

Helsinki Files

Unlearnt Lesson

Central-European Idea and Serb National Program

Charles Ingrao

Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Central Europe

- An Historical Perspective -

Neville Chamberlain spoke for millions of his contemporaries when, at the height of the Munich Crisis, he lamented the prospects of going to war over 'a faraway country' inhabited by 'people of whom we know nothing'. The prime minister was, of course, speaking to his fellow Britons about Czechoslovakia. But he could have just as easily used these same words to characterize the Anglo-American world's knowledge - or concern - about the lands and peoples of the entire region between Germany and the former Soviet Union. A half century later we still know very little about what the Germans call *Mittleuropa*, and even less about its history. Even today, as the world press reports recent events in the former Yugoslavia in terrible detail, it has never explained why there is such intense ethnic conflict throughout Central Europe. One tragic consequence of their ignorance has been the incessant, but incorrect allusion to "age-old hatreds" that helped desensitize America's public and politicians to Slobodan Milošević's carefully orchestrated campaign of ethnic genocide.

We have many excuses. The region's languages are dissimilar to anything we speak. Its multiplicity of intermingled ethnic and linguistic groups challenges the most curious. It boasts no great power to attract our admiration or concern. And, it is not especially strategic or important to us. It may have been only a century ago when Bismarck warned that "the Balkans are not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier", but his advice has guided the statesmen of the West for centuries. But our lack of knowledge or commitment does not mean that we have not played a major role in shaping its past, present, and - as it now seems - future. Although it is true that Central Europe has many endemic problems, the current crisis stems in great part from the West's imposition of its own values and solutions on a region about which it knows little - and cares less.

Unfortunately, those in the public sector who mold and make this country's policy have shown little interest in reading serious historical scholarship. As a result, crucial insights have been lost to the frantic schedules of journalists, who prefer to get their "historical background" from the flip clichés and breezy accounts other journalists. Nor have historical insights gained currency among politicians, who have less time and inclination to read much more than a daily news summary, the requisite opinion polls, and the occasional journalistic account. Thus President Clinton's memorable remark at a press conference in 1995, in which he justified his belated decision to intervene militarily in Bosnia by proclaiming that he now understood the situation, having just read reporter Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*. Even those social scientists who serve as area specialists for central Europe have tended to restrict their historical background to the previous generation or two, failing to see how anything that occurred before World War II could possibly inform our understanding of the events of the last decade; hence the broad currency given to political scientist Susan Woodward's *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, which convincingly ascribes the events of the last decade to a failure of that country's governmental leaders and institutions, without regard to underlying, historically-informed cultural forces that might have prompted that collapse.

The devaluation of history by the public, press, politicians, and social scientists presents a formidable challenge to us as historians. Surely we have a vocational interest in reminding them of our ability to discern the continuity between the past and present as an instrument for determining the likely course(s) of future developments. To this I would add a second, moral imperative to repay the tax- and tuition-paying public that sustains us by contributing to the formulation of public policy. The past decade has exposed us to the tragic alternative. In the aftermath of Srebrenica, Operation Storm and the successful NATO intervention, there has evolved a broad consensus that attributes the war, genocide and the subsequent need for costly, long-term Western intervention to our failure to learn from the lessons of history. I would suggest that part of our responsibility lies in a failure of historians to teach these lessons beyond the narrow confines of the Ivory Tower. Perhaps most remiss have been Habsburg scholars, who have failed to share what they have learned about the multiethnic experience in a "western" institutional environment that upholds the rule of law and codes of professional conduct. To Balkan and Habsburg historians alike, I say that it is not so difficult for a reasonably intelligent person to understand how we have gotten to this terrible juncture in Central Europe, or to envision where we are heading. The answers to our questions are not unteachable, just untaught.

Looking over the events of the past decade, I would suggest a number of historically informed insights that bridge the gap between scholarly discourse and the lay public's self-professed factual ignorance and conceptual confusion.

**Lesson #1:
The East is Different**

Implicit in our profession of ignorance is the sense that the eastern half of Europe is somehow different from the West. But this realization is not very helpful unless we can understand why and how it is so. Obvious explanations, such as the legacy of a half-century of Communism, economic backwardness, or the lack of exposure to Western ideals are less the cause than the most recent effects of deep-seated structural differences that go back half a millennium. Rather, it can be traced to different traditions of government that stressed greater regional and local autonomy that are deeply rooted in geopolitics and the dynamics of statebuilding.

A good place to start is Paul Kennedy's suggestion that intense military competition at the beginning of modern times impelled western Europe (and its North American progeny) to surpass the world's other great civilizations in creating more highly centralized governments. By contrast, the rest of Europe was composed of massive political units like Poland and the Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires that remained much less highly structured because their relative security and greater expanse made it difficult for their rulers to justify and carry out political reform. In this respect, the eastern half of the continent was actually much more like the world's other great civilizations; it was western Europe that was unique.⁽¹⁾ Kennedy points to the technological, military, economic, and fiscal ramifications of Western statebuilding that ultimately led to worldwide hegemony. I would suggest that another ramification was language and culture.

Contemporary observers who are bewildered by the multiplicity of peoples in central and eastern Europe forget that western Europe (like the immigrant societies of the United States and Canada) was originally no less diverse. The peoples of what we today call Spain, France and Great Britain spoke perhaps a dozen languages before the onslaught of government officials, edicts, road builders, universities and other agencies of statebuilding molded each of them into a single nation in which everyone could speak and understand Spanish, French and English. Although "regional" languages like Catalan, Basque, Scotch and Welsh have survived, they have not prevented the evolution of a common language among the monarchs' officials and other educated subjects that later served as a reference point for national identification. Significantly, the central governments of western Europe never compelled their subjects to learn the official state language; rather, the literate elements of each province simply established a pattern of voluntarily acquiring what became a key prerequisite for upward mobility and higher social status.

But the East adopted a different approach. The Ottomans refused altogether to consider adopting the innovations of their Christian adversaries, a decision that guaranteed that the inhospitable Balkan landscape would continue to incubate separate regional languages, customs and loyalties.(2) By the eighteenth century the Austrian Habsburgs and Russian tsars did take the necessary step of adopting *some* of the statebuilding tactics of their western European counterparts, in order to compete in the rough and tumble world of European politics. Yet they remained relatively decentralized states that delegated considerable authority to local elites, which either encouraged or tolerated the survival of ethnic and linguistic diversity. Thus the process by which the Western peoples of Europe and North America adopted a single language or culture was arrested throughout the eastern half of Europe; even closely related dialects like Serbian and Croatian, Bulgarian and Macedonian, or the various branches of Russian never merged, but rather survived long enough to develop as the distinctive written languages of today.

Lesson #2:

'Ethnic Cleansing' has a Long History

Centuries of warfare between the Turks and Habsburgs further enriched the complex mix of Balkan languages. The approach and retreat of opposing armies led to the first instances of what has come to be known as ethnic cleansing. Westerners who are at a loss to comprehend the barbaric tactics of the last five years should start with today's populations' collective memory of Turkish raiding parties that purposely terrorized Christian communities with the destruction and pillage of property, mass rape, and gruesome executions in order to demoralize and intimidate them into fleeing without resistance.(3) The legacy of these forced migrations includes much of the 700,000-strong Hungarian minority in today's Slovakia, as well as the 600,000 Serbs of Croatia, whom the Habsburgs resettled as soldier-colonists along their southern "Military Border" or *Vojne Krajina*.(4) Once the tide had turned against the Ottomans, the fear of retaliation or simply Christian religious intolerance encouraged most Balkan Moslems to move southward to safer areas, including roughly 100,000 who relocated in Bosnia.

Even more population movements were voluntary. The brutal combination of wartime devastation and emigration left much of the central Balkans a no-man's land that was ripe for colonization. The Ottoman government replaced the Serb exodus from Kosovo with loyal Albanian Moslems (whose descendants now comprise ninety percent of that province's population) while encouraging ethnic Turks from Asia Minor and Sephardic Jewish refugees from Spain to resettle in their Balkan conquests. When they arrived they mingled with those indigenous Christians who had chosen not to flee, thereby creating additional ethnically mixed areas. Meanwhile, the Habsburgs repopulated the huge Danubian plain that they had taken from the Turks. They attracted wave after wave of colonists with offers of fertile land, freedom from serfdom, and religious autonomy. Colonists came from all over Central Europe, and some from as far away as France, Italy, Spain and Russia. Most were Germans from various parts of the Holy Roman Empire, including Habsburg-controlled Austria and Bohemia. Many Hungarians returned from their mountain refuges in the Carpathians, followed by Slovaks, Ukrainians, and even some Czechs from Bohemia. More Serbs emigrated from the Ottoman side of the new frontier, followed by large numbers of Romanians, and even some Bulgarians and Armenians. The result was a crescent of colonization that spread from the Adriatic Coast in the West all the way to the Russian steppes (see map). Neither the Turks nor the Habsburgs made any effort to separate their colonists by ethnicity, with the result that some districts spoke a Balkan Babel of a dozen or more languages. The messy demographics still persist in many areas today, most notably in Croatia's eastern arm of Slavonia, Rump Yugoslavia's northern province of Voivodina, and the Banat of western Romania.

Lesson #3:
There is still a Habsburg-Ottoman Frontier

In *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova discusses a hierarchy of self-identification among the Balkan peoples, in which virtually every society sees itself as more "western" and less "Balkan" than those of its neighbors who lie immediately east and south of it.⁽⁵⁾ This game of cultural "one-upsmanship" is played throughout central Europe. Poles stress their western affiliations with the Renaissance and Enlightenment; Hungarians tenaciously maintain that they are central, rather than eastern European or Balkan; Germans speak of a centuries-long civilizing mission stretching from the Baltic to the Balkans; their Austrian neighbors deflect German disdain by affecting even greater condescension toward the south Slavs.

Nowhere are these self-distinctions more evident than along the Habsburg-Ottoman frontier. Both as historian and politician, President Franjo Tudjman is fond of citing the dichotomy between Croatia's Habsburg and Serbia's Ottoman past. It is a distinction that appeals to his Croatian constituents - as it does to many people in the present-day Voivodina, Banat, Bukovina and Transylvania - who occasionally exploit it as a device for asserting their cultural superiority over their Balkan neighbors.⁽⁶⁾ Indeed, although both empires were instrumental in promoting the ethnically mixed societies of the present day, the Habsburgs' belated application of Western strategies of statebuilding placed a premium on honest, efficient and professionally dedicated administrators, as well as on the creation of a statewide infrastructure for education and commerce; by

contrast, the Turks abided by a less sophisticated model of government more commonly found in other Asiatic empires. One concession that the Habsburgs had to make in their pursuit of royal "absolutism" was the acceptance of contractual obligations and limitations that were vested in western Christendom's feudal system - restraints that helped sanctify the rule of law in even the most "absolute" monarchy. By contrast, the sultans were the archetypal oriental despots: In theory they claimed to have absolute power over everyone and everything; in practice, they cared less about how their empire was run, so long as each of their dominions provided them with a steady supply of revenue and recruits for the army. This diffidence helped incubate traditions of public ignorance, technological backwardness, local corruption, social injustice, lawlessness, and violence that are still evident in the Balkans today. Only in the nineteenth century did the sultans belatedly realize that their laid back approach to government rendered them incapable of warding off aggression by the great Christian powers. By then, however, patterns of local economic control, political patronage, and systemic corruption were simply too entrenched to reverse. Although neither empire exists today in a political sense, the former Habsburg-Ottoman frontier retains its utility as a point of demarcation between West and East.

Another major difference between the Habsburg and Ottoman legacies is in religion. Even before the Protestant Reformation split the Christian West, its governments opposed religious diversity as a threat to the unity and stability of the state. Like their fellow monarchs in Spain, France and England, the Catholic Habsburgs enjoyed considerable success in convincing or coercing their religious minorities to adopt the state religion.(7) Although they rarely disturbed the religious rights of the recently settled Protestant and Orthodox colonists, they were sufficiently successful in converting the rest of their subjects that Catholicism (*or its Uniate variant*) won widespread acceptance among all of the Habsburg empire's ethnic groups, with the sole exceptions of the relatively insular Jewish and Serb communities.(8) By cutting across ethnic lines, the adherence to Catholicism among most Habsburg Germans, Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Czechs eliminated the possibility that the former Habsburg peoples would associate religion with national identity.

This was not the case in the Ottoman lands. Many Christians voluntarily converted to Islam during four centuries of Turkish rule. Yet the sultans tolerated the various Christian and Jewish sects, partly because they regarded them as equally misguided, but also because they saw religious identification as a handy vehicle for governing their various subject peoples. Under the so-called *millet* system the Ottomans organized their peoples by religious sect (Orthodox, Jewish, Islamic, etc.) - regardless of language or ethnicity - and delegated to each group's leaders the responsibility for governing and taxing itself.(9) In the absence of a system of secular education, each *millet's* religious leadership provided the sole source for literacy and all forms of culture for the members of its community. This infinitely more humane approach to religious diversity promoted autonomous cultural development among the Balkan peoples, as well as remarkably relaxed relationships between neighbors belonging to different *millets*. One of the many virtues of Ivo Andric's Nobel Prize-winning *The Bridge on the Drina* is the picture it paints of peaceful and mutually respectful coexistence between the Orthodox, Islamic and Jewish communities of the formerly multiethnic eastern Bosnian city of Višegrad. Of course, what neither the Turks nor their subjects could have ever foreseen

was that the *millet* system would preempt the evolution of a sense of nationhood stemming from common language or ethnicity. Far from being religious fanatics, Bosnia's Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and Bosnian Muslims are merely expressing their own form of national identity, even though they all speak one language and descend from a common Slavic ancestry.(10)

**Lesson #4:
Multiethnicity is the Solution, not the Problem**

Central Europe's greater diversity distinguishes it from the more homogeneous societies of Western Europe. But we would be mistaken if we judged it any more backward or unsuitable than culturally rich urban centers like New York, Los Angeles, Toronto or Vancouver. North Americans actually share a common experience with the East in that they have both learned to live side-by-side with numerous ethnic, religious, and racial groups that are intent on preserving at least some distinctive cultural traits.

Indeed, the key to determining the degree of mutual acceptance and toleration is the numerical balance between ethnic groups living in a particular area. If any one nationality comprises a majority, then there exists the temptation for it to assert its dominance - and for the minority populations to become paranoid, even in instances when their fear is unjustified. This was the

lesson of decades of tension between Czechs and Sudeten Germans that Adolph Hitler ultimately used as a pretext for dismembering Czechoslovakia, just as it has been in seemingly insoluble conflicts in bi-national societies like Belgium or Canada.

Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and Macedonia are among the worst example of how such conflicts can escalate into violence. Yet, although tension and occasional violence are unavoidable wherever there exists a dominant ethnic group, it rarely justifies *the dogged insistence of national secessionists for an outright physical separation of ethnic groups*. More typically, tensions remain under the surface and off the streets, much as do conflicts within the United States between ethnic, religious, and racial groups. Only the most radical fringes of American society cite centuries of sporadic racial violence - *ante bellum* slave revolts, the Civil War, Reconstruction, southern lynchings and northern urban riots - as evidence that European- and African-Americans have been at each others' throats for centuries and cannot live together peacefully. However flawed it may be, America's polyglot society has survived by attaining what Austrian Prime Minister Eduard Taaffe once described as "a state of uniform, nicely tempered discontent", whereby every competing ethnic group derives sufficient benefits to accept an admittedly imperfect overall settlement.(11) Taaffe's formulation exposes the greatest paradox about achieving peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups.

Whereas the presence of two ethnic groups represents a formidable challenge to peaceful existence, the task becomes much easier in polyglot societies. Whenever there exists a balance of power between three or more ethnic groups, where no single group enjoys an absolute majority, there is a much greater tendency to coexist in an atmosphere that is free of the fear of persecution by a single, dominant group. The absence of intense ethnic tension encourages people to devote themselves to social and vocational pursuits that promote intermarriage and the voluntary acquisition of the various local languages. This has generally been the case not only in Bosnia, though less so within the solidly

Croatian areas of western Hercegovina that have had rather less experience with ethnic diversity. It has also been true of central Europe's other multiethnic regions; alas, we never hear about the generally positive ethnic interaction in regions like the Bukovina, Voivodina, and Banat, or in such *formerly* diverse urban centers as Vienna, Bratislava, Salonika, and Istanbul for the very reason that their lesson of multiethnic toleration is a peaceful one that never seizes the headlines. Closer to home, we take for granted the almost effortless harmony of Canada's *numerous* Asian and European ethnic communities, while focusing our attention on the apparent incompatibility between its *two* great language groups.

**Lesson #5:
The Nation-State is the Problem, not the Solution**

This was also the case in Central Europe. Within the Ottoman empire, Bosnia's Muslims, Serbs, Croats and Jews invariably cooperated in fighting the sultan's *janissaries* and even his belated attempts to eliminate the widespread corruption that had taken root within Bosnia's ruling elite. Farther to the north, the Croats and Serbs of the Habsburg empire not only lived together in ethnic harmony (particularly in the multiethnic Banat, Bačka, Srem and Slavonia), but generally acted as one in their dealings with their more numerous Hungarian neighbors.(12) But such ethnic coexistence was eventually undermined by the nation-state model that had emerged from the French Revolution. It took hold first in those Ottoman provinces that still contained a numerically dominant ethnic group, thereby providing the crucible for new nation-states like Serbia (1815), Greece (1829), Romania (1858), and Bulgaria (1878).(13) The process accelerated with the installation of Western-born German princes and ministers (except in Serbia) and the repatriation of Western-educated Balkan intellectuals who linked the Balkans' destiny to the uncritical imitation of Western models. The final step came during this century's three great Balkan Wars (1912-1918), when each of those countries extended the reach of the nation-state to ethnically mixed areas like Macedonia, Thrace, Kosovo, Dobruja and Bosnia - even though *each* contained large populations that were less committed to abandoning the multinational Ottoman state for domination by a single dominant ethnic group. Thus, by 1918 the nation-state had wholly replaced an Ottoman model that had been discredited not because it was based on multiethnic coexistence, but because it was associated with other, patently dysfunctional Turkish political institutions.

The Ottomans' position was essentially hopeless because their governmental system had very little to offer their subjects (aside from their benign neglect of local diversity) and no effective, state-wide instruments of social control with which to cultivate popular support. By contrast the Austrian empire was in the position to promote a positive record of achievement that more or less conformed with their subjects' first-hand experience with enlightened government. During the French Revolutionary Wars the monarchy's publicists could point with pride to an enviable record of promoting "culture, living standards, peace and security, poor relief, public education, religion, the arts and sciences, industry, trade and agriculture".(14) Its success in fostering mass literacy throughout its dominions did, however, expose its own peoples to the legacy of the French Revolution.(15) The revolutionary forces of democracy and nationalism posed a challenge to governments everywhere. But whereas conservative figures like Bismarck,

Napoleon III, and Disraeli were able to utilize universal suffrage and national feeling in ethnically homogeneous western Europe to fortify their popularity, Habsburg statesmen like Metternich and the young Emperor Francis Joseph recoiled from the dangers inherent in such a strategy. Hence their reluctance to place their multiethnic empire's fate in the hands of such dynamic, though potentially destructive popular forces. In the end, their unwillingness to confront the inevitable hardly forestalled the spread of nationalism among their subjects. Instead it only guaranteed that nationalism emerged as an independent force capable of challenging the monarchy's essentially supranational institutions.

The Habsburgs' reluctance to embrace fully the democratic ideals of the West made it possible to destabilize their multiethnic empire by associating it with its increasingly outmoded aristocratic and monarchist institutions. The first signs of ethnic conflict surfaced in the revolutions of 1848. Centuries of ethnic harmony ended abruptly in bi-national Bohemia, with the German minority's interest in joining a united Germany,⁽¹⁶⁾ as well as in Hungary, where the short-lived Magyar nation-state (1848-49) sparked a bloody civil war in ethnically mixed areas like Transylvania, the Voivodina and eastern Slavonia; two decades later, the Dual Compromise (1867) reestablished Hungary as the Habsburg empire's only nation-state - and inspired the Czechs to fashion a second one out of greater Bohemia.

