the USSR, which at the time also appeared to be on the verge of disintegration. Although the European Community expected a resolution of Yugoslavia's internal conflict without recourse to violence, its insistence on something akin to the status quo may have inadvertently contributed to the deadlock in the country's constitutional talks. By insisting on a single entity and refusing to concede even the possibility of a transition to a looser association of republics, the European Community appeared to be backing Serbia and the JNA.

While Slovenia and Croatia sought to internationalize Yugoslavia's internal conflict to improve their position vis-à-vis that of Serbia, what international intervention there was only undermined their position. Diplomatic efforts focused on pressuring Slovenia and Croatia into abandoning their independence declaration. Though well-intentioned, such moves bolstered the resolve of the JNA and risked legitimizing their use of force. Indeed, it may not have been the declarations themselves but the eleventh-hour intervention by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, designed to head off Slovenia and Croatia's independence declarations, that pushed Yugoslavia over the edge into war. Five days before Slovenia was due to declare independence, Baker, who was on an official visit to Albania, made an unscheduled stopover in Belgrade to make the U.S. position on Yugoslav matters clear. During his one-day visit he met with Yugoslavia's republican leaders and military chiefs and, before flying out, declared that the United States would not recognize Slovenia or Croatia "under any circumstances."⁵⁸

In spite of Baker's and others' warnings, the leaders of Slovenia and Croatia determined to press ahead with independence declarations. Indeed, as they got wind of JNA plans, both republics brought forward the date for their independence declarations to 25 June. Just over a day later in the early hours of 27 June the JNA dispatched tanks to secure Slovenia's border crossings and Ljubljana airport but making them crisscross the republic in such a way as to exert maximum pressure on the authorities. It was the formal beginning of the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution. Fearful of the consequences of remaining in a truncated Serb-dominated state, non-Serb political leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia now took the first steps that would lead to their secession the following year even though they would have preferred the preservation of Yugoslavia and had hitherto not

seriously contemplated secession. In recalling the security that all of the republics had enjoyed before 1986, Bosniak playwright Abdulah Sidran spoke for many non-Serbs across Yugoslavia in stating: “With [former Serbian League of Communists President] Nikezić I’d enter into a federation. With Stambolić I’d enter into a confederation. But with Milošević, I wouldn’t even enter into a bus.”

In the end, despite Marković’s efforts to stabilize the Yugoslav and the international community’s reluctance to accept the prospect of disintegration, the patient had become too ill to save. Yes, there were many factors at work in the death of Yugoslavia, none of which by itself would have been sufficient to prove fatal. Many were of long duration, whereas others dated from the 1980s and early 1990s. But it can also be said that the final blow was self-inflicted.

Notes

- 1 On the optimism of the immediate post-World War I period, see Andrew Wachtel, “Yugoslavie, 1918–1921,” in *Sortir de la grande guerre*, eds. Christophe Prochasson and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2008). For a balanced discussion of the entire interwar period, see Ferdo Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Historijski institut Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti u Zagrebu, 1961).
- 2 The importance of these preconditions has also been emphasized by a number of team members and other SI scholars including Mark Biondich and Stevan K. Pavlowitch. As Biondich puts it: “Whether or not one believes that the interwar state was a political failure, what is perhaps far more significant is the widespread *perception* of failure. . . . Communist and national historiographies alike agreed that the interwar political experiment was an abysmal failure. As such, Communist and nationalist presentations of the interwar period were responsible for the widespread sense that no positive lessons could be learned from the interwar period.” “The Historical Legacy: The Evolution of Interwar Yugoslav Politics, 1918–1941,” in Lenard Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008), 65. As a result, this legacy could not be drawn upon when the Communist version of Yugoslavia failed in its turn.
- 3 For important discussions of Yugoslavia during World War II, see Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Četnici u Hrvatskoj 1941–1945* (Zagreb: Globus, 1986); Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i NDH* (Zagreb: S. N. Liber & Školska knjiga, 1977); and Matteo J. Milazzo, *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).
- 4 Singleton, Fred, *A Short History of the Yugoslav Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 211.
- 5 “In the early 1920s, unitarist Yugoslavism was not official policy, even though the country was being governed in a centralist way. Unitarist Yugoslavism was to be introduced only after the establishment of the royal dictatorship in 1929. Communists, however, were unitarists from the very foundation of Yugoslavia.” Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919–1953* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 61. The basis for their belief in unitarism was, of course, Marxist theory, which predicted that nations would eventually disappear, their