The four decades of Austria-Hungary (1867-1918) were marked by frequent constitutional squabbles, punctuated by occasional strikes and riots. But there was very little bloodshed, largely because the government in Vienna combined a reluctance to embrace the forces of nationalism with a genuine willingness to afford equal treatment and patronage to their various peoples to the extent that such accommodation did not alienate Hungary's dominant Magyars. Right up until its dissolution in 1918, the Habsburg empire counted Czechs, Italians, Hungarians, Croats, Poles and Jews among its most important civilian and military leaders. Nor was it all that atypical of other multinational states. For centuries the Ottomans had drawn their best soldiers and administrators from converted Christians, and depended more on Greeks, Jews, and Albanians than on their own Anatolian Turks. Despite its deeply entrenched roots as a Russian nation-state, even the former Soviet Union made significant concessions to multiethnicity; thus, the KGB was founded by a Pole, the driving force behind the failed 1991 coup was a Latvian, and both its most brutal dictator and its last foreign minister were Georgians.

Yet every multinational state has at least one ethnic group that sees itself as a preeminent, "master nation" whose mission it is to safeguard its national patrimony by leading other, less able "subject nationalities". Thus the tsarist and Soviet empires were "entrusted" to the Great Russians, the Ottoman empire to the Anatolian Turks, Austria-Hungary to the Germans and Hungarians, Czechoslovakia to the Czechs, Yugoslavia to the Serbs - and, for that matter, the great American republic and Canadian commonwealth to the WASPs. However intangible or incomplete such pretensions may be, they permit each country's dominant ethnic group to sincerely acclaim its own commitment to the larger multiethnic society. Yet its hegemony also exacerbates ethnic tension by calling into question the dignity and self-worth that comes from the achievement of some measure of popular sovereignty; in the process they forge the kind

of persecution and inferiority complexes that still afflict the former subject nations of Central Europe.

The perception of such an imbalance places a special burden on "dominant" ethnic groups, which must be *accommodating* in their interaction with "threatened minorities" in order to preserve national unity. But such sensitivity requires a high degree of self-assurance in handling what necessarily amounts to an open-ended succession of minority aspirations, fears and demands. The implicit acceptance of this obligation is reflected in the tact and sensitivity of Caucasian American and Anglo-Canadian politicians, both because their hegemony is secure and because the alternative is the destruction of the greater transethnic civil society. Such forbearance has been less evident in central and eastern Europe because even "master nations" like the Habsburg Germans and Magyars or the Great Russians lacked the security that comes from a clear numerical advantage. And it has been virtually non-existent among the political leaders of those central European "subject peoples" who have finally achieved dominance since the middle of the nineteenth century.

Indeed, the next stage in the progressive destruction of multiethnic Central Europe came in the opening decades of this century, with their success in establishing fully independent nation-states on both sides of the Ottoman-Habsburg divide. To legitimate their separate existence, their governments employed printed and visual media to pronounce their nation's past greatness - and the guilt of the formerly dominant "master nations" in arresting their natural development and manifest destiny. While stressing the national identities of the oppressed and their oppressors, the new governments deemphasized the positive achievements of the multinational states from which they sprang. The "founding fathers" of Central Europe's new nation-states accomplished their task all too well. To this day, laymen and scholars alike perceive their region's history from a distinctly national perspective, while minimizing the achievements of other ethnic groups and the multinational societies to which they once belonged.(17) This mass exercise in national amnesia also explains how so many of the region's peoples could celebrate World War I as the moment of their liberation, rather than as the most catastrophic event to befall Central Europe in the five centuries since the Turkish conquest.

Lesson #6:

Versailles + Four:

World War I's 'Other' Treaties still plague Central Europe

It is widely appreciated that the Treaty of Versailles doomed Europe to a second, even more destructive world war, followed by mass genocide and a half-century of nuclear confrontation between the two great superpowers. Only in the last five years have we recovered from some of this unfortunate legacy with the reunification of a decidedly democratic Germany and the end of the Soviet Bloc. But, if we have overcome much of the Versailles legacy, we have yet to address the equally unfortunate consequences of the four other Paris peace treaties that we concluded with Germany's World War I allies. Notwithstanding our focus on Versailles, the settlements with Austria (St Germain), Hungary (Trianon), Bulgaria (Neuilly), and Turkey (Sévrès) were no less instrumental in fomenting the outbreak of World War II, the Holocaust and five decades of Soviet

hegemony in eastern Europe. Moreover, it is the legacy of these 'other' Paris treaties that informs Central Europe's continuing instability.(18)

Much of that legacy still reflects the fortuitous constellation of alliances during World War I. Although the head of Serbian intelligence acted alone in hatching the assassination plot against Archduke Francis Ferdinand, his country's dependence on Russia - and Russia's alliance with France and Britain - eventually linked it with the victorious coalition. By 1918 a combination of allied promises and pressure had recruited three other regional nation-states with irredentist aspirations: Italy (1915), Romania (1916), and Greece (1918). Although the Entente offered considerable territorial acquisitions to each of its four Central European allies, it had no intention of eliminating the multi-national Habsburg empire; its most ambitious plans ranged from Woodrow Wilson's call for a more truly democratic multinational federation (primarily at Hungarian expense) to Great Britain's suggestion that the empire be repositioned squarely between Germany and Bolshevik Russia by merging it with all of the Polish lands.(19)

Then, in the fall of 1918 the allies made the fateful decision to recognize the exiled Czech and South Slav "national committees" as the only legitimate spokesmen for their peoples. These independence-minded exiles did not necessarily represent their countrymen. Whereas the 80,000-man Czech Legion had fought for the allies on the Italian and Russian fronts, a far greater number of Czechs, as well as virtually all Slovaks and South Slavs, fought doggedly for their Habsburg emperor until - and, in some instances beyond - the end of hostilities.(20) Nevertheless, these committees' agenda proved congenial to the Western political model of the nation-state, reinforcing the Entente's generous territorial commitments to its Serb, Romanian and Italian allies. It was also a logical response to growing allied apprehension that the Habsburg empire had become a vehicle for German imperialism in *Mitteleuropa*.(21)

The allies compounded this mistake with the terms that they meted out to Germany's four defeated allies. Nowhere was the fiction of "peace without victory" more apparent than in Central Europe. To their credit, the American negotiators in Paris and their commissioners on the scene generally worked to advance the principle of self-determination, even when it favored the peoples of the defeated Central Powers. Nevertheless, President Wilson chose to invest most of his waning political leverage in negotiating the Versailles treaty with Germany. This exercise in diplomatic triage presaged the detachment of future US presidents, who understood and cared much less about the strategically remote center of the continent. By contrast France recognized a vital interest in Central Europe, where it was determined to create and cultivate loyal clients which could help it encircle its German nemesis in the next war.(22) Its unabashed patronage of Czechoslovakia, Romania and what soon came to be known as Yugoslavia ultimately earned it not only the gratitude of the so-called Little Entente, but their dependence for assistance in holding on to patently illegitimate acquisitions. In the process France and its clients essentially created an unjust, but durable three-tiered hierarchy of peoples that has guaranteed 75 years of regional instability:

1. At the top were the victorious Greeks, Italians, Romanians and Serbs, together with the Poles and Czechs whom the French readily identified as key allies on Germany's immediate eastern flank; each acquired territory in which its own people were in a decided minority, so long as it could be justified by some historic claim or by a tangible strategic or economic need.

2. The Albanians, Bosnian Muslims, Croats, Slovaks, Slovenes, and Ukrainians existed in a kind of limbo reserved for those peoples who were essentially unrepresented at the peace conference, either as winners or losers. Their interests were represented by the victorious allies, with decidedly mixed (but rarely catastrophic) results.

3. At the bottom were the four nationalities that had lost the war. Having been denied the right of self-determination, the Germans, Magyars, Bulgars and Turks all yearned to revise the peace settlements. The Turks achieved many of their objectives four years later after a successful war with Greece and a new round of forced population exchanges. The others would have to wait two decades for their opportunity to revise the settlements.

The peace settlements for Central Europe not only committed an injustice that would not go unchallenged; they also exacerbated three of the problems that the allied statesmen were supposed to resolve. Given the region's complex ethnic demography, the decision to replace a multinational entity with nation-states actually worsened what had been reasonably tolerable interethnic tensions. As the western peacemakers discovered - many for the first time - it was simply impossible to create a system of geographically contiguous, ethnically homogeneous political entities. The defeated countries approached this ideal only by relinquishing areas of mixed settlement to their triumphant neighbors. After 1919, their largest ethnic minorities comprised isolated pockets of other "defeated" nationalities, namely a million Turks in Bulgaria and nearly that many Germans in Hungary. By contrast, the spoils of war had converted their victorious neighbors into the worst possible contrivance: multinational states governed by a single, dominant ethnic group. A third of Poland and Romania consisted of sullen, if not openly hostile minorities; nearly half of Czechoslovakia's population - including the supposedly co-equal Slovaks - was essentially controlled by a slim, but politically sophisticated Czech majority;(23) likewise, Slovenes and Croats quickly realized that their country's Serb plurality was determined to dominate Yugoslavia through its own king, capital, ministers, and an army that counted 161 Serbs among its 165 commanding generals.(24)

Ironically, the region's ostensibly democratic institutions actually made matters worse by promoting the creation of a national identity built around each country's dominant ethnic group. Nor was it long before populist politicians discovered that the quickest way to win an electoral majority was to play to the dominant nationality's latent resentment and fear of other, potentially disloyal ethnic groups. Like gasoline companies who formerly used lead additives to boost octane ratings, politicians had found a cheap means to gain power, albeit at the expense of poisoning the atmosphere. Under this kind of scrutiny, any attempt by disenfranchised ethnic groups to preserve their cultural identity could be easily interpreted as treason. In 1937 the celebrated British historian Trevelyan expressed his dismay at the inability of democratic institutions to overcome ethnic conflict:

"The truth is that even the most genuine and established democratic way of life is exceedingly difficult to apply when you are dealing with a minority that does not want to live under your rule. We know very well that we ourselves were never able to apply... democracy to our own attempt to govern the Irish".

If eliminating the multinational Habsburg empire worsened reasonably tolerable ethnic tensions, it also created an insoluble geopolitical imbalance where none had existed before. Despite the allies' fear of a pan-German *Mitteleuropa*, the Habsburg

monarchy had served for centuries as a vital counterpoise to the growth and aggressiveness of Germany and Russia. The peacemakers naively assumed that the string of smaller states that they had created would continue to hold that balance, while providing a *cordon sanitaire* between the two remaining great powers. Instead they created a power vacuum of unprecedented magnitude that has been exploited in turn by both Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. It did not take a rocket scientist to presage the consequences, only an understanding of diplomatic history. As early as 1891, one proponent of the Habsburg empire's role as a multinational great power rebutted radical Czech aspirations for independence by asking,

"What will you do with your country, which is too small to stand alone? Will you give it to Germany or to Russia, for you have no other choice outside this Austrian union".(25)

A third, somewhat less obvious consequence of the Balkanization of Central Europe was its toll on the economic well-being of the peoples of the former Habsburg empire. At the turn of the century, production levels and living standards within Austria-Hungary were actually rising faster than the European average. The Austrian lands were already comparable to Western Europe, while even the economically less developed Hungarian lands and Bosnian condominium were appreciably better off than their immediate neighbors to the north, east and south. Yet the data presented by economists shows that the gap between the region and western Europe began to widen with the dissolution of the Habsburg "customs union of fifty million", a shortfall that become even greater with the imposition of Marxist economics after World War II.(26)

Nor does it take an economist or statistician to notice the effect that the decline in discretionary spending had on what had once been one of the world's richest sources of creative talent. In the years immediately prior to the Great War, men like Bartók, Dvo ák, Mahler, Schoenberg, Smetana and Strauss still upheld an unbroken tradition of great composers that included Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Brahms; Hoffmannsthal, Kafka and Rilke, represented a somewhat more recent resurgence in literature, much as Freud and Mendel did in the world of science. Although it remains today a source of great technicians - conductors and soloists in music and inventors of practical technology - Central Europe no longer contributes the world-class creative minds of centuries past. Surely part of this decline can be attributed to the sparsity of discretionary funding available in the smaller economies that emerged from World War I; much of it can be explained by the eradication of ethnic minorities like the Jews.

Lesson #7:

The Jews were the First Victims of the Nation-state

A more tangible consequence of economic stagnation and growing poverty was the instability caused by popular unrest. It may be mere speculation to suggest - as many observers have - that economic prosperity would have spared Yugoslavia from its cataclysmic slide toward ethnic hatred and violence; but it is undeniable that declining living standards helped fuel the surge of rabid anti-Semitism in the two interwar decades. The Jews were, however, more than the victims of economic hard times. They had been the ultimate beneficiaries of multinational political systems like the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, where the regime appreciated the practical potential of human

resources more than they did national consciousness. And they had responded by becoming a key force in the Balkan commercial economy, especially in major urban centers like Sarajevo or the great port of Salonika, where they not only constituted a majority of the city's 160,000 people, but still spoke the Spanish dialect of their fifteenth-century forebears.(27)

At the same time Jews were a powerful source of trained professionals within the Habsburg dominions. By 1918 they comprised roughly twenty percent of Austria-Hungary's university students and civil servants, despite constituting only five percent of its population; they even held over fifteen percent of all military commissions (including two dozen generalships), which made Austria-Hungary the only country in the world with a disproportionately *higher* percentage of Jewish army officers.(28) "My libido bleeds for Austria-Hungary", wrote Sigmund Freud on the morrow of this century's first Sarajevo Crisis. Indeed few ethnic groups bled more than the 300,000 Habsburg Jews who served in Great War.(29) But the end of Central Europe's multiethnic empires left them stateless. Many ethnic Germans joined the young Adolf Hitler in linking the Jews to whatever they resented about Austria's imperial past, such as their opposition to a fully unified Germany, their disproportionate share of government patronage, and their role in overwhelming the German population of administrative centers like Vienna. Like Vienna's legendary mayor Karl Lueger, whose anti-Semitism was more tactical device than personal preference, democratic politicians all over Central Europe found anti-Semitism a handy means of garnering popular support from electorates suddenly obsessed with the need to establish a single, dominant national identity against the threat posed by ethnic minorities.(30)

We all know the ultimate fate of nearly six million Central European Jews. Over the past four years journalists and political observers alike have repeatedly pointed out that the murder of scores of thousands of Croats and Bosnian Muslims in the former Yugoslavia constitute the worst episode of genocide since the Holocaust. Yet none of these analysts has recognized the obvious link between these two horrible human catastrophes: namely, the imposition of the nation-state on multiethnic, Central Europe.

Lesson #8:

The US has always deferred to its allies in Central Europe

Of course, there is yet another parallel between the Holocaust and the most recent incidence of genocide of which we are aware. Historians of the Second World War have documented the unwillingness of many neutral and allied leaders to take action, or even speak out about Hitler's death camps. That realization has inspired many to remind today's statesmen of our commitment that such a horror would "never again" be allowed to happen. But they did, simply because statesmen in the position to intervene - then, as now - did not deem such heroic action to be in their country's national interest. Even less evident is that the United States has previously confronted the same choice between abstention and intervention in Central Europe at least three times in this century. As we have seen, the first was during the Paris Peace Conference, when Woodrow Wilson concentrated his attention and political leverage on the Versailles treaty, at the expense of Central Europe and the peoples who lived there; unfortunately, deferring to its allies resulted in injustice and instability that ultimately led to another war and a second

American involvement. Indeed, it is hard to imagine Hitler's eastward expansion into Central Europe - or even the region's partition in the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact - had there been another great power in the region, especially one committed to maintaining the status quo and forestalling the eastward march of nation-statism. And there would have been no chance of mass genocide, whether against Jews, Gypsies, or Serbs and other Slavic populations.

America's entry into World War II presented it with a second chance to craft a more just - and thus durable - peace. The US Council on Foreign Relations did not miss the opportunity. By 1942 it had recommended the formation of a new Danubian confederation to take the place of the old Habsburg empire. Nor was it alone. Across the Atlantic, eminent British historians like Arnold Toynbee and Robert W. Seton-Watson, who had advocated partitioning Austria-Hungary in 1918, had since recognized their mistake years before the outbreak of World War II. Together with Sir Lewis Namier (himself a Polish Jewish refugee), they had already won Winston Churchill's support for the plan even before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into the war. For the next three years Churchill pushed what soon became a joint Anglo-American agenda for the reestablishment of a multinational great power in Central Europe.(31) Indeed, *his later support for a British-led* landing in the northern Adriatic offered the advantage of placing the entire region at the disposal of the western Allies.

In their design the allies and their advisors were most interested in ending the regional power vacuum, reasoning that the small states of the *cordon sanitaire* could not possibly keep up with the new military technology that was currently rewriting the rules of warfare. For this reason they eventually dropped any idea of restoring the Habsburgs, and even considered excluding Austria's population in order to keep the proposed confederation clear of German influence.(32) As the war progressed they picked up additional support from former proponents of the nation-state like the former Czechoslovak president Eduard Beneš, who joined with his Polish counterparts in contemplating a single, confederated power to hold off future Russo-German aggression.

The Anglo-American design for a confederated, multinational republic was the best of three options. By 1941 Hitler had put the finishing touches on his own solution, which upheld the principle of nation-states, but with redrawn borders that often corrected the most blatant violations of self-determination. Although a sober analysis of Hitler's new frontiers constitutes the ultimate exercise in political incorrectness, the fact remains that it applied the concept of national self-determination better than any of the 1919 settlements: Austrians and Sudeten Germans got their wish of joining a united Greater Germany; the Slovaks split off from the Czechs; Hungary retrieved most of the three million Magyar speakers it had lost at Trianon; Croatia became independent; Bulgaria's people were again reunited, together with the Macedonians; Serbia was shorn of all of its conquered minorities, including the Albanians, virtually all of whom were now assembled for the first (and last) time in a single country that included Kosovo and western Macedonia.(33)

Of course, there was much that was intolerable about Hitler's new *Mittleuropa*, especially the creation of German and Italian protectorates over several of the newly constituted nation-states, the institution of brutal fascist regimes, and the commission of genocide on an unimaginable scale. Hence, it is understandable that Hitler's defeat demanded that the baby of reasonably legitimate national frontiers be thrown out with the

bath water of Nazi aggression, totalitarianism, and genocide. Unfortunately it was not replaced by the Anglo-American plan for a multinational confederation. That was eventually vetoed by Stalin, who correctly surmised that such a state would inhibit not only German, but also Russian penetration into Central Europe. Instead, Churchill and Roosevelt reluctantly consented to the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*, except for the extensive Soviet acquisitions that Stalin had won in his earlier pact with Hitler.

The Anglo-American capitulation was politically defensible, at least in the short term: Maintaining allied solidarity against the Axis Powers was of more immediate consequence than a potentially divisive revision of the region's borders.(34) Yet this third option was arguably the worst in the long run. By 1945, deference to our Soviet ally had led to the westward expulsion of fourteen million Germans, including nearly five million from the ethnically mixed lands of the former Habsburg empire. An estimated two million people died in this, the most massive expulsion of human beings in world history.(35) Next came forty-five years of Soviet hegemony over the eastern half of Europe. As the Hungarians discovered in 1956, US Cold War diplomacy placed a higher priority on peacefully deterring the Soviet Union, than on liberating the occupied peoples of Central Europe. Its priorities in 1956 reflected the long-standing American judgment - already articulated at the end of both world wars - that a just settlement in Central Europe was less vital to its national interest than the immediate maintenance of peace and stability.