- place taken by international working class solidarity. Hence, anything that could be done to hasten the disappearance of nationalism was to the good.
- 6 The waverings were the result of the Stalinist revision of Marx's views of nationalism. Stalin recognized that national cultures were still quite important, and in his typically pragmatic fashion decreed that this was not a problem for the Soviet Union (and, by extension, for Yugoslavia) as long as culture was "national in form, socialist in content."
 - 7 Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 25.
 - 8 Ivo Banac goes so far as to assert that the success of the Communists was due solely to their embracing the "clear identity of the constituent parts." He says, "They did not win the war under the banner of Yugoslav unitarism; they won under the banner of the national liberation of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and so on." "An Interview with Ivo Banac," in *Why Bosnia?* ed. Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifshultz (Stony Creek, CT: Pamphleteer's Press, 1993), 141.
 - 9 The treatment of non-Slavic minorities in post-World War II Yugoslavia varied. Germans, for example, who had been one of the largest prewar minority populations, were almost all expelled after the war. Many Italians were expelled as well, though those Italians who declared themselves Communists were generally allowed to stay. On the issue of Italians in postwar Yugoslavia, see Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). Albanians, most of whom lived in Kosovo, were by far the largest remaining non-Slavic minority in Communist-era Yugoslavia. The fluctuations of relations with that minority group are discussed later in this chapter.
 - 10 "During the 1950s, 'Yugoslav' was touted sometimes as an ethnic/national category in its own right, sometimes as a supranational category. This Yugoslavism (*jugoslovenstvo*) campaign reached its culmination at the seventh congress of the LCY in 1958. Although the party program adopted on that occasion denied the intention of assimilating the composite groups into a homogeneous Yugoslav nation, the concept of 'Yugoslav culture' endorsed by the congress implied an expectation of homogenization." Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 50.
 - 11 Milovan Djilas, "Novi tok istorije," *Socijalizam* 33, nos. 1–4 (1990): 37, quoted in Cohen, 24.
 - 12 Audrey Helfant Budding, "Nation/People/Republic: Self-Determination in Socialist Yugoslavia," in Cohen and Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse*, 98.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, 103.
 - 14 John Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 90.
 - 15 Dejan Jović, "Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism: From Tito to Kardelj," in *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992*, ed. Dejan Djokić (London: Hurst, 2003), 174.
 - 16 Michael Palaret, "The Inter-Regional Struggle for Resources and the Fall of Yugoslavia," in Cohen and Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse*, 222.
 - 17 For a discussion of the variety of ways in which historical and literary topics were covered in Yugoslav schools, see Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 179–81, and Andrew Wachtel and Predrag Marković, "A Last Attempt at Educational Integration: The Failure of Common Educational Cores in Yugoslavia in the Early 1980s," in Cohen and Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse*, 203–19.