Lesson #9:
Saving the Serbs:
The Case for War Crimes Trials

Unfortunately, without justice there can be no long term stability. Communism may have temporarily relieved central Europe's ethnic tensions for a nearly half-century. But if religion was the opiate of the people, Communism proved no more effective than methodone in suspending their craving for ethnically whole nation-states, without providing a cure. The subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Bloc permitted the peoples of Central Europe to contest anew the legacy of the Paris Peace Settlement. Given the freedom to choose, the Slovaks once again left Czechoslovakia. Theirs was a patently illogical choice, impelled by pent up feelings of inferiority and persecution that are all too common among minorities in *states dominated by a single national group*. More justifiable was the rush to secession in the former Yugoslavia that was triggered by the nationalist demagoguery of Slobodan Milošević. Over three decades and four constitutions, Marshal Tito had carefully crafted a balance of power among Yugoslavia's many nationalities that depended in large part on the institutionalized *accommodation of minorities* and restraint of the previously dominant Serbs. Yet Milošević realized that most Serbs had never accepted the burden that comes with being the strongest constituency in a multilateral polity. Although his heavy-handed elimination of Kosovo's autonomy and subversion of the federal constitution made him enormously popular among his fellow Serbs, these actions demonstrated that a single nationality once again dominated multiethnic Yugoslavia.(36)

We all know what followed: the incremental departure of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia from the Yugoslav union; Milošević's use of the

state-controlled media and his fellow Serbs' collective paranoia to equate Croatia's Tudjman with the *Ustaša* and Bosnia's Izetbegović with the Ayatollah Khomeini; the "preemptive" commission of genocide primarily by paramilitary units, ably assisted by the Rump Yugoslav army and local Croatian- and Bosnian-Serbs. Though appalled by the slaughter, successive American presidents deferred to their allies for four years, until the enormity of their negligence was made clear by the Srebrenica massacres. Mercifully, American intervention in the summer of 1995 quickly put an end to the horror, marking the first time in this century that US diplomacy had taken the lead in resolving the problems of Central Europe.

Yet, barely two years after the conclusion of the Dayton Accords, Milošević once again tested Western resolve by turning a small-scale rebellion by the Kosovo Liberation Army into a humanitarian catastrophe through the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of military force. This time US response was immediate. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was determined to avoid another humanitarian catastrophe like the one in Bosnia. Although her blunt style made her the symbol for robust intervention, she represented the overwhelming majority of State Department officials who had been dismayed by President Clinton's earlier reluctance to engage America's diplomatic and military might to stop the slaughter in Bosnia. Indeed, it is impossible to comprehend the mindset of Albright, Clinton and Gen. Wesley Clark without appreciating the remorse and guilt that they and their lieutenants felt about the Bosnian death toll, especially the estimated seven thousand Muslim men and boys executed at Srebrenica. By autumn 1998 the US had convinced NATO's most influential member countries to intervene militarily if necessary to assist 330,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees who had been burned out of their homes before the onset of winter. Although Milošević won a reprieve in October by calling a halt to the massive destruction of Albanian population centers, he continued to authorize the commission of atrocities on a smaller, but regular basis on the assumption that they would not be sufficient to trigger NATO intervention; in the words of one Yugoslav diplomat, burning down "a village a day keeps NATO away". It did not, mainly because western leaders were determined not to commit the same mistakes that they had in Bosnia.

In the end, the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia resolved the immediate humanitarian crisis, as well as the much larger one created by the expulsion of about 800,000 Kosovo Albanians - even as criminal elements within the Albanian leadership created new problems in its stead. The war also helped to bring down Milošević sixteen months later, as the Serbian people voted *en masse* for relief from the consequences of his policies, especially international sanctions, which had not only destroyed living standards but created a corrupt, government and business elite whose obvious wealth was widely resented. Even if Milošević had managed to steal the September 2000 elections from the democratic opposition coalition (DOS), the US was prepared to recognize and actively support a parallel government, presumably with Vojislav Koštunica as head of state.

By electing the DOS, Serbian people have taken the first, indispensable first step toward their country's reconstruction and rehabilitation within the international community. Nonetheless, like the other republics of the former Yugoslavia, Serbia must still undertake an arduous journey that will take years to complete and goes well beyond the most obvious, immediate task of economic recovery. The US/EU have an obligation

to assist in that process. Nevertheless, because of the absence of a compelling national interest in the region, they continue to be tempted by the expediency of a superficial peace, rather than the long-term stability that comes from a just and legitimate settlement. Indeed, their pattern until now has been to intervene only in order to avoid large scale humanitarian catastrophes. This has involved the delivery of refugee relief, military action to end hostilities on the ground, and the reconstruction of infrastructure. Yet, once these missions have been completed, western statesmen have recoiled from necessary additional involvement that might greatly expand the number or endanger the safety of their own military personnel; instead they have been content to simply sustain basic humanitarian needs by maintaining protectorates in Bosnia, Kosovo and, perhaps, Macedonia in the knowledge that a finite "maintenance dose" of a few billion dollars annually will be politically palatable to voters back home. But "annuitizing" the problem in this way does not, by itself, build a better future for the region.

The EU/US response to this dilemma has been to adopt an "endgame strategy" of wearing down nationalist elements by making the provision of aid conditional upon local leaders' acceptance of mutually toleratant multiethnic democracies. For those who are willing to be patient, "conditionality" has been reasonably successful. The purposeful use of foreign credits and investment has not only repaired much of the destruction within Croatia, the Bosnian Federation and Kosovo, but has forced the reluctant cooperation of politicians. The one exception has been *Republika Srpska*, where dogged resistance to compliance with the Dayton Peace Accords has delayed the infusion of significant foreign aid. Nonetheless, President Bush's belated, post-election acknowledgment of an open-ended US commitment to the Dayton process, appears to have convinced recalcitrant politicians that they can no longer prevail by obstructing the peace process.

In fact, two goals remain to be achieved throughout the former war zones are:

1. **Repatriation of refugees**, which has proceeded at a glacial pace. Although a small percentage of the region's two million displaced persons have returned to Bosnia and Croatia, it remains to be seen whether the US and EU have the will power and persistence to negate ethnic cleansing by guaranteeing the right of all refugees to return to their homes; failure to do so would ratify war crimes that have converted region's multiethnic societies into a nation-state with oppressed minorities. Roughly half of the so-called *Republika Srpska* consists of land that formerly housed *Bosniak-Croat* majorities, while the *Krajina*, Sarajevo, large parts of western Bosnia, and most of Kosovo have been virtually emptied of their Serb inhabitants. In the end, only substantial ethnic reintegration can prevent the Serb Republic from seceding from Bosnia and merging with Greater Serbia. Indeed, given their own positive experiences as nation-states, many western European leaders appear willing to sanction partition in lieu of a multinational solution.⁽³⁷⁾ Yet failure to prevent a Bosnian Serb secession would almost certainly doom Dayton's remaining entity - a Bosnian-Croatian Federation whose bi-national composition is a recipe for internal conflict and collapse. In short, Bosnia can survive only as it has in the past: as a balanced, multiethnic union of at least three confessional groups. Similarly, the failure to return Serb expellees from Kosovo would render inevitable its formal secession from Serbia, thereby further destabilizing Macedonia with the specter of a Greater Albania.

2. **War Crimes Trials** for all indictees. After years of disinterest, the western allies have rededicated themselves to the apprehension of the region's most prominent

war criminals. To its credit, the Bosnian government has cooperated fully with the Hague Tribunal by turning over suspects as soon as indictments were issued. Despite his own unsavory (and, perhaps, criminal) record, the late Croatian President Tudjman handed over sixteen out of nineteen Croatian indictees - and even allowed perhaps thirty thousand *Krajina* Serb refugees to return to their homes - though only because it was a prerequisite for badly needed western assistance. The international community's insistence on "conditionality" has also helped induce a measure of cooperation by a succession of pragmatic Bosnian Serb leaders like Biljana Plavšić, Milorad Dodik and Mladen Ivanić. But the great mass of Serbs on both sides of the Drina (and, indeed, in its overseas diaspora) continue to regard the agenda and activities of the Tribunal as a punitive act explicitly aimed at them. At this juncture *Republika Srpska* has yet to deliver a single indictee to The Hague. Although Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić seized Milošević himself at the end of March 2001, and sent him to The Hague three months later, he did so only to meet the "conditions" that had been for infusions of foreign aid.

Yet, far from being a form of punishment that is "inflicted" on the Serbs, such trials offer them a golden opportunity not only to rebuild their lives but to transform the culture of persecution and revenge that informs so much of the region's sometimes violent xenophobia. Since 1919 the nation-states of Central Europe have engaged in the kind of mythmaking that is common to all new nations attempting to legitimize their existence. Much as America's mythmakers transformed George Washington into an Olympian hurler of silver dollars and slaveholder Thomas Jefferson into the champion of the common man, Rump Yugoslavia has made national heroes out of the *etnik* warrior bands that harassed the Turks and the Bosnian Serb teenager who assassinated Francis Ferdinand and his wife. Like many central Europeans, they also bemoan centuries of "oppression" by supranational empires that deprived them of their manifest destiny. Yet, even more than the Greeks and Bulgarians with whom they endured centuries of Ottoman misrule, Serbia's statebuilders have forged a national identity based extensively on the nation's past suffering at the hands of its enemies. Although even Serb historians acknowledge that the battle of Kosovo Polje of 28 June 1389 was fought to a draw, its anniversary remains the most hallowed day on the Yugoslav calendar, marking as it does the onset of five centuries of Turkish occupation.⁽³⁸⁾ Nor is it a coincidence that 28 June also marks the anniversary of Francis Ferdinand's assassination and Milošević's fateful decision to terminate the autonomy of Kosovo's Albanians. Together with the Serbs' horrendous suffering in the two world wars, Kosovo Polje and its Ottoman aftermath justify the widespread belief in "age-old" hatreds that the Serbs brought to the wars of Yugoslav succession.

It is this deeply ingrained and continually nurtured persecution complex that has enabled so many Serbs to support and participate in acts of aggression and genocide. To date most Serbs continue to dismiss the formidable evidence presented by countless international agencies as lies born of an ongoing conspiracy to persecute and oppress them. War crimes trials constitute a realistic antidote to the psychosis that explains the horrific crimes committed in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo by the military, police and paramilitary forces that Milošević directed. Through trials we can hope to reacculturate the Serbs and others who reject international norms of behavior as an unjustified restraint on their thirst for retribution. Only by finally acknowledging the crimes of the last decade and, hopefully, dissociating themselves from their leaders, can the Serbs regain the

respect and consideration of the international community. It is in this sense that war crimes trials initially inspired by the demand for justice and retribution, actually benefit the society of those who perpetrated mass crimes more than the survivors whom their victims left behind. There is a precedent for such confidence in the cathartic effects of such trials: We need only look to Germany, where the Nuremberg Trials, de-Nazification, and the diligent use of public media effected a far-reaching change in a people's collective memory and political culture. So effective was that campaign that today's Germany is an active proponent of democracy and human rights both at home and abroad that routinely bans books that deny the Holocaust, while turning others - like Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, into instant best-sellers. Nowadays, a search for xenophobic Germans is best launched in the former East Germany, while any hunt for German anti-Semites is best undertaken in Austria, which escaped much of the official opprobrium that followed the fall of the Third *Reich*.(39)

Of course, the Serb leadership's crimes pale by comparison with those of the Third *Reich*, where ethnic cleansing was followed by genocide on a scale incomparably greater than anything committed in the Yugoslav conflict. Nonetheless, by failing to confront and condemn these crimes, they risk joining the Germans as the forgotten victims of ethnic cleansing. Not unlike the Serbs of the *Krajina*, Bosnia and Kosovo, the Austrian and Sudeten Germans had legitimate concerns and grievances during the interwar period. These were addressed and internationally recognized through *Anschluss* and the Munich Accords of 1938, but then repudiated in the aftermath of Nazi aggression and genocide. Like the fourteen million ethnic German expellees who paid the price for Hitler's quest for a Greater Germany, there are today over one million Serb refugees from the *Krajina*, the Bosnian Federation and Kosovo who presently live in abject poverty, with few foreign advocates and little hope of ever returning to their homes. But saving the Serbs from this self-destructive political culture will take time, money and more political courage than the international community has heretofore invested in the region. Most important of all, it will require courage from Serbia's newly elected leaders to convince their constituents to confront the past.

**Lesson #10:
Central Europe's Twentieth-Century Catastrophe:
Past, Present & Future?**

The implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords and a comparable settlement in Kosovo will ultimately resolve the most pressing problems created by the dissolution of the old Yugoslavia. But what about the region as a whole? After nearly a century of missed opportunities, the international community has another opportunity to play a decisive, positive role determining in the future Central Europe. Over that time, the collective failure of the US and its western allies has helped effect a truly incredible change in the region's political demography. It has gone unnoticed by the news media, which reports on the day's events and relies for much of its historical background on the accounts and clichés of other journalists. Nor has it grabbed the attention of political scientists, whose sober application of abstract models to current crises ignores the region's individual character and historical experience. What both have overlooked is the historian's century-long perspective that exposes the gradual, violent transformation of an

ethnically diverse region where people once lived in peace with their neighbors, into a poor and wholly inappropriate imitation of the West. The misconceived attempt to create ethnically homogenous nation-states has, to date, resulted in the flight or execution of well over thirty million *civilians* since the outbreak of the first Balkan Wars. Multiethnic areas like the former Czechoslovakia, the Aegean littoral, Transylvania, the *Krajina*, Bosnia and Kosovo have been transformed by a combination of mass executions and forced population transfers. Millions of Jews and Germans who contributed so much to the region's political development, economic prosperity, and cultural sophistication are gone altogether. Indeed, with the exception of the 800,000 Albanians driven from Kosovo in 1999, not a single mass expulsion has ever been reversed.

Surely it is too late to alter the catastrophic demographic upheavals wrought by two world wars and the depredations that followed. But has Central Europe's rush to nation-states left us with no recourse to more balanced and, hence, more stable multiethnic polities? After World War II, Marshal Tito proposed a Balkan confederation comprising Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria. Alas, the break with Stalin and Enver Hoxha's own ideological eccentricities ended any chance of submerging Kosovo's bi-ethnic conflict in a broader, more stable multiethnic polity.(40) As late as 1962 the eminent British historian C.A. Macartney could claim that many observers were convinced that the region's best interests required "the creation of some larger multi-national state or states with special institutions appropriate to the special conditions of the area".(41) Three decades later, the BBC's Misha Glenny ventured that the ideal, long term solution to Yugoslavia's problems might be the reformulation of new multiethnic confederations.(42) Nor has the country's subsequent dissolution and seven years of ethnic cleansing necessarily destroyed this vision. In October 1998 the president of Kosovo's Serbian Opposition Movement, Momčilo Trajković, told me that the best hope for peaceful coexistence between Kosovo's Serbs and Albanians was their integration into a larger polity that embraced a host of countries and ethnic groups; meanwhile, his Albanian counterpart, Adem Demaci, advocates the creation of a broad confederation that he fancifully calls "Balkania".

The benefits would be enormous. A large multinational state would eliminate the power vacuum that has tempted aggressors three times in little more than a half century. It could even ease Russia's acceptance of limited NATO expansion by creating a reasonably independent great power that could serve as a buffer between them. Indeed, the same settlement that Stalin rejected in 1943 would be a godsend to Vladimir Putin as he endeavors to assuage the Russian electorate's fear, anger and humiliation over the triumph of the West and the eastward expansion of NATO. It would also offer a realistic *interim* solution to the region's economic goals, while it is still awaiting entry into the European Union. Few of the region's political leaders have publicly admitted that their economies are as much as decades away from attaining full integration with the EU. Yet until they achieve that dream, their countries' exports will be subject to trade barriers that the EU has routinely erected to protect its own producers. The expanded free trade zone created by a multinational state could shorten the wait for admission by accelerating the commercial integration already begun by more modest intraregional consortia like the Višegrad Group and the Septagonale.

Finally, a multinational entity offers the best hope of ending the century-long conflict born of nation-states and intentionally imprecise borders. Over the past five years

the Western democracies have achieved some success in inducing the region's leaders to guarantee the rights of ethnic minorities by offering eventual membership in the EU, OSCE, NATO and other international organizations, or by extending direct financial aid, such as generous credits for Romania after the fall of Iliescu, reconstruction funds for those Bosnian factions that fully implement the Dayton Accords, and emergency assistance to newly democratic Serbia. Whereas this approach has proven reasonably effective with the leaders of the region's European "wannabes" (such as Macedonia) it has had only a minimal effect on the people themselves, who continue to harbor self-destructive prejudices against other ethnic groups. Moreover, there is no way of enforcing compliance to such norms once a government has received its reward. Greece's numerous acts of diplomatic sabotage in the former Yugoslavia amply demonstrated that neither NATO nor the EU are capable of enforcing the cooperation of maverick member states.(43) By contrast, a fully democratic multinational state would be able to police itself by denying any one ethnic group the ability to establish its hegemony.

Such an entity could easily embrace much more than the ill-fated Yugoslav union. At the very least, it could encompass parts of the eastern half of the former Habsburg empire - though assuredly *without* the Habsburgs. It would certainly not include the Austrians themselves, who after a millennium of indecision have finally chosen the West by joining the EU, rather than the East with all its unresolved problems. Nor would the other 'Austrian' parts of the former Austria-Hungary be likely to join such a union: the Czech, Slovene and Polish nation-states of today have become too ethnically homogeneous and close to EU membership to be attracted to such a union. On the other hand, it would appear almost inevitable that some sort of close association between Croatia and a virtually landlocked Bosnia lies in the future. A broader multinational economic or confederal union that also included Hungary, Slovakia and Romania would make even more sense as a solution to the heretofore insoluble demographic challenge posed by Magyar-language minorities. A closer association of Bulgarians, Macedonians, and Albanians would solve a number of existing problems south of the Habsburg-Ottoman divide: At the very least, it would offer perhaps the only guarantee of Macedonia's survival as a recognizable entity by simultaneously satiating the irredentist urges of Albanians and Bulgarians, developing secure commercial links with the Adriatic, and offering credible security against hostile neighbors; at the same time, the presence of three million predominantly Muslim Albanians would assuage the residual insecurities of Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks, much as the power of millions of Orthodox Bulgarian and Macedonian Slavs would safeguard the rights of Kosovo's 150,000 Serbs.(44) Indeed, at present it would appear that the only way of saving both Macedonia and Kosovo from partition would be to forge links with neighboring entities that could break up the bi-ethnic contest between its Albanian and Slavic components. Nor would it be too farfetched to contemplate Serbia's eventual membership in such a union, once it has purged itself of the exclusive nationalism that impelled four Yugoslav republics and Kosovo to secede over the past decade.

Any such innovations would be truly visionary, especially for a century of peacemakers whose preoccupation with immediate problems has rendered them oblivious to the forces of history and geopolitics. But realistically speaking, the obstacles to anything more ambitious than a Bosnian-Croatian confederation are almost certainly insurmountable. Eight decades of statebuilding by the region's "successor states" have

buried the positive legacy of multiethnicity beneath an impenetrable cultural overlay of historical myths and mass amnesia. A half-century of radical changes in Central Europe's ethnic demography have also devalued the *raison d'être* for reinstitutionalizing multiethnic polities. Instead, there is now a seemingly irresistible momentum for the creation and maintenance of nation-states like the *dozen* new entities that have appeared in this decade. In all likelihood, the resurrection of a larger multiethnic entity in Central Europe could only occur after either (1) another great war - an event too "destablizing" for the US and NATO to allow, or (2) the advent of a truly great world leader - a Winston Churchill or Woodrow Wilson - rather than the current crop of western statesmen whose political experience, self-confidence and focus lie in domestic issues. Thus, I am compelled to concur with Gale Stokes, who recently discounted the prospects for resurrecting larger, multiethnic polities as trying "to put the toothpaste back in the tube". Alas, even today there remain millions of ethnic minorities trapped inside, feeling the pressure of those dominant majorities that control the region's nation-states.(45)

We do, however, have recourse to certain corrective measures that can minimize the unfortunate cultural consequences of nation-statism. Surely it is not too late to encourage a public dialogue throughout the region, daring (but not compelling) its people both to rediscover the forgotten benefits of their multinational past and to confront what nationalism has cost them in external security, economic prosperity, and domestic peace. Western historians could play a crucial role in this process, both through closer contact with their colleagues in central Europe and through more active intercourse with the makers and mediators of public policy. Such an enterprise would reassure and reacquaint the peoples of the former Yugoslavia with their long history of ethnic coexistence and collaboration, while tempering the misperceptions of past persecution that have so poisoned relations between the peoples of the entire region. Having exorcised the demons of the past and experienced the euphoria of independence, perhaps *some* would have the self-confidence to commit themselves to voluntary reintegration into a transitional central European union along the path toward the larger multiethnic entity represented by the EU. But that is their choice.

In the end, whichever path we choose - whether an ambitious, wholly voluntary regional restructuring that promotes a larger multiethnic union and eventual entry into the EU, or a limited solution in former Yugoslavia that is based on the full implementation of the Dayton Accords, the repatriation of Serb refugees to *Krajina* and Kosovo, and a satisfactory resolution of the latter's status - the US/EU will have to challenge the shortsighted expedients of the past and insist on just, and thus durable, settlements that guarantee regional stability. Or it can walk away and invite future conflicts, whether in Bosnia after the departure of the SFOR, in Kosovo and Macedonia or, perhaps, in other ethnically mixed regions like the Voivodina, the Sand ak, Transylvania or Slovakia. As it has in the past, failure to act now will not bring lasting peace. It will only prolong ethnic conflict and ensure the need to return in the future, perhaps to fight another Balkan war between World War I's winners and losers.

Notes:

1. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (New York: Random House, 1987), 3-30.
2. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York and London: Norton, 1982), 49-51, 56, 60-61, 91, 113, 226-29, 300, 302.
3. Catherine Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1992), 1-11, 21-23.
4. Gunther E., Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia 1522-1747*, (Urbana: Illinois, 1960), 6, 13-39, 50, 59-60, 93-94; Wayne S. Vucinich, 'The Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy,' *The Austrian History Yearbook*, 3 (1967), Part 2: 11.
5. (New York & London, 1997), 38-61.
6. Brian Hall, *The Impossible Country: a Journey through the Last Days of Yugoslavia* (New York, 1994), 59; Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: the Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (New York and Oxford: Oxford, 1993), 174, 210; Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: a Journey through History* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 6, 27, 137, 155, 182; Misha Glenny, *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy* (London : Penguin, 1990), 128, 130-31, and *idem.*, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: the Third Balkan War* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 82; 14-15, 47, 268, 283.
7. R.J.W. Evans, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700* (Oxford: Oxford, 1979) 39-140; Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618-1815* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge, 1994), 34-39, 50-51, 84-87, 95-104.
8. An excellent profile of Jewish autonomy within the various Habsburg lands before emancipation, see Joseph Karniel, *Die Toleranzpolitik Kaiser Josephs II.* (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1986).
9. Jelavich, *Balkans*, 39-62, 72-115.
10. Robert Donia and John Fine, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: a Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia, 1994), especially 6-74; Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: a Short History* (New York: NYU, 1994), 1-12; Hall, *Impossible Country*, 118-19, 143-44.
11. Arthur J. May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, 1964), 487.
12. Fine and Donia, *Bosnia and Hercegovina*, 53-70; Malcolm, *Bosnia*, 119-36; Croat-Serb cooperation was especially evident in 1848 and in parliamentary politics after the Dual Compromise. István Deák, *The Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848-1849* (Princeton: Princeton, 1978), 126-29; Nicholas Miller, 'Two Strategies in Serbian Politics in Croatia and Hungary before World War I,' *Nationalities Papers*, 23 (1995), 327-45.
13. Namely: Serbia proper; the though each Peloponnesus and Thessaly (Greece); Wallachia and Moldavia (Romania); and Silistria (Bulgaria).
14. Hellmut Röbler, *Graf Johann Philipp Stadion: Napoleons deutscher Gegenspieler*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1966), 297-98; Andreas Flitner, *Politische Erziehung in Deutschland* (Tübingen, 1957) 57-64; Walter C. Langsam, *The Napoleonic Wars and German nationalism in Austria* (New York, 1930), 26, 58-59.
15. As has been suggested most recently by James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the 18th-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1988), 238-39.
16. Sir Lewis Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals* (New York: Oxford, 1964), 19-39, 113-51. The century-old myths of an Czech-German struggle at the

beginning of the Thirty Years' War, and of the subsequent persecution of the Czechs and their culture, has since been debunked by western scholars, most notably R.J.W. Evans, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 198-203, 214, 229-31.

17. Among the most notable national myths are: the Czech view of the Counter-Reformation as an instrument for imposing German language and culture; Serb historiography's refusal to acknowledge the role of Serbian state intelligence in the Sarajevo assassination or *etnik* collaboration with the Germans and Italians during World War II; the Greeks' collective amnesia about the presence and contributions of Salonika's huge Jewish, Turkish, and Bulgarian communities in Macedonia and Thrace.

18. The best, detailed accounts can be found in C.A. Macartney, *Hungary and her Successors: the treaty of Trianon and its Consequences, 1919-1937* (New York and London: Oxford, 1937); Béla Király, *et al.*, eds., *Essays on World War I: Total War and Peacemaking, a case study on Trianon* (New York: Brooklyn College, 1982), *idem.* and László Veszprémy, eds., *Trianon and East Central Europe* (New York, 1995); R.W. Seton-Watson, *Treaty Revision and the Hungarian Frontiers* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1934); Nina Almond, ed., *The Treaty of St. Germain: a Documentary History* (New York, 1935); Ivo Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: a Study in Frontier Making* (New Haven, 1938).

19. Piotr Wandycz, *France and her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno* (Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1962), 11-14; David Kelly, 'Woodrow Wilson and the Creation of Czechoslovakia,' *East European Quarterly* 26 (1992), 186-97; Roy Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815-1918* (New York: Berg, 1990), 367-68.

20. Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (West Lafayette, Ind: Purdue U. Press, 1976), 216-17, 221; C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire, 1790-1918* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 812-13; Kelly, 'Woodrow Wilson and...the Creation of Czechoslovakia,' 190.

21. Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918* (Oxford and New York: Oxford, 1991), 259-60.

22. Wandycz, *France and her Eastern Allies*, 22, 74, 186, 370.

23. Stephen Fischer-Galati, 'National Minority Problems in Romania: Continuity or Change?' *Nationalities Papers*, 22 (1994), 71-81; Gabriele Simoncini, 'The Polyethnic State: National Minorities in Interbellum Poland,' *ibid.*, 5-23; Bruce Pauley, *The Habsburg Legacy, 1867-1939* (Huntington, N.Y.: Krieger, 1977), 68-127.

24. Frank Littlefield, *Germany and Yugoslavia, 1933-1941* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 1988), 71. Another estimate reduces the number of Serb generals to 156.

25. T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II* (New York and London: Longman, 1994), 206. An assessment that was echoed by Emperor Francis Joseph, who once described his empire as 'a refuge, an asylum for all those fragmented nations scattered over Central Europe who, if left to their own resources, would lead a pitiful existence, becoming the playthings of more powerful neighbors.' Alan Palmer, *Twilight of the Habsburgs: the Life and Times of Emperor Francis Joseph* (London and New York, 1994), 349.

26. David Good, *Economic Transformations in East and Central Europe: Legacies from the Past and Policies for the Future*, (New York and London, 1994), 5-7.

27. Anthony Molho, 'The Jewish Community of Salonika: the End of a Long History,' *Diaspora* (1991), 100-122.

28. Jews also constituted a third of Hungary's engineers, nearly half of its doctors and lawyers, and a substantial majority of Vienna's physicians (59%), industrialists (63%), lawyers (65%) and financiers (73%). Bruce Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: a History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill & London: North Carolina, 1992), 45, 62-63; István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: a Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps 1848-1918* (New York and Oxford: Oxford, 1990) 133, 172, 174-75, 196; Rothenberg, *Army of Francis Joseph*, 128, 151.

29. R.J.W. Evans, 'The Habsburg Monarchy and the Coming War,' in *idem.* and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, eds., *The Coming of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford, 1988), 50. Of those Habsburg Jews, 30-40,000 were killed. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 63.

30. 'Anti-Semitism was a good means to get ahead in politics, but once one was on top, it was of no further use; it was the 'sport of the rabble'.' Quoted in Richard Geehr, *Karl Lueger: Mayor of Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Detroit: Wayne State, 1990), 171-207.

31. Robert H. Keyserlingk, *Austria in World War II: an Anglo-American Dilemma* Kingston and Montréal: Toronto, 1988), 87-121, and *idem.*, 'Austro-Hungary's Revival during World War II: Anglo-American Planning for the Danube Region,' *Études Danubiennes*, 2 (1987), 54-64.

32. Peter Jordan, *Central Union of Europe* (New York: 1944), 17, 49, 93-94.

33. Which is not to say that the new borders were the most accurate possible or uniformly successful in uniting all ethnic groups. Discontiguous concentrations of Poles (in Ukraine), Romanians (in Transylvania), Serbs (in Bosnia and Croatia) and Turks (in Bulgaria) were only the most obvious examples of the impossibility of erecting ethnically precise nation-states.

34. In the words of Secretary of State Stimson, 'the Balkans and their troubles were beyond the sphere of United States action.' Philip E. Mosely, 'Hopes and Failures: American Policy toward East Central Europe, 1941-1947,' in Stephen D. Kertesz, ed., *The Fate of East Central Europe: Hopes and Failures of American Foreign Policy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1956), 64, 68-69.

35. Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge: the Ethnic Cleansing of the East European Germans, 1944-1950* (New York, 1986).

36. Tito's achievement in institutionalizing a balance of power within Yugoslavia is emphasized in Pedro Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1963-1983* (Bloomington, In.: Indiana, 1984); for a detailed account of the Albanian coup, see Harold Lydall, *Yugoslavia in Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford, 1989), 196-212.

37. Thus the lament of one senior US State Department official that his European colleagues consider him "crazy" for his advocacy of multiethnic solutions.

38. Fragmentary contemporary accounts of the battle suggest that it was a draw or perhaps even a Pyrrhic victory for the Serbs. Timothy Judah, *The Serbs* (New Haven: Yale, 1996).

39. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 302-15.

40. Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: a History of Kosovo* (New York, 1998), 145-46.

41. C.A. Macartney and A.W. Palmer, *Independent Eastern Europe: a History* (New York, 1966), 451-52.

42. *Rebirth of History*, 141, 215-19.

43. In a conversation in March 1995, the current US Ambassador to one major western European capital went so far as to recount oft-repeated expressions of regret by NATO and EU officials about having Greece as a member state.

44. Nor has the utility of a "special relationship" between Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria escaped officials at the US State Department, whether during the tenure of Ambassador Robert Frowick in Skopje or, more recently, as officials have grappled with the need to preserve Macedonia's integrity in the event that the ongoing Kosovo conflict spreads.

45. Hungary's former foreign minister and current ambassador to Washington, historian Géza Jeszenszky, has estimated the east and central Europe's residual minority populations at between thirty and forty million people, or roughly equal to the number purged over the past century, "Nations and Minorities in Europe", *The Hungarian Observer*, May 1994, 6.

Lazar Vrkatić

CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEAS IN SERBIA IN THE NINETIETH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY

*The state is a natural, necessary
condition of a historic being of
people; outside the state a man has no
history or life. That is why anyone's
action begins with building of the state.*

Ilija Garašanin

INTRODUCTION

Recent Yugoslav wars are the largest military conflicts in Europe after the WW2. They resulted in large-scale devastation and many casualties. Serb people are the biggest political loser of those wars: they remained divided in six states. Current predicament of the Serb people can be compared only to the year of the collapse of the First Serbian Uprising, 1813, and the year of the total military defeat, 1915 (WW1). In the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of socialism new historic situation required new solutions. Similarly to the early Twentieth Century, when empires collapsed one after another (Turkey, Russia, Austro-Hungary), now the multi-ethnic states began disappearing (the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia). Disintegration of the SFRY was a case apart, for it ended in a terrible war conflict. A war usually begins when there are interests and will to initiate it.

In the Yugoslav territory those interests spawned a new elite, and the will to wage war was encouraged by a century-old conservative political idea. That old political idea was so belligerent and subjective that its predominance in fact represented a victory of historic past over the present and future of tens of millions of people. The Serb conservative idea never accepted socialist Yugoslavia as a permanent solution, but seized a favourable international and historic moment to destroy the SFRY, which had already been teetering on the brink of collapse. It first defeated a competing, liberal idea and then embarked upon implementation of its political program. The world and history would have forgiven the destruction of the SFRY, but not the solution offered by the conservative political idea in the post-destruction period. Aggressive conduct of the Serbian conservative political idea led to supremacy of conservative political ideas among other Yugoslav peoples, notably among Croats. Thus the belligerent mood was created also in other SFRY republics. During the armed conflicts, conservative political ideas supported each other very much. Hence the war was just a bloody feast of conservatism.

Although the conservative political idea by definition is not able to implement its program, it can produce an authoritarian regime. That impotence of conservatism to realise itself, is due to the basic conservative position that the state is the only subjective factor of practical life, and that the state is the purpose of customs and history. The state

will is the only will; it is an absolute will. Single or common will have no subjectivity. Conservatives fail to see the general will in the state, for single and common will only serve the state interests. That is why the subject of implementation of the conservative political idea, must be the state will. This entails establishment of an authoritarian rule. The purpose of such regime is to realise a conservative project. But that political still-born has its own will, which seeks its realisation either through conservative project or beyond it. After a certain period of time when the will of an authoritarian regime becomes independent, it comes into collision with the parental will of the conservative political idea. Conflict between a subjective authoritarian will and a substantial conservative will is necessary. Authoritarian will then kills its "father" and annuls the very substantiality of the conservative political idea. After that conservative political idea morphs into a legitimising basis of the authoritarian regime. Its offspring, its beloved child continues to live in line with its logic and perishes in line with its own logic. In its old age and because of its parental bias, the conservative political idea fails to see and accept the aforementioned, but instead still hopes that everything will go back to its original principles. Added to that conservative political idea does not feel guilty for all the aforementioned.

Serb people in Serbia formed its modern being with conservative political idea, during the Constitution-Defending regime. That idea defeated the patriarchal rule of Miloš Obrenović, and led the Serb people into modern era. That is why the conservative political idea is considered the deepest and most important idea in Serbia, and its principal exponent, Ilija Garašanin is considered the most important Serbian politician in modern history of Serbia. It was obviously not able to implement its project single-handedly, so it had to spawn as it lever the authoritarian regime of the Duke Mihailo, who ultimately defeated and instrumentalised it.

Serb people outside Serbia had a different and independent historic development. Therefore conservative idea did not gain much ground in Serb-inhabited territories outside Serbia. Serbs from Vojvodina made a clean break with the patriarchal moment of their history after disbanding of the Military District and under specific historic circumstances were compelled to position themselves as the civil element. The reason thereof was the fact that they encountered difficulties in attaining and exercising their will and interests in their new political community. That is why they developed a separate sphere, a civil sphere or a civil society versus the political state. Thus the Serb people in Southern Hungary, Slavonia and Croatia developed their own civil being and became economically and culturally subjective, and achieved a political subjectivity through the Serb-Croat coalition. Liberal idea thus led Serbs from Vojvodina to modern era (while conservative idea carried out that passage from patriarchal to modern era in Serbia proper). At play were historical processes and not different predispositions of two parts of Serb people. Had the Serbs from the Military District had a say in resolution of their future development, the Military District and Austro-Hungary would not have ceased to exist. But instead, they were compelled to accept the civil being. But, Austro-Hungary is the most important state in which Serbs had ever lived.

Second promotion of conservative political idea in Serbia happened in the late Ninetieth century and early Twentieth century, when the set of circumstances made possible implementation of Garašanin's program. Conservative idea tried to do that alone, but met with a crushing defeat in 1915 when it lost the state and over a million subjects. It

was a very tragic experience for the conservative idea, for it valued its state the most. Impotence of conservative idea indicated that an authoritarian subject needed to be installed. And there were two candidates: the Crown and the army. And the Crown defeated the army through the Thessaloniki trial. Aleksandar killed Apis. Afterwards Aleksandar built an authoritarian regime, and the act of unification of Yugoslav countries was just a moment in the process of supremacy of authoritarian over conservative regime. Conservative idea has been already reduced to its legitimising basis and the regent's instrument. Serbs from Vojvodina joined the state of Serbs from Serbia through an act of promotion of an authoritarian regime (the 1st December Act) under the auspices and legitimacy of conservative political idea. The Act of Unification annulled their separate history and they became the biggest victims of an unjust and impossible state community, namely the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Kingdom had to fall apart for it was based on the allegation that the Serbian history had defeated the Croat, the Slovene and Vojvodina Serbs history.

Socialism was also contrary to the Vojvodina history, but it had something acceptable: it represented a dam to the rampant and aggressive Serbian conservatism. All in all Vojvodina Serbs did not benefit from socialism as much as they benefited from Austro-Hungary, but it kept them together and consolidated them. Principal opponent of socialism was the conservative idea of all the Yugoslav peoples. The latter in a way outlived the former, thanks to a strong patriarchal biological and cultural resource, which was both the hallmark of the socialist and conservative idea. Thus those two ideas vied for supremacy or for peasants souls for half a century. No wonder that many communist firebrands morphed overnight into fervent nationalists. Liberal-civil idea sustained many defeats throughout the Twentieth century, although it occasionally experienced some positive promotions. In the battle for the socialist legacy, the liberal-civil idea was defeated by a conservative one. Conservative idea immediately embarked upon implementation of its program, but it needed an authoritarian ruler to spearhead that project. But the logic of history imposed the following development: that authoritarian leader defeated the very conservative idea, for he acted in accordance with his own will, that is he used the conservative idea to legitimise his own rule. Therefore the Serb conservative political idea was a basic internal cause of disintegration of the SFRY, and its product or brain-child, authoritarian will of Slobodan Milošević, was the prime mover or executioner of armed conflicts. In their conflict with the Serb conservative idea Serbs from Vojvodina once again fared badly, for the either opposed it or took part in the implementation of "foreign" programs.

The Serb conservative idea put the blame for past developments squarely on Milošević's shoulders. That idea cannot be defeated as long as the Serb national sovereignty exists, for the latter shaped the civilisational basis of the modern being of Serbs.

Modern history of Serb people is in fact a debate between two parts of Serb people, Serbs from Serbia and Serbs from Vojvodina, or a debate between two ideas of customs. Unfortunately for both sides in the debate, both in the post-WW1 period and in the late Twentieth century, conservative Serbian idea emerged victorious.

Exponents of the conservative political idea rebuff the aforementioned or similar positions. Hence such positions should be substantiated. As Hegel maintained that the basic methodological principle was that "to prove is to show", we are compelled to

embark upon that task, that is, to prove how successes of the Serbian conservative idea were lethal for Serbs from Vojvodina. We shall also focus on Vojvodina, as the most developed area in the new community, and the one which most felt dire consequences of the aforementioned conservative ideas.

FIRST EMERGENCE OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA IN SERBIA

Development of modern, practical being of Serb people during the early years of rule of Miloš Obrenović, was just a moment of independence without any contents. Reality of the civil being was established during the era of Constitution-Defenders when basic legal and civil institutes were set up, notably, property, contract, lawsuits, guilt, criminal responsibility, etc, and also the institutes of the civic-public sphere, for example, administration, police, judiciary, division of power. Groundwork for parliamentarism was laid after establishment of the Saint Andrew Assembly, that is dethroning of Aleksandar Karađorđević and toppling of Constitution-Defenders regime.

That inception of the civil principle is the most important moment of the Serbian history. Basic positions and consequences of that epoch are still felt today.