- 18 For more on the Serbian victimization narrative, see Sabrina Ramet, "The Dissolution of Yugoslavia: Competing Narratives of Resentment and Blame," *Südosteuropa* 55 (2007): 30–40.
- 19 Popović's novel won the coveted Isidora Sekulić prize in 1985 and went through at least nine editions in the first year after its publication.
- 20 Danko Popović, *Knjiga o Milutinu* (Belgrade: Biblioteka Književne novine, 1986), 6–7.
- 21 See, for example, Milutin's complaints about the Macedonians (41) and about the Croats and Slovenes (43).
- 22 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 23 See *Memorandum Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti*. Nick Miller points to the importance of the Kosovo issue and the SANU Memorandum in changing the tenor of Serbian intellectual discourse in Yugoslavia. "One can argue that until 1986, the Serbian intellectual movement might have retained the purity of its origins as a return to engagement and advocacy of democratic reform, had the issue of Kosovo not emerged. Nevertheless, and with great force, Kosovo did come to subsume virtually every other principled issue . . . from about 1985 onward. . . . unfortunately, Serbian intellectual arguments regarding Serbian suffering became spiritual, and they ultimately focused much more on the alleged desire of Tito and his heirs to crush the Serbian nation as such, with Kosovo as Tito's proving ground, than they did with actual conditions in Kosovo or relatively more banal (and certainly less emotional) issues like respect for intellectual engagement. . . . The Serbian intellectual opposition accomplished one critical task: it painted a picture of a divided and degraded Serbia, victimized by Bolshevism as it had earlier been victimized by other foreign notions and demands; it developed what became a 'deeply embedded cognitive blueprint' that framed the actions of politicians, intellectuals, and ordinary Serbs thereafter." Nick Miller, "Return Engagement: Intellectuals and Nationalism in Tito's Yugoslavia," in Cohen and Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse*, 186–87.
- 24 During the existence of Yugoslavia, such narratives circulated publicly primarily in the Croatian émigré community. As Mark Biondich puts it: "It is hardly surprising that, among politically active Croats outside Yugoslavia after 1945, the Second World War would be commemorated through Bleiburg and not Jasenovac. . . . Insofar as Croat responsibility for any crimes was acknowledged, it was in the context of political errors committed by a criminal element within the regime or relative to the crimes perpetrated by the Serb royalist Chetniks or Tito's Communist partisans, both of which were seen as ideological variations of the Great Serbian theme." "We Were Defending the State': Nationalism, Myth, and Memory in Twentieth-Century Croatia," in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, ed. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 68.
- 25 Ramet, "Competing Narratives," 41–50.
- 26 Bogdan Raditsa, "Nationalism in Croatia since 1964," in *Nationalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe in the Era of Brezhnev and Kosygin*, ed. George W. Simmonds (Detroit: University of Detroit Press, 1977), 464.
- 27 See Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, 109.
- 28 The conference proceedings were published as *Mjesto i položaj hrvatske književnosti u nastavnim programima za škole drugog stupnja i za gimnazije*. (Rijeka: Matica hrvatska, 1971).
- 29 *Ibid.*, 31; from a speech by Ivo Frangeš.
- 30 Jill Irvine, "The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia," in Cohen and Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse*, 168.