That moment is linked to activities and ideas of Ilija Garašanin, whose ideas and biography exemplify the said principle. Garašanin was the author of "Načertanije", but also of the 1850 Police Code and the 1857 Act on Primary Schools. In both his foreign and domestic policy agenda, Garašanin posed only one question: "How can we establish in pre-civil circumstances basic preconditions of the civil being?" His answer to that question was paradoxical: in order to establish civil and public institutes in Serbia and facilitate its territorial and political shaping as a nation, pre-civil methods of compulsion and politics must be applied/implemented. The subjective sphere is of a pre-civil character, and the substantial sphere is of a civil character. It is difficult to find such a drastic collision between a subjective and substantial aspect of establishment of a civil being among other European peoples, even peoples of similar geographic position and equally arrested historic development. Patriarchal, pre-civil moment was the subjective aspect in uprisings, and autonomy and independence were the substantial moment. Both were in collision, but less so than in Garašanin's principles. What is visible is the following: at the moment of possibility of the civil being (uprisings and Miloš) and at the moment of establishment of civil being the subjective moment was identical: it was a patriarchal, pre-civil moment.

INTERNAL POLICY

Favourite Montesquie's citation was Solon's saying: "I gave to denizens of Athens as free laws as they could tolerate". Antique ideal of law-maker is an unbiased and wise foreigner who can gauge the extent of freedom which a certain 'polis' can tolerate. It is

alleged that Solon was the best law-maker. But as denizens of Athens were not ready for such laws, dictatorship of Thirty or of Pisistrate was put into place.

Freedom was forcibly inculcated in denizens of Athens. But it happened to other citizens too. Hence one can say that establishment of freedom is more often enacted against people's will than with people's consent. Garašanin simultaneously had to act both like Solon and Pisistrate, to pass as liberal laws as his people could tolerate and to compel his people to accept freedom. Solon's aspect of Grašanin ideas and actions is manifested in his private legal institutes, and Pisistrate's aspect, in his public-legal institutes.

GARAŠANIN ACTS LIKE SOLON

While speaking about subjective legal institutes of being of a civil practical idea, we mentioned four of them: property, contract, lawsuit and guilt.

First phase of Miloš's rule was marked by taking possession of land. His principal stance in the agrarian policy was: the land belongs to the one who works it. Turks have relinquished land, there was a lot of de-forestation, and in a short period of time Serbia got a lot of land, which was distributed to local peasants, but also to settlers from other areas. Most land was grabbed by Miloš's coterie and the Duke Miloš himself. Taking possession of the land was a long-term process, which entailed a lot of conflicts and disagreements. Seizing of already taken land was commonplace. To put it simply, Miloš's agrarian reform was done irregularly, in keeping with the custom law. Consequences thereof were negative both externally and domestically. First, there was no reliable authority to register ownership, second, there was no mechanism of protection of ownership barring Miloš's utterly arbitrary rule. Third, the customs law, in principle, cannot regulate the institute of private property, and notably the one of private land, for it regulates only joint, that is, communal property. To put it simply what applies to the collective ownership, does not apply to the private one. Due to all the aforementioned and despite effected agrarian distribution, agrarian relations in Serbia were in total disarray. To make things worse, proper re-arrangement of those relations did not suit anyone. It did not suit small land-owners who were used to living in keeping with the customs law, while unregulated relations enabled big land-owners and the Duke Miloš proper to usurp the land haphazardly.

The 1844 Civil Code, written by Jovan Hadžić, was designed to protect owners of land. Its article 213 lays down: "Since spahiluks, timars and zizamets had been abolished in Serbia, every Serb had his land protected under law". This was the most important article of the Civil Code, for in a legally clear way it ensured implementation of agrarian reform and private ownership. Hadžić was a true innovator, for he envisaged success of the civil-procedural law, that is of a judicial system.

Although it relied on the Austro-Hungarian civil code, that is the code of a pre-civil state, Hadžić's code contained basic elements of civil understanding of institute of property and trading of property, that is contract. Property and property transfer/trading were possible only if the judicial protection existed, and that protection was guaranteed under the 1840 Law on Arrangement of District Courts and after the Supreme Court came into being in 1846. The 1853 Code on Civil-Judicial Proceedings regulated civil-procedural proceedings.

And finally a separate ministry was established, "Popečiteljstvo pravosudija" which marked the beginning of emancipation of judiciary within the executive authority.

But Solon-like enterprise met with difficulties which made it almost worthless, namely judicial composition and expertise were not up to the required standards. According to a document from that period the structure of judges was the following: three illiterate judges, ten judges who could write only their name, three with secondary school education, and only one with a law school degree. Such a scandalous set-up would have devalued even the simplest legal actions, let alone a complicated and delicate civil-judicial proceedings.

Short-term improvement was not possible. Even appointment of Vojvodina Serb jurists did not yield good results. Then an initiative was launched to develop educational system. Under the 1844 Law on Establishment of Secondary Schools, drafted by Jovan Sterija Popović, a humanist secondary school was established. That school was expanded in 1853 thanks to initiative of Platon Simonović, also a Serb from Vojvodina. The same Sterija-written law regulated structure of high education institutions, that is of Lycee, by introducing two courses: legal and philosophical. Legal course was much more important, while the philosophical was considered only as a preparation for the legal one. It is obvious that the purpose of educational system was to produce lawyers. Elementary education was regulated only in 1857 under the Law of Elementary Schools. Then a network of elementary schools was set up. They were plagued by constant financial and personnel problems and absence of pupils. Poor-attendance was due to across-the-board poverty, need to have children work the small land allotments, and low educational and cultural level of parents. Due to the aforementioned the Act on Elementary Schools contained Pisistrate-style punitive provisions. Namely parents who failed to send their children to schools were threatened with fines, imprisonment and beatings.

Professors in Lycee and secondary schools were mostly Serbs from Vojvodina, and later, Serbs, university graduates, from France and Germany. New educational system was established with difficulty. It had several purposes: to educate and make literate population at large, to enable them to use institutes of subjective law, and to produce a certain number of jurists able to promote and re-arrange judicial system to protect the aforesaid institutes of subjective law.

The principal elements of subjective law, that is of the protection of subjective rights, are criminal and misdemeanour law, which in fact belong to the sphere of public law, that is the executive power. And the Solon's aspect now morphs into Pisistrate's.

GARAŠANIN LIKE PISISTRATE

The most important achievement of Ilija Garašanin is his organisation of administrative power in Serbia. Either in his capacity of the Interior Minister or Prime Minister, Garašanin was during his long and rich political career, the first man of administrative power. His contemporaries noted his stern and rigid attitude, typical of a bureaucrat, in his management of administration.

Eastern-style rule of Miloš Obrenović tended to develop obedient administrative officials, heavily dependant on the Duke's commands. They were at whim awarded and beaten, and were essentially what Max Weber called-patrimonial clerks. Weber writes: "Patrimonial administration is not able to make difference between private and official/public sphere. For political administration is considered a personal matter of the

master and in exercise of his political power he can impose and collect any dues and taxes. Loyalty of a patrimonial clerk to service is not an impersonal loyalty to his duties and tasks, but it is a loyalty of a servant based on strictly personal relations with his master and as such represents an integral part of his, in principle, universal commitment to obedience and allegiance. Patrimonial clerks consider their services as their personal rights".

Pre-civic character of the state is most evident in the patrimonial position of administrative clerks. In Miloš's era position of an administrative clerk was considered a lowly one, for all more important administrative matters of the state were managed by the Duke himself. Clerks were used as his stooges, that is tasked with carrying out his private business. In fact no major role was accorded to administration, as Serbia was a small territorial community, in which all public figures knew each other well. Peasants were not considered subject of administration, for they were taken care of by their patriarchal masters in their areas or regions.

The Duke's power was limited under the so-called Turkish Constitution. In fact positions of clerks were strengthened and they were turned into state officials. They were accorded the right to regular pay, pension and their bodily punishment was prohibited. Their status was well protected, for they could not be simply fired, but they could be discharged of their duties only if the court ruled so. Such modern and proper regulation bothered very much Ilija Garašanin, so in 1849, in his capacity of the Interior Minister he suggested that the government be empowered to punish and dismiss administrative clerks and officials, with a view to introduce discipline among administrative ranks. Members of Soviets turned down Garašanin's proposal not because of their modern, civil leanings, but because it infringed upon their status of administrative clerks.

Clerks were well paid, had their ranks and uniforms, could not be dismissed on orders of a superior authority, they were not allowed to engage in trading and other extra-curricular (service) activities. It was seemingly a modern, bureaucratic administration. Added to their lack of expertise, skills and education, in many aspects status of clerks was patrimonial, if not with respect to their master, then with respect to their people.

Max Weber says that modern bureaucracy has the following characteristics:

1. regular activities or official duties, necessary for attainment of goals of bureaucratic institutions were strictly distributed;
2. chain of command necessary for fulfilling those duties is also strictly established and the rules thereof strictly limit means of compulsion;
3. only qualified individuals are appointed to certain duties;
4. there is a principle of hierarchy in the service;
5. rules and duties are prescribed by written documents;
6. modern organisation separates bureaus from private residence of clerks/administrative personnel.
7. Service/job is a profession.
8. Impersonal loyalty; Etc.

Garašanin administration was quite different:

1. There was no division in line with call of duty, for administrative officials and clerks were territorially organised and had to perform several different duties in their territory.

2. Clerks were empowered to issue orders and commands, and means of compulsion were applied in line with private assessments of clerks.

3. Administrative jobs were given mostly to relatives or friends. Elite of administration was recruited from the Queens immediate family and next of kin.

4. Local clerks were not answerable to a higher instance for their actions. Their protectors in the capital and lack of expertise and slowness of judiciary/courts of law relieved them of any responsibility. In those terms the aforementioned Garašanin's request should be viewed. There were some written documents, but mostly containing regulations which suited administrative staff. There were no organised archives.

5. Duties were more frequently performed in flats and houses of clerks than in bureaus/offices.

6. Job was not considered as a profession, but as a privilege and sinecure.

7. Loyalty was of a markedly personal nature, for it was a guarantee of good career; Etc.

All these elements indicate that administration under the guise of bureaucratic management retained its essential patrimonial character, which only acquired some 'brokering or intermediary' features. Therefore one cannot say that at play was bad bureaucracy, but rather, a pre-modern administration.

The main reason for such arrangement of administration was Garašanin's concept of relations between people and clerks. In a letter to Kničanin, Garašanin says: "Tell them all that they have to focus on the manner of running their economy, instead of worrying about their legal rights and duties. Judicial and legal bodies should not interfere into their private business, and vice versa".

Garašanin thought that the property was protected and that subjects of state many, with full sovereignty, enjoyed their property, whereas public law and authorities could not be scrutinised or evaluated by citizens. Clerks were there to rule, and citizens were there to obey. But there is an enlightening aspect in the whole story for Garašanin thought that administrative clerks were smarter than common folk. And he was right, for illiterate mass of peasantry was not indeed able to develop a political or public-legal awareness. Added to that patriarchal and self-managing way of life, to which peasants aspired, was not compatible with idea of a regular, modern, state. The Duke Miloš curried favour with local self-management and patriarchal peasants. He manipulated them skilfully. The first Constitution Defenders acted similarly, but not Garašanin, who thought that peasantry was a dam to arbitrary conduct of a sovereign ruler and non-freedom of primitive people. He deemed that the bureaucratic management should be accorded a civilised role, and consequently he strove to organise administrative ranks carefully. Like Pisistrate he tried to compel people to embrace a higher measure of freedom.

But contrary to all expectations patrimonial mind-set soon prevailed among administration. Instead of a progressive bureaucracy a parasitic stratum was created. It controlled both subjects and ruler. Institution of 'Soviets' is a pre-modern institute, through which patrimonial clerkdom gained the upper hand, and became even more important than the hereditary duke. But throughout the Ninetieth Century the role of administration weakened and the one of ruler strengthened. But at the same time administration increased its repression against population at large. After instalment of the Saint Andrew Assembly, King Aleksandar Karađorđević lost power, and institution of Soviets also disappeared, since young Liberals, Grujić and Ilić, as secretaries of the

Assembly, managed to impose the institution of Parliament with Garašanin's tacit agreement. He annulled the controlling role of administration with respect to sovereign, and accorded that role to Parliament.

Due to continuing repressive role of administration, several decades later the Radical Party was established. Its leader Nikola Pašić scored major political points thanks to his demand that the local self-rule and people be emancipated from clerkdom.

Repressive role of administration was most evident in police affairs. Under the 1850 Police Act the police were vested in rights to mete out punishments, usually beatings, without judicial rulings. Thus local cops and captains were given a lot of unlimited power. In the aforementioned provision of the Police Act we have several modern prerequisites:

1. Administrative body passes a sanction without consent of a judicial body-the Eastern principle of an absolute unity of power.

2. Bodily punishment is a pre-modern method of punishment, abandoned after the French Revolution.

3. Bodily punishment is humiliating, and it does not lead to emancipation and acceptance of freedom (exactly as Garašanin wished).

Pre-modern character of the Police Act turned Serbia into a cop style-state, where all the power was directly exercised by district police captains. A Decree written in the cabinet of Milutin Garašanin and Nikola Hristić and transmitted to all the district police captains on the eve of elections reads: "if citizens in your district do not vote as suits the Crown and Milutin Garašanin and Nikola Hristić, we shall deem such development an act of insubordination by the district police captains". It is interesting to note that the police and not the people were to be blamed for the 'wrong choice' of the latter. And why is it so? Because people simply could not act in an insubordinate way, they always had to be obedient!

Pre-modern, cop-style police, essentially patrimonial structure of administration, inadequate and unqualified judicial apparatus, alongside illiterate and primitive population relying on patriarchal institutes of the customs law-all this totally devalued possibility of protection of subjective rights and institutes of subjective rights, notably property. Thus Solon was defeated by Pisistrate, and institutes of subjective law, imposed as freedom were defeated by manner of protection of freedom.

There are several causes thereof:

1. Patriarchal population did not gladly accept the newly-emerged institutes of subjective law, for collective property does not tolerate private property. Institutes of protection of collective property could not protect, but only derogate private property.

2. Consequently new institutes of protection had to be established. Their proclaimed character was immediately usurped by the pre-modern customs law. To put it simply if your subject is a patriarchal, pre-civil servant, you cannot have modern civil, bureaucratic administration.

3. Spirituality of people was imbued with the pagan mind-set, and relatively non-influential church was in collusion with paganism. Christianity has not simply permeated the being of people due to lack of interest of the Turkish landowner's system to support large scale promotion of Christianity among population at large. Without a more serious Christian experience one cannot expect a fertile spiritual soil for development of political virtue or feeling for private property.

4. Garašanin, who was aware of all the aforementioned facts, in his merciless assessment of his own people, nonetheless espoused his idea that freedom should be imposed to people. His is a pre-modern concept which is in direct collision with modern civil position of sovereignty of people. Garašanin considered a major principle proclaimed by the French Revolution, and with which Serb people got in touch in 1848, lethal for the state. His conduct during the unrest of Serbs in Vojvodina, in 1848, was indicative of the aforementioned.

5. Larger assets and funds were needed for realisation of Garašanin's program than those at disposal of the Serbian state. Very progressive tax system devised by the Duke Miloš, was derogated by Constitution-Defenders in a demagogically political way. When they took over power they promised that income tax would be only 5 talirs per head. They managed to topple the first government of the Duke Mihailo by protesting against a 6 talir tax. Short-term political gain morphed into a constant budgetary crisis and budgetary deficit. In fact that budgetary deficit toppled Constitution-Defenders and Aleksandar Karađorđević.

6. As a more active fiscal policy could not be pursued, money became very expensive. Lack of banking system and situation of so-called expensive money prevented taking of external loans, which in turn led to situation propitious for accumulation of financial capital. In Belgrade loans were granted by the state to the chosen few at a correct interest rate; later that money was distributed in the province, through administrative clerks, captains, inn-keepers and richer landowners and sold at a much higher interest rate. Peasants got indebted at high interest rates, and when they could not repay their loans, district police captains interfered, intermediaries and brokers made financial gains, and a large part of profit flowed into the capital. Money-lending per se is not bad, that is it does not have a negative impact on the being of certain people, if it leads to original accumulation of capital. But in the aforementioned case something else was at play: to put it simply the Serbian village was intentionally stratified and plundered not to create a reserve army of workers and the basis for emergence industrial workers, but to increase personal capital of Belgrade's rich people. Money-lending in Serbia had not created either jobs or capital. The Duke Miloš got rich thanks to his state administration, while friends and next of kin of the court and authorities amassed their personal wealth through state loans. The Serbian village was ruined in vain, in order to build palaces in the capital and to create the end-century city which by far-exceeded its social and economic basis. Profit generated by money-lending was not transformed into a kind of capital, at least, financial capital, if not industrial one, but into - a personal wealth. Hence poor Serbia spawned quite a number of rich people who were not capitalists, but were simply-rich people. Industrial development of Serbia began only in the 20th century, and gathered pace only in the post-WW2 period.

Moral, economic, or political individual was not considered a subject of the Serbian state. Hence the demand that the subject of Serbia be protected in his/hers subjective rights, notably in property and contract, was not met. Moreover it turned into a complete negation of subjective rights.

Conservative political line of thinking was more reflected in the foreign policy arena than in the domestic one.⁽¹⁾ This was not proper, as foreign policy ideas of Ilija Garašanin were based on fundamental principles of his concept of the state and relations between people and administration. In fact he thought that people should be liberated forcibly.

Two political planes must be distinguished, the first of real politics of Ilija Garašanin the statesman, pursued most conspicuously during the second mandate of the Duke Mihailo, and the second- the political program known as "Načertanije". In his real politics Garašanin stuck to the basic principles of "Načertanije", but he had to fine-tune them. Garašanin relied on everyone, Turkey, Russia, France and England, but never on Austro-Hungary, in order to improve the foreign policy position of Serbia, which was worse than during the first stage of Miloš's rule, partly because of Garašanin's role of a Constitution-Defender. He created an important network of agents and envoys in neighbouring countries, he planned and dreamed of many things, but basically did not do anything, for his hands were tied. Poor Serbia with limited budget could not afford a creation of a more serious military force, and he deemed uprisings as unfit methods of resolution of the national issue.

Garašanin's conduct in 1848 and 1849, whenever he thought as a policeman, and not as a statesman, best illustrates the aforementioned. The only foreign policy success of Garašanin was dissolution of the Turkish garrisons in Serbian towns, which meant that the only army left in Serbia was the Serbian army. That was the only move forward with respect to position of independence achieved by the Duke Miloš. The very demand for removal of the Turkish army from towns was based on the 1830 document from the Miloš era, which was at odds with Hatisherrif from 1833. By adhering strictly to the first and not to the second document, Garašanin's second, long-standing effort of reliance on the major powers, managed to convince Turkey to agree to a favourable solution. Basically all his efforts in foreign policy, barring the aforementioned contents, were focused on retrieving what the Duke Miloš had, and what the Constitution-Defenders and he personally, sacrificed to remove the Duke. He declined to fight for the hereditary rights of Karadjordjevićs, and when the Duke Miloš came back to power, Garašanin's resistance to the hereditary, dynastic right became senseless, because the Duke Miloš automatically activated his earlier hard-won hereditary right. His opposition to the hereditary right of Karadjordjevićs was basically of internal policy nature and stemmed from the basic idea of Constitution-Defenders-the one of limitation of the Duke's power. Garašanin's political concept favoured a weak sovereign, and he toppled Karadjordjevićs when it occurred to him to strive to become a strong sovereign. Objections from his era, that he allegedly strove to become the Duke, are based on the wrong reasoning.

Relatively modest results of Garašanin's foreign policy efforts are in a major collision with his intentions. At the start of his political career Garašanin realised that during the Duke Miloš era, the Serb police was tasked with only one job: to consolidate his rule and establish a dynasty. Even strengthening of independence served that purpose. By removing the possibility of a strong sovereign the Serbian foreign policy was left without a clear goal. At the end of Miloš's era France and England emerged as a certain mainstay, while during Garašanin's era Western powers became a very important element of foreign policy. Thus the Russian seniority and the role of 'mentor' was called into question in Serbia. Until the WW1 the foreign policy of Serbia was impacted by the

Western powers, Russia, Austro-Hungary and Turkey. Turkish policy was defensive, Austro-Hungarian mostly aggressive, Russian-paternalistic, and policies of France and Britain long-standing and delicate. Prime movers of western policy towards Central Europe and Balkans rallied around Duke Adam Čartoriski, one of the leaders of a failed Polish uprising, school mate and friend of the Russian Tzar Aleksandar and Foreign Secretary of Russia in 1803-1807 period. That aristocrat was a marked russophobe, but also a man devoid of revolutionary ideas. Due to such characteristics of his, he suited aristocratic France and always aristocratic Britain. As the Berlin Congress produced revival of pre-revolutionary institutions, and also a delicate compromise with revolutionary achievements, so Adam Čartoriski was renowned for his compromising position. He was a man bent on achieving national emancipation of his own people and destruction of the Russian reactionary policy. He implemented his 'program' through pre-revolutionary means. As a former Russian Foreign Secretary he knew well the position of and situation in Serbia, and he thought that Serbia could become a main obstacle to the Russian and Austro-Hungarian foreign policy, once it grew stronger and attained sovereignty. This was a good assessment, and according to recent findings based on earlier stances of the First Secretary of the British Embassy in Istanbul, David Urquhart, the author of a book about history of Serbia. In early 1843 Čartorski wrote a foreign policy recommendation to the Serbian government, known as Adam Čartorski Advice. Prominent Constitution-Defenders were acquainted with this document. In the second half of 1843 Franjo Zah, a Czech and a close friend of Čartorski, came to Serbia. He helped forge closer ties between Western powers and Constitution -Defenders and had frequent talks with Garašanin about the political position of the Balkans and central Europe.

Garašanin asked Zah to produce a document clarifying his ideas and ideas of states which stood behind him. In May 1844 Zah submitted the requested document, later known as the Plan of the Slavic Policy of Serbia. In his text Zah continued to espouse ideas of Čartoriski, although they were somewhat modified. That Plan was much more concrete than the Advice. In late 1844 Ilija Garašanin effected essential changes in Zah's Plan, and called that document "Načertanije". In line with its aristocratic ideas, the text was of a highly confident nature. In 1833 Austria got hold of a copy of that text, which was made public in Serbia for the first time only in 1906, in "Delo", the Radical Party magazine. The Radicals leader Nikola Pašić in 1906 became the Serbian Prime Minister, and started a process of unifying Slavic peoples still occupied by Turkey and Austro-Hungary. After its publication, the document became the public and current agenda of the Serbian policy, with or without Pašić.

Čartorski Advice and Zah's Plan are invaluable documents for history, but "Načertanije" is the strongest written source of conservative political ideas in Serbia.

Its main idea is the following: the basis of the Serb policy mustn't be auto-isolation, but active co-operation with all neighbouring Slavic peoples.(2) If Serbia fails to pursue such policy, or rejects it, it shall be under heavy influence of foreign powers and utterly dependant on them".

Serbia was a vassal of both Turkey and Russia. It devalued its autonomy and threatened to annul it as a community under any unfavourable set of external circumstances. In order to avoid such a fate it had to become an independent political subject, and the latter could be achieved only through territorial expansion. The idea is

clear: only a bigger state, can be independent, and not a vassal, for it shall be economically and militarily strong.

Hence the following position:

The Turkish Empire must disintegrate:

1. either the empire would be carved up or
2. the new one shall be composed of all the Christian inhabitants

Turkish empire in the early 19th century was externally held together thanks to compromise of major powers, while on the internal plane it was exhausted. The very autonomy of Serbia indicated that weakness of the empire. In case of some shifts in balance of power between big powers that empire would disintegrate easily. If the Russian or Austro-Hungarian political concept prevailed then the Turkish empire would be divided between the two empires along the lines Vidin-Thessaloniki. That old political idea, was occasionally floated both by Russia and Austro-Hungary. Both empires would be pleased with that division, for Austro-Hungary would annex the largest part of the Balkans, and Russia would finally have access to the Mediterranean sea. After that division Serbs would belong to Austro-Hungary, which would be most lethal for them, as such a solution would entail loss of autonomy and probably of the national being. Austro-Hungarian empire is most probably the biggest obstacle to realisation of the idea of an autonomous Serb state. Position of Western powers is quite different: they cannot annex Turkish territories, for they don't border on Turkey. Added to that in the long-term they cannot preserve Turkey in its current shape. It would hurt very much British and French interests if Russia had access to or appeared territorially in the Mediterranean. Austro-Hungarian control of the Balkans peninsula does not suit them either. They prefer a Christian state, which as a new subject would prevent Austrian and Russian expansion. And how much that was a long-term element of the Western powers policy became very manifest throughout the Twentieth Century.

That Christian state can be established only through participation of Serb people:

Serbs were the first Slavs in the Turkish Empire to fight with their own means for their freedom. Consequently, they are entitled to carry on their liberation campaign. Many foreign cabinets are aware now that Serbs shall have a bright future, and they are closely watching Serbia.

It is clear that uprisings and autonomy are the elements which impacted the decision of Western powers to back strengthening of Serbia. Claim that Serbs independently organised their uprisings is true to a large extent, but a decisive moment had been a diplomatic protection of Russia, without which the end-result would not have been greater autonomy. The idea to sideline Russia was taken over from the Zah's Plan, which was stridently anti-Russian. Perhaps such an assessment suited Garašanin, but not his genuine position, as it emerged later. But the subjective moment which influenced the Western powers to back Serbia in its striving to establish a Christian state in the Balkans was Serbia's ability to independently carry out military and diplomatic actions leading to formation of a new state.

But for all the three prime movers, Čartoriski, Zah and Garašanin, that subjective moment was not accidental, but rather based on a higher principle of a deeper ontological and historical significance.

The Serb state which had its auspicious inception, and which had to expand and strengthen itself, is solidly based on the Serbian empire from the 13th and 14th century and

in the glorious and rich Serbian history. That history shows that Serbian tzars conquered many parts of the Greek empire and were ready to conquer it completely, in order to lay the foundations of the Serb-Slavic empire, on the remnants of a disappearing Eastern-Roman Empire. Tzar Dušan the Powerful has already received the coat-of-arms of the Greek Empire. Arrival of Turks had cut short that venture. But as the Turkish power is very weak now, the same spirit of building the Serb-Slavic empire must be revived and the job must be continued. These foundations of the Serbian empire should be laid. This venture shall be appreciated by foreign cabinets and other peoples in the world, and we shall be then deemed as genuine heirs of our fathers, or as their descendants bent on restoring their old empire. Our present shall be linked to our past, and hence Serbhood has every right to protect its sacred historical right. Our strivings cannot be vilified as revolutionary and coup-like. They are fully justified and politically necessary, they are rooted in previous state and folk life of Serbs. We want our national tree to blossom again.

This second quotation makes the fundamental idea of "Načertanije" from which everything develops and can be deduced: that is the idea of the *sacred historical right*. Adam Čartoriski' intellectual development ended with ideas of the late feudalism, while much younger Zah and Garašanin have never embraced fundamental ideas of the French Revolution. All of them were spiritually formed on the ideas of the Holy Alliance and restoration of the pre-civil state creations. Zah and Garašanin were not even influenced by the momentous year of 1848. The spirit of the epoch, which marked the period from the Vienna Congress to 1848, was such that anything akin to revolution or coup was considered as a threat to a determined state and the European order. The evil seed of revolution had to be destroyed immediately by the major powers. Čartoriski, who was aware of the aforementioned, espoused the basic idea (later developed by Zah) that the future task of creation of the Christian state is not a revolutionary act, but an act based on a pre-civil principle of the historical right. Zah and Garašanin obviously knew well that uprisings did not stem from the historical right, but from the right of people to self-determination. Obviously neither Karađorđe nor Miloš could express such a political idea, but it was nonetheless the historic basis of the Serbian revolution. Dušan the Powerful and the Serbian empire were not related to such idea, but the idea of historic right of people is a political idea of the epoch. It was not only a dominant idea in the aforementioned documents. Košut espoused it, but failed in his intent. Bismark implemented that idea. But after 1848 that political idea was not something subjective, but rather something proclaimed. No-one in his right mind could justify the conquest of a certain territory in Africa by the historic right to emancipation of the Blacks. To put it simply, Europe, after 1848, entered the phase of creation of big national states and the phase of colonialism. Late feudalism constructions of so-called historical right became something folkloric.

But Čartoriski, Zah and Garašanin laid claim to the historical right, not only because of proclamative and tactical purposes, but rather because they were aware of the changes of balance in part of Europe, and draw certain conclusions from the then developments. The historic right became a strategic basis of the Serbian foreign policy.

The first and most far-reaching conclusion is that the new state cannot be created through realisation of the right to self-determination of the neighbouring Serb and

Slovene population, but through expansion of the existing Serbian autonomy, in the territorial and ideological terms.

As regards the method of territorial expansion, Zah and Garašanin say the following:

To attain this goal just and expert men should be first sent to explore the situation in those countries and status of those peoples, the men who should thereafter submit relevant reports. What we need mostly are situation analysis of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Northern Albania. At the same time it is necessary to make situation analyses of Slavonia, Croatia and Dalmatia, and of peoples of Srem, Banat and Bačka.(3)

Obviously action against Turkey must be highly organised, because of the strength of the Turkish state in that territory. Basic action should include work of undercover agents on the ground, intense propaganda, influence on priests, and distribution of some economic privileges. Everything is reduced to subjective work of the state bodies of Serbia, and the neighbouring Slav population was considered a non-subjective, easily mouldable mass of people. Even the Roman-Catholic religion of that community in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not considered a major obstacle to their incorporation into the Serbian national being. Such views were optimistic because Garašanin's concept of the being of people was reductionistic, that is, for him the nation was closely related to the state. Since the state community is an essential component of nation, then peoples of the future joint state, upon entering that state, would be blended into it. Garašanin in fact denies them any subjectivity, by denying to recognise the common law and culture developed by the neighbouring Slavic peoples. Those peoples were not Slavs or Serbs because the Serb state thought saw, but because they considered themselves Slavs or Serbs. If only the state link is important, then the question must be posed how can such population be considered of Serb origins, if it is not in the state community with Serbia. Invoking the historical rights does not hold water—we surely don't intend to include in the restored Dušan's Empire Slavonia, Bačka and Dalmatia?!

Garašanin's absolutisation of the state link is based on a pre-modern or in the best case on the early civil concept of politics, as the only form of the practical activity, but also on the genuine status of being of Serb people. The question is what makes population feel that they belong to one people? Is it religion, is it language? As regards language only in the second half of the 19th century standardisation of literary language was effected. Majority of population was illiterate and they spoke different dialects, which separated them, rather than united them. Assertion that Štokavica dialect was a basic feature of the Serb people was unfounded because, large part of Serbian population did not accept Štokavica even in the Twentieth Century. As regards religion, the Serbian Orthodox Church was a national church institution, whose actions bore many pre-Christian hallmarks, SOC was not centralised, it had different priests. In fact its only cohesive elements was its anti-Mohammedan stance in the polemic terms. Even if the church had been more modern it could not have been considered a unifying element, for modern peoples are not constituted because of the religious link (it is a pre-modern element in their being). But one cannot say that the religious link plays an accidental role in constituting modern peoples. One could hardly talk about economic or other external links between parts of that population, who were territorially distanced from each other. But what is then a unifying element?

It was above all the mythical mind-set. According to the totally pre-modern principle the nation is constituted, like pre-Roman peoples, and no people can exist without their mythical mind-set, as it constitutes an integrative element of the religion and language, everything else are just external manifestations. Being of Serb people is his mythology. Pre-modern mythology can be suppressed only by Christianity, with the backing of the state. But there was no such development in the Balkans. It has not happened because part of people had no experience with feudalism, both in the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empire (barring Serbs in Bačka and Slavonia.) Civilising role of feudalism is destruction of national mythologies and establishment of only one mythology-the Christian one. Autonomy within the Turkish, Mohammedan state, could not provide for imposition of the Christian mythology. In Austro-Hungarian empire the situation was even more drastic: military regions, pre-feudal status of people, collective post-feudal form of property, threat of unitary strivings, etc.-contributed to Serbia increasingly strong ties with national mythology.

Garašanin sensed the aforementioned, and he had no other choice but to absolutise the political ties. He wanted to build a modern state, but knew that it could not be built on the national mythology. Garašanin was moreover aware that the national mythology was the biggest hurdle to constitution of a modern state. Hence the only solution was to expand institutions and the state life of Serbia to that population, for Serbia was the only entity which had a kind of modern state forms.(4)

That is the basic principle of "Načertanije": on the basis of the historic right neighbouring Slav and Serbian population should be subjected to institutions of the Serbian state in a bid to create a nation from them. Concept of self-determination cannot be applied to that population, for it is not subjective per se. Garašanin did not think that population of Serbia proper was subjective, let alone the one outside Serbia.

Differences between Zah's plan and Garašanin's Nečertanije are such that they attract great attention of historians, but the aforementioned general principle thereof is not challenged. But there are three salient differences, notably those related to positions on Croats, those related to positions on Russians, and the dynastic issue. Zah wrote the part of his Plan on Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina after talks with Stjepan Car. He focused on the subjectivity of the Croat people. On the other hand Garašanin refused to say anything about subjectivity of the Croat people, while manifesting his understanding for the subjectivity of the Bulgarian people. Zah alike Čartoriski thought that Russia after Austria was the biggest enemy of independence of the Serbian people, and that independence cannot be built with the help of the Russian foreign policy. But despite his reservations about the Russian foreign policy, Garašanin thought that in the forthcoming venture reliance on Russian interests is possible. He was an irreconcilable enemy of the hereditary monarchy in Serbia, for in line with the hereditary rights the duke was accorded a personal authority of a pre-modern character. Garašanin refuses hereditary principle in the business of creation of a new state. What is new is only a foreign policy argument: namely it is true that pre-judging and imposition of the hereditary dynasty would be an obstacle to unification.

MORPHING OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA INTO AUTHORITARIAN RULE OF DUKE MIHAİLO

Saint Andrew Assembly eliminated the Constitution-Defending regime and King Aleksandar Karađorđević in a general polemic with the conservative, political idea. There were two prime movers of that polemic: pro-Obrenović group and Liberals. The first rejected conservative political idea from the position of the patriarchal status of the uppermost authorities and local self-rule. They only rebelled against things which Garašanin administrative clerks subjected to their repression. Liberals were against the conservative idea, because they urged introduction of principle of national sovereignty and competent institutions, notably a permanent national parliament and responsibility of the executive authorities. Pro-Obrenović group and Liberals could be united only by the subject of their discussion.

When the Duke Miloš restored his patriarchal power, he annulled basic achievements of Constitution-Defenders. But due to very repressive and anti-modern actions of the regime, patriarchal political idea was soon rejected. If Miloš's position was obsolete because it stemmed from the abandoned past of the people, Grujić's position was obsolete because it departed from reality of some other, very modern peoples. In 1858-1860 period both patriarchal and liberal ideas showed their impotence, and they had not in fact surpassed the conservative political idea, but in an external way had thwarted it.

Due to external pressure, conservative political idea found its rescue in bastardization, that is in its evolution or morphing into authoritarian rule. Until 1860 Serb people did not have any experience with authoritarian rule, for Miloš's rule was more of a patriarchal kind. In fact Miloš's lack of arbitrariness was contrary to the basic principle of patriarchal rule, the one requiring preservation of customs of forefathers. Wisdom and benevolence are rarely met in patriarchal rule. Collision and mutual limitation of Soviets and the Duke are not of course elements of authoritarian rule.

Authoritarian rule is a modern form of customs law, in which subjective-legal and economic-political moments of statehood annul their particularity and autonomy. They are in collision of substantiality. And that is the basic difference between authoritarian and patriarchal authority; in patriarchal authority there is no collision of substantiality, for it is the pure essence of customs law. Subjective moment of authoritarian rule is a private person, whose arbitrariness, even the wise one, can kick-start all the customs. Substantial moment is tolerant, it does not show any subjectivity, but rather receives it from outside. Hence all moments of practical life (subjective law, morals, economy, politics) become dependant on the arbitrariness of the prime movers of the authoritarian rule. Thus free will is not the subjective moment in practical life, and arbitrariness of prime movers of authoritarian rule is not free will, for it does not contain the moment of urgency. Substantial side of practical life remains recognised by subjective one, by prime movers of authoritarian rule, that is, institutes of private law, economy and public law, remain as they are, they are not denied. But patriarchal rule denies them as such (that is why Miloš's second government is as much patriarchal as the first one, and not authoritarian). Even the substantial side of moral awareness is not challenged, but the subjective one is denied, for one cannot recognise as proper actions those stemming from a moral judgement, but only those stemming from the will of subjects alongside the will of authoritarian ruler. Basic antinomy of authoritarian rule, between subjective and substantial side is its border. In authoritarian rule only one person is subjective, but no-one is free, while in patriarchal rule one is or some are free. Repressive actions taken by the prime movers of

authoritarian rule against subjective side of moment of practical life, do not topple authoritarian rule. It is in fact achieved by the lack of repression against substantial side of the same moments. If a prime mover of authoritarian rule is successful, then his power transforms into a patriarchal form and becomes stable. Authoritarian rule cannot resolve its basic antinomy, for it would stop being antinomy if it were resolved. Authoritarian rule is established when the basic principle on which subjectivity of practical life is upset or destroyed. Authoritarian rule is not established through skill, although it is present, of its prime mover (that is a renaissance, Machiavellian concept), but because of impossibility of practical life, or its great resistance to maintain the element of unity.

Linking the notion of authoritarian rule to unity of power, or non-control of executive power, and not to the unity of moment of practical life, is not proper, for the full unity of power is possible without full unity of moment of practical life. That is why a revolutionary, socialist, national-socialist, fascist, political idea cannot be reduced to principle of authoritarian rule, although it is possible that such political ideas end up in authoritarian rule. There is an ideological tendency to understand as authoritarian rule everything that is not civil-liberal position. There is also a tendency to link the principle of authoritarian rule to patriarchal forms of life, and to link, out of ideological reasons, authoritarian rule to primitive nations, and underdeveloped institutions. That is a basic error, for the authoritarian rule is based on unlimited right of an individual to his own convictions and actions, which is the basis of modern customs. The very notion of authoritarian rule speaks of that: privation is a brain-child of modern, non-patriarchal epoch. The fact that the unlimited power is usurped by only one person, does not indicate an Eastern, Byzantine or simply primitive form. Had there not been Garašanin's institutes of subjective law and some hints of modern administration, Mihailo would not have been able to impose authoritarian rule. The latter cannot be based on principle of patriarchal customs. When Mihailo wanted to do that, his first rule ended disastrously, for Serbia's primitive status could not tolerate authoritarian rule. But the fact is that patriarchal mind-set easily accepts authoritarian rule, for the unity of subjective moment is reminiscent of patriarchal authority, and does not perceive particularity of substantial side. That patriarchal mind-set may directly politically work on establishment of authoritarian power, as it could be its best ally, but not its ontological basis.

After Miloš's death no-one in Serbia was subjective, a new patriarchal master was not feasible, popular sovereignty was ungrounded and almost impossible. Hence Mihailo's authoritarian rule was the only possible answer. But patriarchal and liberal ideas in their polemics with conservative ideas helped spawn authoritarian rule, which was in fact grounded in conservative political ideas.

Conservative political idea refuses the possibility of national sovereignty, due to primitive status of the very people, and because clerkhood in a centralised way dominated their subjects. That element was not present neither in Miloš's patriarchal nor in the liberal government. Idea of administrative control over subjects is a brain child of Mihailo's authoritarian rule. It existed in another shape during the era of the Constitution-Defenders. Garašanin accepted to serve the authoritarian rule of younger Obrenović by pursuing the aforementioned model of administrative control. Garašanin, who was once the main opponent of hereditary dynasty and authoritarian rule of the Duke, suddenly decided, like Nikola Hristić, to fully back the private rule of the duke. Garašanin thought that he always acted consistently, and that he did not compromise his political ideas, for

the new regime upheld the idea of administrative control over its subjects. Moreover the regime developed it, and almost militarily subordinated administrative clerks, for Garašanin during the Constitution-Defenders era had failed to discipline them.