- 31 Ciril Zlobec, "Jezgra nisu kraj posla," *Politika*, June 30, 1983, 5, and "Smišljena podvajanja," *Borba*, August 23, 1983, 15.
- 32 Janez Menart, "Ogledalo pesnika Janeza Menarta," *Borba*, September 10–11, 1983, 11.
- 33 R. Lazarević, "Strah od 'tuđih' pisaca," *Politika*, 18 September 1983, 7.
- 34 Aleksandra Plavevski, "Sami ćemo odlučivati," *Politika Ekspres*, September 21, 1983, 7.
- 35 Xavier Bougarel, "Bosnian Muslims and the Yugoslav Idea," in Djokić, 101–02.
- 36 Ibid., 104.
- 37 For more on this event, see Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2003), 227–28.
- 38 The series of articles began with an attack on Mujagić by Miroslav Egerić, a professor from the Philosophy Faculty at Novi Sad on November 23, 1984 (5) and continued with a long and sometimes rambling response by Mujagić on January 4, 1985 (16–18). It was followed a week later by another attack on Mujagić by Milorad Vučelić (36) and concluded with a group of four letters to the editor on January 18 (4). The quotations here are from Mujagić's response of January 4 (18). Thanks to Dejan Jović for bringing this material to our attention.
- 39 As Hugh Poulton puts it: "in the first Yugoslavia, the Kosovo Albanians were seen essentially as alien interlopers living in Serbia's heartland. Similarly the attitude of the Albanians to the state and this blatant Serbian repression was unremittingly hostile." "Macedonians and Albanians as Yugoslavs," in Djokić, 127. On the relative absence of overt calls for Greater Albania, nevertheless, see Robert C. Austin, "Greater Albania: The Albanian State and the Question of Kosovo, 1912–2001" in Lampe and Mazower, 235–47.
- 40 On the evolution of Kosovar resistance in the 1980s and into the 1990s see Henry H. Perritt Jr., *Kosovo Liberation Army: The Inside Story of an Insurgency* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008).
- 41 Ramet, "Competing Narratives," 60. For more on supranational cultural narratives of Yugoslavism, see Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*.
- 42 Dragiša Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988).
- 43 Ibid.; Bogdan Bogdanović, *Mrtvoudice* (Zagreb: BST/Cesarec, 1988); interviews with Željko Simić (Serbia's minister of information and close Milošević confidant in 1987), Ljubinka Trgovčević, Bogdan Bogdanović, Kosta Čavoški, Vesna Pešić, and Dragan Veselinov by Christopher Bennett, January–February 1992).
- 44 Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo* (London: Hurst, 1998), 236.
- 45 James Gow, *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis* (London: Pinter, 1992), 90–94.
- 46 Interviews with Jože Mencinger, Janez Janša, Dimitrij Rupel, Jelko Kacin, Rastko Močnik, and Anton Bebler by Christopher Bennett, June–December 1991.
- 47 Mitja Žagar, "Yugoslavia, What Went Wrong? Constitutional Development and Collapse of a Multiethnic State," in *Reconcilable Differences: Turning Points in Ethno-Political Conflict*, eds., Sean Byrne and Cynthia L. Irvin, (West Hartford, CT: Komarian Press, 2000), 142.
- 48 Sabrina Ramet, "Explaining the Yugoslav Meltdown, 1: 'For a Charm of Pow'rful Trouble, Like a Hell-broth Boil and Bubble': Theories about the Roots of the Yugoslav Troubles," in Thomas Emmert and Charles Ingrao, eds., *Conflict in South-Eastern Europe at the End of the Twentieth Century: A 'Scholars' Initiative' assesses some of the controversies* (London: Routledge, 2006), 28.

- 49 Although Kučan was reelected president, a coalition of six opposition parties called Demos defeated his now reformed Communists in the April parliamentary election, which took place before Marković was able to form a party. For more, see Matjaž Klemenčič and Mitja Žagar, *The Former Yugoslavia's Diverse Peoples* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2004), 226–28.
- 50 Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 228.
- 51 In *Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1999), Robert Hayden examines the constitutional nationalism at the heart of Yugoslavia's dissolution and the incompatibility of ethnic rule with multiethnic territories.
- 52 Slavoljub Djukić, *Milošević and Marković: A Lust for Power* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 34.
- 53 Dejan Jović, "The Slovenian-Croatian Confederal Proposal," in Cohen and Dragović-Soso, *State Collapse*, 249–80.
- 54 Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997).
- 55 Radio Belgrade had sent a reporter from Belgrade to cover the standoff rather than allow the Zagreb correspondent to report on it as would have been the case under normal circumstances. Interview with Radio Belgrade's Zagreb correspondent Vesna Knežević, September 1991.
- 56 Interviews with Ivan Zvonimir Čičak, Mate Granić, Branko Horvat, Vesna Knežević, Mario Nobilo, Janko Pleterski, Žarko Puhovski, Milorad Pupovac, Jovan Rašković, and Stipe Šušar, by Christopher Bennett, 1991–1992.
- 57 Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse* (London: Hurst, 1995), 152.
- 58 For a full discussion of international involvement in the dissolution crisis, see chapter 5.