As regards the institute of subjective law, Mihailo has not revised achievements of conservative political idea, and protection of property was not improved. Institute of contract was upheld, when Miloš's attempt to revise loan obligations failed. He tried in fact to curb money-lenders interest rates, and in accordance with the basic principle of his rule he passed a fully pre-modern solution, which did not annul free will of any side in contractual relations. Obviously damage from that action was much greater than benefit. Thus Mihailo after -taking the reins of power, rehabilitated inviolability of contract and tried to solve the problem of money-lending by economic means. But he was not successful in that intent. Judicial authorities were not obstructed in performing their civil law duties, and judicial proceedings were even accelerated. But the biggest Miloš's failure was in that area, on the occasion of so-called Mastorović conspiracy. In 1864 an alleged group of pro-Karadorđević conspirators, operating outside Belgrade, was arrested and brought to trial thanks to a swift police action. The first-instance court sentenced conspirators to short terms of imprisonment. The executive authorities then transferred the case to the second-instance, Supreme Court, which, having established the lack of physical evidence, and determined that the accused did not attack the institution of the ruler, but only verbally protested against private person Miloš Obrenović, acquitted the accused of all charges. Miloš Obrenović responded by bringing to trial judges of the Supreme Court. A private, illegal court composed of extra-judicial individuals sentenced the Supreme Court judges to two and three years of prison. Such proceedings and ruling indicated that the Duke did not consider the judicial authorities subjective, but only substantial, and subjected them to his own subjectivity at whim. Interestingly enough Grašanin did not deem improper that action of Duke Miloš, while Nikola Hristić thought that the police methods would have been even more successful in matters of that nature. While Miloš acted arbitrarily against individuals, Mihailo, due to authoritarian character of his rule, took actions only against institutions.

Added to courts, administration was the most radical Mihailo's lever for protection of institutes of subjective right. During the Constitution-Defenders rule, administration acted repressively against subjects, and controlled the Duke's actions. During Mihailo's rule administration became a very repressive instrument as it was transformed into the Duke's personal services. Under the 1861 Law on the State Council the character of the Council was changed: it retained the legislative authority, but lost its controlling function with respect to the Duke. In fact its legislative role was reduced to advisory. That was a key amendment to the 1838 Turkish Constitution. After subjecting the Council to his will, the Duke decided to resolve the issue of governmental responsibility by passing the 1838 Act on Arrangement of Central State Administration. Thus he reduced the government of its executive body. Non-subjective government and only representative Council enabled Mihailo to exercise his thoroughly private authority. In 1876 Duke Mihailo passed an amendment to the Act on Arrangement of the Central State Administration, under which the government could punish and dismiss any clerk at will and without legal remedy. This in fact meant that administrative authority was subjected to the executive one, and the executive one to a private person, Duke Mihailo Obrenović. While the position of the executive authority with respect to the sovereign

underwent changes, relations between administrative and executive authorities in the Serbian state, have never been changed since Mihailo's era, not even during the Liberals and Communist rule. On the other hand the entire administrative authority was usurped by the police; even the military officials tasked with setting up the national army were under the police authority. Under the 1866 Act on Municipalities, municipal authorities were organised as the police one, and thus the last element of local self-rule was abolished. Mihailo's Serbia was the most salient example of the police state in Europe. Even the Prussian state was not so centralised in terms of the police-administrative authority. Subjects of state had the status of subject of the police report, and no subjectivity was recognised to them.

The 1861 Act on National Assembly completely devalued the legal and political significance of parliament. It was reduced to a parade institution, and survived only as a throwback to the Saint Andrew Parliament (the duke obviously did not intend to abolish institution which had brought him to power.) Under that Act the intelligentsia, clerks and lawyers, were removed from the political life. Duke appointed secretaries and other parliamentary officials. They were criminally responsible for all cases of vilification of the Duke. Elections were organised by the police run by a methodical Nikola Hristić, and the parliament was convened every three years preferably outside Belgrade, because of the popular support to some 'strange' MPs proposals. In a stark contrast to the St. Andrew Parliament, which brought Mihailo and his father to power, the new Parliament was reduced to the Duke's advisory body. Mihailo thus made sure that the parliament could never topple him and bring to power another duke.

Authoritarian rule of Mihailo Obrenović simply did not need subjects, and their presence was a disturbing enough factor.

But despite all the aforementioned Mihailo was considered a just and enlightened man, a great idealist and a gentleman. The most authoritarian rule in Europe was to an extent obviously recognised as legitimate, both by the subjects and the international factor. The basis of that legitimacy was an alleged absolute devotion to the foreign policy goal of liberation of neighbouring Serb and other Slavic territories from Turkey. Upon coming to Belgrade in 1858 Mihailo established close ties with Garašanin. And they remained close ties almost throughout Mihailo's rule. As Mihailo's long-term Foreign Secretary, Garašanin implemented basic guidelines of "Načertanije", convinced, like others, that the Duke wanted to wage wars. At the time Mihailo was setting up a national army, the first serious military formation in Serbia. But Mihailo only kept promising wars. In fact his external policy served the purpose of his internal policy. It was a justification of his unlimited personal power, and not vice versa as many believed. And he spoke openly that Serbia, on the basis of its historical rights intended to expand its state in a war against Turkey to be waged together with neighbouring Slavic peoples. He thought that a Serb was an incomparably better man and a soldier than a Turk, and that the size of his army was irrelevant. That opinion of his was shared by all Conservatives and Liberals. But contrary to Mihailo they did not work on consolidation of authoritarian rule and the police dictatorship. Humiliated and belittled subject of the Serbian state was expected to show an unusual military virtue and freedom-loving spirit. Internally subjugated subjects of the Serbian state were expected to show enterprising skills in the business of expansion of that very state. Mihailo even thought that Garašanin's

undercover agents in neighbouring Slavic states were not an important factor. In fact he believed that peoples should be simply instigated to take up arms and stage a revolt.

Mihailo recognised the principle of self-determination to other Slavic peoples, he intended to incorporate into his state, but failed to recognise that principle to his own people. Obviously such contradictions could not yield results. Hence his famous foreign policy was a mere justification for his authoritarian rule. In fact his justification was the following: as Serbia must wage war against Turkey, it must organise an army, prime the neighbouring Slavic and Serb peoples for that campaign, and have an internal order befitting that goal. And the state is most ready for the war, when all institutions of customs are in hands of one person, and the society is organised as a military formation. If we organise the state in such a way then its subjects shall embrace the idea of war, for both they and the state have in peace prepared for that war. At play was an age-old political manipulation: authoritarian rule justifies its actions by foreign policy reasons. His threats of war aimed at ensuring legitimacy to his authoritarian rule. And that policy of his became transparent to both his foreign allies and enemies. His naive and fallacious foreign policy assessments, like those of the outcome of the Prussian-Austrian war, indicated the amateurish character of his foreign policy. Even Russia had reservations about his foreign policy, and after dismissal of Garašanin openly opposed the Duke. His own subjects, notably intelligentsia, started calling into question legitimacy of his authoritarian regime. Liberals and civil Liberals from Hungary became his bitter enemies. In fact they demystified his foreign policy. In the last stage of his rule many expected that he would be assassinated. And nobody was surprised by the Topčider assassination. Ristić, at the time of assassination, his Foreign Minister, and later his Deputy Prime Minister, wrote that only direct perpetrators should be convicted, for investigation would show that too many people were involved in that assassination plot. One gets the impression that Mihailo's murder was inevitable, as it resulted from his suicidal authoritarian rule.

Conservative political idea acquired a bastard shape during Mihailo's authoritarian rule. Hence the end of that rule was tantamount to a defeat of the very conservative idea. Authoritarian rule of Mihailo and conservative idea were not so similar, but they were nonetheless held together by principle of centralism and customs. That is why in the wake of the Topčider assassination, conservative political idea morphed into a liberal one, without severing ties with basic tenets of conservative and authoritarian ideology. In fact original rejection of conservative political idea happened outside Serbia, that is in Vojvodina, through ideas of Vojvodina civil liberalism.

VOJVODINA RESPONSE (MIHAILO POLIT-DESANČIĆ)

In Vojvodina different ideas emerged primarily thanks to a different political situation and existence of a more developed bourgeoisie. The most prominent representative and advocate of those Liberal-civil ideas was Mihailo Polit-Desančić. He was an unusual man, a gentleman, an educated man (he spoke 9 languages). He was very much appreciated by Croat, Romanian and Slovak politicians and intellectuals, and notably Hungarian politicians, who were aware of his political strength. He started his political career with Mažuranić in Vienna, then he spent some time in Cetinje where he

got familiar with the political situation in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the Croat Parliament as a very young person, he was highly acclaimed. After the Austro-Hungarian deal, he was compelled to learn Hungarian language in order to work as a lawyer in Novi Sad. In later years he delivered all his refined speeches in the Hungarian Parliament in that language. His very long career was very consistent for it was based on a polemical position; Mihailo Polit-Desančić was a stiff opponent of the conservative political idea and thought that the national affirmation of the Serb people could not be achieved through conservative policy propagated by Vienna, Budapest, Russia and, let alone-Belgrade. In his anti-conservative campaign he had an advantage over Serb Liberals, because he was well acquainted with conservative ideas of both foreign and domestic origins. In contrast to Polit-Desančić Serb Liberals criticised only conservative ideas of their own people. Covert or rather latent conservatism and romantic patriarchal nationalism of Serb Liberals was conditioned by their lack of knowledge of and experience with conservatism and romantic patriarchal nationalism of other peoples. When one takes into account that influence of the 1848 ideas in Serbia was only external and subsequent, although it was very penetrating, differences in the line of thinking between Serb liberals and Mihailo Polit-Desančić became very clear.

Polit-Desančić rejected conservative political idea primarily on the plane of national politics and considered identification of nation and state as its basis. In *Nationality and its statehood-making basis*, he notes:

"Striving to identify nationality and state is futile; we can only reach two extremes: either we shall take an area (territory) as an element which binds all citizens of one state, and disregard akin language and origins. If we do that nationality emerges as a paraphrase of state, and means as much as all citizens of a state. Or one can claim territory for each tribe (nation), whereby one thinks that the state can progress only when united are all those who belong to that tribe (nation). But both concepts of nationality are wrong, for they tend to equalise different things. Moreover if one tried to consistently implement any of those concepts, one would realise that each of them would be a hurdle on the road to state development, impeding the state to become a legal state.(5)

In the aforementioned famous text written in German and published in Vienna, Polit-Desančić starts out with the idea that nation is not only a natural, that is external tie, but rather something spiritual. Hence he says: "Nation is a personality". This is contrary to a conservative political idea which main argument is that "Nation is a community of blood ties and territory", non-subjective and non-personality. Polit-Desančić established that there were two modes of conservative political stance, depending on the position of a certain nation within a state: according to the conservative political idea of the majority nation citizenship and nation are one thing, while the minority conservative political idea sought its affirmation in a separate state.

Conservatism of the majority people is not based on wrong equalisation between public-legal and civil-legal status. Although it was a legal mistake of history of European peoples of the Ninetieth and Twentieth Century, in both centuries there were many attempts to affirm that idea. Mihailo Polit-Desančić and Serbs in Vojvodina got in touch with that idea in 1848-9 when the liberal course of unrest in Hungary was replaced with a conservative one.(6) Interestingly enough Lajos Kosut in emigration, in Italy, revised all his ideas, barring the one that all subjects of the Hungarian state were Hungarians. Although in 1848 Hungarians made up over 30% of population, conservative majority

idea prevailed among them. One can say that the 1848 ideas among Hungarians were eliminated by Hungarians, and not by Serbs, Austrians or Russians.

The majority conservatism defends itself by assertion about civil affirmation of other nations or national minorities. And it is a wrong defence: of course every subject is equal in subjective-legal or economic affairs, for a legal person, like an economic one is anyone, hence profit is not a national category, but political person has its contents and elements. Subjective-legal or economic laws do not deal with concrete people, but with abstract, legal person, while public-legal acts or actions don't make difference between people according to their race, intelligence, wealth, sex, or nation, for their principle is abstract equality without any contents, while political acts and activities happen in the world of concrete differences, where every single difference is important, even the ones between nations. Therefore politics are the highest, practical activity, for they happen in the world of concrete mediation and inequality. Assertions that members of this or that nation have the same rights like all citizens of a state is correct, but not true, for they have the same rights as legal and economic persons, but not as political subjects; even the general suffrage and the right to freedom of expression don't abolish a concrete national inequality, but only make it more abstract.

Polit-Desančić is aware that the national issue surpassed legal and economic considerations:

"Obviously well-resolved issue of nationalities (nations) shall have to take into account social relations, which have a bearing on relations with minorities. A major individual liberty will have to be achieved. State mustn't compel an individual in religious, national, economic or social terms. It should boost free actions of individuals, instead of hindering them. Compulsion is justified only if free actions of individuals threaten the general cause".(7)

Thus in a response to the majority conservative idea Polit-Desančić affirms the liberal idea, whereby the majority nation is liberated from other non-national ties, and the minority conservative idea is not invoked.

The minority conservative idea is based on the same principle like the majority one, on understanding of nation as the community of blood ties and territory. It is essentially only individuation, and not individualisation of the majority conservative idea. Individuation is the process of crumbling of an unity or one, in which the newly-emerged parts are the same like in the previous unity or only smaller, while individualisation is the process of creation of differences, in which parts are different, but still make an unity or new-one. Polit-Desančić thought that individuation of national separatism does not bring anything new and that it is detrimental to nations bent on separation, due to external and internal reasons. The external reason is the following: "To consistently implement the principle of nationality, to enable each tribe (nation) to make a state for itself is linked to many unpredictable problems and in most instances is not feasible, unless the states are to disintegrate into families".(8) Internal reason is the following: "There are many such states in the European East, namely many nations are so big that they cannot blend into others, and at the same time so small that they cannot defend their nationality when attacked by the big nations".(9) The first objections speak of a complicated and bloody, but frequently futile road of creation of the national states, while the second one speaks of a historical strength and impotence of small peoples; both objections make Polit-Desančić

reject the minority conservative idea and proclaim any mode of conservative idea-false. Hence, the only solution is a liberal political idea.

Polit-Desančić's liberalism is of a civil kind, which means that his principle is based on an individual embodied in the civil personality, in contrast to the Serbian liberalism which perceived the people exclusively as something subjective. The basic position of the original liberalism is thus formulated: "Freedom of an individual is something sacred and lofty, it is inherent to a personality. Therefore the state should not repress the individual, but rather expand and promote its freedom". According to Polit-Desančić personality includes not only an individual, but all institutions which make the citizen and the nation. Hence the

position on needs of the state should not hinder development of personality...all parts of practical life must be developed autonomously, resting on the subjectivity of the free will".(10) Such an idea or basic position of original liberalism, emerged in the Eighteenth century, but as Polit-Desančić was the man of the Ninetieth century, Polit-Desančić is not inclined towards ideologization of liberal ideas and assertion that they represent attainment of absolute freedom and equality. Thus he writes:

"Even the modern times, which attach such importance to human rights, could not realise the pure freedom of individuals. Inequality of property and wealth, a growing victory of big capitalism over the small one, and resulting proliferation of proletariat, have plunged many individuals into a state similar to slavery. The state, whose task is to harmonise interests of all citizens, must strive towards removing this terrible condition of many human beings. But obviously the social issue can be resolved only in a gradual way. Social inequality affects all nations and nationalities, and hinders development of all of them".(11)

Therefore if one were to accept ideologisation and absolutisation of liberal idea about the final right to all to freedoms, then all inequalities between men would not have sense, even those of national character; despite the fact that the subjective legal and moral freedom reached a principled truth in the civil world, in the face of many restrictions in positive laws of certain European states, the man's practical life has not become free. And it has not become free for the civil inequality is based, as Polit-Desančić, in line with his times thinks, on economic inequality which generates both basic freedom and inequality. inequality of rich and poor, and which is so large that it is akin to "slavery". Adam Smith saw and described that fundamental antinomy of civil society, but he did not think that it jeopardised the economic society, but rather that it was subjective and propelling. Smith's purely liberal capitalist idea fails to perceive destructive force of that obstacle. But the second half of the Ninetieth century perceived it and tried to solve it through imperialism as it helped mover that antinomy from the country of origin to colonies, in order to lessen it destructive power. Polit-Desančić remarked that the task of the state is to resolve that antinomy internally instead of exporting it to the colonies. WW1 showed in a bloody and non-academic way that external solution to the obstacle was not sufficient, that it that the internal one must be found. Three major political ideas of the Twentieth century: socialism, national-socialism and welfare state are just attempts to solve internally that issue. Polit-Desančić was very progressive in terms of his urging that the issue be solved internally, but he did not reach that position after a substantial analysis of European societies, but uttered it out of a more prosaic reason: out of national, political fear. He repeatedly wrote aggressiveness of major powers is subject to both qualitative and

quantitative changes in their relations and towards smaller nations. As a representative of a small nation on the European fringes, he anticipated that his and other people would fare terribly in the coming time of imperialism. Out of that fear he suggested internal and not external solution. He deemed the latter lethal for small European nations.

But existence of that obstacle, in addition to external and internal soft-cushioning, was most certain to induce all other differences and inequalities in the civil-economic and political society, which would consequently entail a deeper inequality between nations. Because of economic inequality and lack of freedom in the civil world, the national inequality is large, and the task of the state is to soften that inequality. The civil state should not do it because of generosity, but because it can only benefit from such easing of inequality. Moreover unsolved national inequality grows into a conflict which dissolves the very state. Polit-Desančić sees impotence of modern state in economic sphere. Therefore he claims that it will take a long time to fully solve that inequality. According to him the state must solve that national inequality and non-freedom directly, in the public-legal and political spheres. That is the fundamental thesis of Mihailo Polit-Desančić in his essay "Nationality and its state-legal basis".

In further elaboration of this thesis he noted differences between national states and states with several generic nations. National states are dominated biologically, linguistically and economically by one nation, whereby representatives of other nations were something accidental and sporadic, for example in France. The first kind of states may be, but need not be, administration-wise centralised, for such arrangement of administration does not call into question their state survival.⁽¹²⁾ The second kind of states, like Switzerland, have an internal order fully compatible with their multi-nation composition. On the other hand Austria, Hungary and Turkey, in which internal order is contrary to national situation, have to be decentralised, for any centralisation would call into question such states.⁽¹³⁾ Polit-Desančić says: A national state, or a state with several nationalities should be a legal state. And this is what he considered a legal state:

"The notion legal state (Rechstaat) is not contrary to the one of the police state. For us a legal state is the one whose task is to be just to all".⁽¹⁴⁾

Hence a legal state is a state based on a liberal political idea. According to Polit-Desančić all multi-national states must be arranged in keeping with that idea. But wherever a conservative political idea, which with the centralist administration annuls multi-national states, prevails, its spin-off is necessarily a minority conservative idea generating separatism.⁽¹⁵⁾

One-nation state if organised in a liberal way, does not need to elevate manifestations of free will of the national aspect to public law, but should keep them at the level of family and municipality. On the other hand a multi-national state must regulate national autonomy through public law. This means that in one-nation states a liberal basis is in the cultural and linguistic autonomy, while in multi-national ones it is elevated to the level of self-management. Polit-Desančić called national self-management "a municipal right" and considered that a municipality has an ideal territorial basis, that is, that one municipality differs from another in a territorial sense, and from a centralised state in terms of its prerogatives and autonomy. In fact he spoke about federalism, which wisely strikes a balance between authority and federal units, and whose foundation is a liberal idea of economic, legal, religious and national freedom. National state can be attained only through municipal, state law, while other freedoms are reached beyond it.

Polit-Desančić obviously thinks that there are no privileged people in economic and religious sense, in any federal unit, municipality.

His definite conclusion is the following:

"Federation is the only possible state system for the whole European East, not only for Turkey, but also for Austria and Hungary".

In other words he established that those states would collapse, unless they become federal states and organise themselves on the basis of a liberal political idea.⁽¹⁶⁾ But can such states become federal states? In the Hungarian parliament he explained to advocates of conservative political idea, and Croat and Romanian politicians, the necessity of federalisation. One can say that he had faith in federalisation of Hungary and Austria, for their European customs basis included the subjectivity element. But he thought that Turkey could not embrace a liberal political idea, notably because of Muslim religion. He expounded and clarified that position in his second essay "*Eastern issue and its organic solution*", published in 1862, in Vienna.

Polit-Desančić wrote that the modern state was characterised by "the organism which is manifested primarily in the all-powerful state authorities who extend evenly their protection and assistance to all citizens. Mohammedan state does not recognise such even protection and assistance, for its rule rests on subordination of followers of Islam. Moral idea of a modern state, which is concerned about the general interest of citizens, irrespective of their religion, is incompatible with the gist of the Mohammedan state".⁽¹⁷⁾ According to Polit-Desančić Turkey cannot establish the principle of modern states, because, due to overwhelming Islamic influence, it equalises religion and state. But one can say that Polit-Desančić failed to see similar instances in Europe, and that even some Serb advocates of conservative idea tended to perceive Orthodox religion as citizenship, and not as a religious orientation. Religion and state are equalised because a subjective legal institute is elevated to the level of a public-legal one. Moreover religious orientation is a private choice of citizens, and in a modern state it cannot be the basis of its legal or any other status. If it constituted such a basis, then the idea of a legal, moral, economic and political equality of all persons making up that community, would be annulled, and the state would be then organised only as a privilege, that is, only some persons would enjoy freedom in it. In Turkey only some persons are free, or maybe only one person, and that privilege is the basis of the practical life. Islam does not allow the change of such privileges, that is, the idea of a modern state is not compatible with Mohammedan religion. Although Polit-Desančić's position is too stern, the history proved that he was right, for Turkey was the only Mohammedan state which in the Twentieth century developed institutes of modern customs, but in the face of Islam. Atatürk's secularised Turkey is based on the conservative political idea, and that is the largest measure of freedom which the Islamic population can tolerate. Any other idea would have led to disintegration of the state. Hence decades-long European criticism of Turkey's conservatism are grounded, for Turkey shall sink again into Islam, if it does not preserve its conservatism. But twenty centuries-long Turkish conservatism has embraced to a certain extent institutes of a modern state, although it has constituted Turkey, in line with the position of the majority conservatism, as one-nation state. In other words Turkey is still not a free country for non-Turks living in it. Hence the history has confirmed Polit-Desančić's position.

Since the multi-national Turkish state cannot embrace liberal institutes, it shall disintegrate, but its disintegration can be effected in different ways. The first is carving-up of Turkey by the big powers:

"There is much talk about division of the Turkish administration, as if in the Balkans, only Asiatic hordes, and not European peoples, lived. As if those peoples could be divided or annexed. Division of Turkey is considered in Europe the only possible solution of the Eastern issue, but one should admit that a mere attempt at division would spark off a European war".

Europe is not ready for an European war, not because of its anti-war mood, but because the outcome of such war would be uncertain: if Turkey were divided without European war, nothing would be attained, for the Balkans population would be once again subjugated. According to Polit-Desančić division of Turkey is not feasible because of unsubstantial reasons:

"In all the great issues of the world history, moral principles shall emerge victorious from the struggle between particular interests. They will prevail over all particular interests and confirm the rule of wisdom. And such an outcome shall give assurances to the Balkans peoples that sooner or later their future shall be bright too. The Eastern issue has not been resolved to date because of conflicting interests of European states. But from this conflict shall emerge something which shall neutralise all those particular interests, but also guarantee a common interest to all. That logic of the world history shall emerge victorious in the settlement of the Eastern issue.(19)

One must admit speculative nature of this way of thinking, for it unites the general and the particular, and sees behind it *Aufhebung* which shall bring to the Balkans peoples freedom and make them familiarise with the European institutions. Particular interests of big European powers cannot be annulled, but must be confirmed in the settlement of the Eastern issue.

"A service to the European balance can be made by a state combination opening Turkey, as a neutral area to European trade, for only then different interests of some European states shall be met. Hence such a state combination must be a confederation of states and not an aggressive, expansion-minded, unified state. Linking of those neutral states shall serve the purpose of defence of federal territory and internal development".(20)

Hence on the one side real interests of European states, and on the other "logic of world history and principle of wisdom", impose the following solution: confederation of the Christian peoples in the Balkans. Christian peoples are not getting liberated from Turkey because of their possible historic rights(21), as Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians had powerful medieval states which in turns controlled that part of the Balkans, but because of their future rights, and notably because of the highest national right which the French Revolution produced and transferred to all in 1848: the right of people to self-determination, or as Polit-Desančić calls it "principle of nationality". Reformation set the principle of free research and despite many obstacles it was widely accepted in Europe. This resulted in re-arrangement of the European system of states. In our century a similar characteristic of reformation seems to be principle of nationality. But this is a much more powerful characteristic, for nationality more than religion embraces spiritual life of men Principle of nationality has it deeply embedded philosophical-state-legal basis. Its starting point is the philosophically based truth that nationality is a spiritual being which makes

up a personality of a determined national tree. Hence life of such a personality can be complete only in that state and in the state life. Therefore every national tree, to fully develop and promote the progress of mankind in general, has the right to attain the state existence, for only in such an existence it reaches that goal.(22)

Principle of nationality as the highest international right of the Ninetieth century has been transferred to the Twentieth century. Polit-Desančić rightly indicates that change of that principle was negotiated by real relations, level of education and culture of a nation, and its economic and military power. Principle of nationality is a principle, and not a scheme or a legal norm. That mental principle has its possibility of realisation in a favourable combination of many, even conflicting moments, and emerges as their solution and confirmation.

In contrast to Garašanin and Vladimir Jovanović, Polit-Desančić obviously on the foreign policy plane rejected consistently a conservative political idea, for in his opinion the right of the Balkan people was established on principle of self-determination of peoples, and not on the historical right. He wrote: "If there is war between Serbia and Porta, and if the consequence thereof is an all-out revolt of Christians and participation of Greeks...etc".(23) Therefore added to the military power of Serbia and Greece, he anticipated an all-out uprising of Christians, which was contrary to conservative Garašanin's idea, and latent conservative idea of liberation of Serb people.

Only in one point Polit-Desančić agrees with his predecessors and contemporaries; namely he claims that the very Turkish people are ready to defeat the Turkish military power. That assessment was so commonplace until the Eastern crisis that we cannot accuse Polit-Desančić of lack of objectivity. He was the man of his times. What is essential is Polit-Desančić's assertion that the result of liberation of the Balkans peoples should be "confederation, as it most suits the peoples of the Balkans peninsula, for it preserves the state independence of each people, and at the same time preserves the link created by the geographical position and material interests".(24) Hence confederation is a necessity because of internal reasons, historical maturing of the Balkans peoples, and the external reasons, the need to maintain neutrality of the Balkans because of balance between the major powers. Polit-Desančić's solution presupposed impossibility of the European war.(25)

Polit-Desančić's solution has not been historically confirmed, for the concept of conservative idea has won due to the European war and radical shifts in international relations. But despite that Polit-Desančić's argumentation remains an inspiration for every solution of the status of the Serb people if there is no war in Europe.

Polit-Desančić's liberal political idea, very close to the original liberalism, but with elements of being and myths of his epoch, represents the highest level of political enlightenment of the Serb people in the Nineteenth century, both in its conception of internal, and also foreign policy, and his manner of shaping his stances. The latter is very inspiring for those who want to deliberate the being and notion of the Serbian people.

THE SECOND EMERGENCE OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA

The second emergence of a conservative political idea in Serbia occurred in the late Ninetieth century, had its golden age between 1903 and the Balkans wars, and ended

during the WW1, when in 1915 it led to the collapse of Serbia and to the seizure of power by the Regent Alexander. If the first emergence of the conservative political idea is linked to confrontation with patriarchal political stance, the second emergence is linked to confrontation with the radical political attitude. In essence the second emergence of conservative political idea is morphing of the radical stance into the conservative one, and not an external, mutual showdown.

TRANSFORMATION OF THE RADICAL IDEA INTO THE CONSERVATIVE ONE

One of the best known assessments of radicalism in Serbia is the following: the Radical Party first embraced socialism, later concept of the peasant state, then conservatism and finally reactionary stance. It turned out that Marković's socialism to a relatively modest extent influenced the development of the radical idea. Its origins were basically domestic, and it was influenced only by Russians. The Radical idea was born in 1881, when the party was founded, and when the radical program was conceived. Hence it is problematic to speak about socialism of Radicals, although they often hyped their socialist stances. Early radical ideas were most clearly expounded in a series of articles published by Self-Management, in the shape of brochure titled "*Civil society and its social political parties*" and which was sold at the popular price of 1 dinar. It was later established that the author of those articles was Laza Paču, one of the most bizarre leaders of the Radical Party, a doctor and economists, and highly educated intellectual. His goal was to defend the Radical Party from criticism voiced in *Radenik*, tantamount to assertions that the Radicals abandoned Marković's heritage. The question is whether Paču succeeded in his polemical intent, but he most surely managed to clearly express his Radical program. On page 165 he says: "What can be the task of Socialism in Serbia, in the country of primitive culture? Nothing else but the following: development and organisation of production, without class differences, as foundations of the financial independence and a broad democratic basis of the state". Thus Paču reduced his economic program only to industrialisation, and his political one to democratisation, that is a consistent parliamentarism. Idea about "class differences" was insignificant and he soon abandoned it. Industrialisation was not only the dream of the Radicals, but also of the majority of the economic intelligence in Serbia, practically only Čedomir Mijatović had a different stance. But Radicals, in contrast to others were ready to use state to a large extent, for the purpose of industrialisation. After the King had left the country and the Radical government had been installed, the economic program was implemented. It focused primarily on protection of the domestic market from the imported industrial commodities and incentives to domestic output. Long-standing finance minister Mihailo Vujić was a consistent protectionist and economic nationalist. He tried hard to prevent import of foreign goods and entry of foreign investments. Ministers of Economy, who were also bent on protection of domestic commodities, tended to grant numerous and hefty concessions, in order to develop domestic output. Although their intentions were very good, the result was modest, for excessive state involvement into economic matters produced many counter effects and an express agricultural character of economy and production prevented the growth of the processing industry. The fact was that Serbia did not have economic and social strength for a speedy and dangerous spill-over of surplus of

value from agriculture into industry, and political effects of such, possible policy would have been lethal for the party in power. No Peasant Party can propagate spill over of capital from agriculture. Hence concessions, benefits and taxes and tariffs remained the only serious instruments of the economic policy. Obviously in the Ministry there were many clever people who, by using benefits, used the state without developing production. Those individuals who soon openly started colluding with the civil-minded members of the Radical party, grew on importance in the economic and political life of Serbia. Consequently a serious idea soon regressed to radicalisation of the old custom that privileges could help make profit. Earlier such privileges were accorded by the court, and now they originated from the legal institutions of the state. Earlier governments were not so ambitious in their economic programs, but they plundered less. Namely a lot of state money ended up in private pockets during the Radical party governments. Economic program of the Radical Party had very modest effects, but it compromised the civil-minded members of the party who became puppets in the hands of the wealthy business people. This in turn changed the social character of the party, which now had the elite with the rudimentary capitalist reasoning. Consequently the party now had now new ideas and -new interests. In an attempt to realise their economic ideas, Radicals launched social incentives for development of the party in the conservative direction, for the civil-minded members of the party were bent on preserving their positions and also espoused different views on the state matters. Mihailo Vujić and Kosta Taušanović spearheaded the transformation of the party from the radical concept to the conservative one.

As regards the political part of the program something similar happened. Original radical ideas and their concept of self-rule and the peasant state won by a landslide unprecedented in the European practice, but after coming to power it became a source of instability for the very party. But let us clarify this matter: the 1869 free-minded constitution opened wide open doors to Radicals to take over power and to arrange the state as they wished, or rather to tailor it to their needs. Radicals simply disregarded many constitutional provisions which were contrary to their intents or made them null and void thanks to their total control over the parliament. In a very short period of time they created a party state, which had never before existed in Serbia. The main subjective moment in the community became the party. Consequently the Radicals-controlled parliamentarism was reduced to the one-party state dictatorship with legal means. To put it simply the party and state structure of power and decision-making were equalised. In a situation in which the party occupied the state, the state imposed its principle of functioning of the party. Therefore instead of a decentralised party with predominance of local committees, the need arose for a solidly organised party in power. The old peasant cadres could not follow that change, so they were thrown out of party. This happened to Ranko Tajić too. Centralism destroyed political program of the Radical idea. Key moment was the annual assembly of the Popular Radical party in 1891 in Zaječar. Pašić in his native town experienced one of the most unpleasant moments of his long party life. Logic of the state power pulled in one direction and strength of tradition and program in another. The conflict was resolved in the following way: Pašić made a selection of cadres, nicknamed "the second elimination of Radicals", for it could be compared only to what King Milan did after the Timok Revolt. In implementing their principles, the Radical Party generated something that was contrary to those principles, both in the economic and political sense. By beating the others, they made sure to beat themselves

too. In 1891 the greatest political hope of Serbia in the Ninetieth century was crushed, and not by any outside intervention. The result was a new party of the old name, which was now a centralised organisation, the party in power, and its top leadership was composed of businessmen. Era of radicalism lasted only ten years, and the rest is only history of the Radical Party and of Nikola Pašić. The Radical idea was the first great political idea in Serbia which was not defeated by an authoritarian regime (in the past conservative idea was defeated by the authoritarian Duke Mihailo, and the liberal one by the authoritarian King Milan). In the last decade of the Ninetieth century the period of predominance of the conservative political idea lasted until the Thessaloniki process, or authoritarian rule of the Regent Aleksandar Karađorđević. In that long period the Socialist idea became very strong, while the Liberal one met with its biggest defeat. In that period no prominent Liberal intellectual emerged.

In the late Ninetieth century the cycle of development of big political ideas in Serbia ended. Everything evolved from the patriarchal stances of popular uprisings and the Duke Miloš's rule. In polemics with patriarchalism the conservative idea emerged victorious and the Constitution-Defenders lost their 'battle' with King Milan. Liberal idea evolved and progressed, and it peaked during Piroćanac's Progressive government. It was later defeated by the authoritarian regime of King Milan. The Radical idea surpassed the liberal one in all aspects, and it even managed to dismantle another authoritarian regime, but it lost impetus, and consequently mutated into the conservative one. The cycle has indeed ended, or it was closed, but the new cycle or process of coming of age of big political ideas in the Twentieth century was also began.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA AT THE TIME OF ITS SECOND EMERGENCE

At the watershed of centuries Serbia was still a peasant community in which the primary accumulation of capital was effected in a successful way, subjective rights were protected, but not fully understood by common people, while public rights were at the mercy of the ruler, and state finances in a continuing deep crisis. The state of Serbia was so indebted that one third of its budget had to cover its annuities. Once a year loans were raised at invariably unfavourable conditions, to cover deficit or to allow for re-programming of accumulated debts. In view of a modest economic strength of Serbia such indebtedness was indeed unwise. All political options did the same thing, and only few governments tried to introduce order into state finances. All in all, judging by the level of its national income Serbia was one of the most indebted countries in Europe. Administration was once again centralised, the state served for personal profit-making, and corruption was rife. Social stratification was rudimentary, the society was in fact divided into a small elite and enormous majority of peasants, while working class did not exist. Elite was of civil kind and its business was tied to the state. Intelligentsia was not so numerous, and was also on state gravy train. Status of women was catastrophic, even worse than in the patriarchal times. Serbia could be proud only of its literature and political independence which guaranteed it a solid future.

There was a kind of economic development, in 1900 trade was seven time greater than in 1843, and in 1873 - late Ninetieth century period 100 new companies were

founded, railway development enabled internal linking of trade (barring the Užice region) and links with the world through Bulgaria and Thessaloniki. When Đerdap was regulated the fluvial transport with the Black Sea was established. But all this was established in the face of the dispersed peasant production and great trade dependence on Austro-Hungary. Over 90% of total imports and almost all cattle exports were carried out by Danube, while over 10% of Austro-Hungarian exports went to Serbia, which is a high percentage in view of the economic strength of Austro-Hungary and small territory and population of Serbia. Serbia was economically equal to Bulgaria, but it was less independent and had more debts. However Bulgaria was militarily stronger than Serbia, for it was able to more successfully modernise its army.(26)

The basic customs idea was of a patriarchal-conservative nature. Even in literature, and not only in romanticism, that stance was dominant. Political sphere was totally conservatism-minded. All three parties were conservative. Elderly Ristić linked his party to his three-decades old ideas, according to which the 1869 Constitution was considered the right measure of freedom for Serbia. The party was consistent only in the sense that it was loyal to the House of Obrenović, and everything else was less important. At the spring 1898 elections it ran as a clearly royal party, and like all the others royal parties it was cheated by the Court in the wake of elections. Decades-long leader of the party Jovan Ristić became so radical, that from his death bed after Ivanjdan attempted assassination of King Milan he suggested to the court that all the radical leaders be shot down. Liberals were always nationalists, but in this phase their nationalism lost the romantic basis which it once had and was reduced to the provincial public opinion.

The Progressive Party from the pro-Western, liberal party was reduced to the party begging the court to enter the government. It did not have the grass-roots backing, and even when it had serious intentions, it could not do anything against the will of the King. The last Progressives government was the one headed by Stojan Novaković in 1895-96 period. It then showed its very conservative leanings. From the time of Piroćanac and Mijatović Progressives enjoyed the reputation of the party which could oppose nationalism and aggressive foreign policy. But now Novaković became the greatest nationalist in Serbia and he caused mindless scandals with Austro-Hungary. In his internal policy he relied on the court wishes, and in his foreign policy he tried to be independent and to compete with nationalism.

Radicals were a purely conservative party, for unlike Progressives and Liberals, they were not such a pro-court party. They were separated from an excessive influence of the court by upholding their claim to preservation of parliamentarism. But they were permanently at loggerheads with the court, for they were no longer the popular party, but rather the party in power. Their relationship with the court was permanently determined by Aleksandar's coup of 1 April 1893, that is, by the fact that they came to power not because of their political strength, but thanks to the will of the underage successor to the throne. The aforesaid implied that they could be eliminated by the court at the latter's whim. The Ivanjdan attempted assassination in 1899 was carried out in an amateurish fashion, but it nonetheless made some contemporaries believe that it was organised by King Milan. Radical party leaders were arrested, although there was no evidence against them. The newly-formed court was tasked with definitively destroying the Radicals. But, kings (Serbia had two kings: "His Excellency King Aleksandar" and "General, His Excellency King Milan) did no pull a stunt properly. Unprecedented judicial farce caused

international scandal and they were criticised even by Austria. They brought themselves to the situation of a complete political defeat and a possibility of rejection of the dynasty. They were suddenly saved by Nikola Pašić, who agreed to a deal with the court, fearing that the party's leaders might be convicted (there were in fact no grounds for such fear because the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empire threatened the Kings to suspend judicial proceedings). Pašić later explained that he did it to save the party, while other thought that he did it to save himself. Leaving aside his true reasons for that action, his dishonourable conduct prolonged the rule of Obrenović for several years. Pašić's speech before the Obrenović-appointed court was humiliating both for him and his party, for it indicated his party's involvement in the assassination. During the Timok Revolt Pašić fled Serbia, but the party remained strong without him and many arrested leaders. Now this was not possible, for the party because of excessive centralisation, that is too close ties with its leadership, became too vulnerable. That was the party in power which was ready to accept even restoration of the 1869 Constitution, to admit consequences of the king's coup, only to grab some power. And when it came it power, it never created major problems for the court. In one matter Radicals remained consistent: in their nationalism and links with Russia, and Pašić also adhered to such a policy.

Subjective moment in the politics all those years was the Court. The reason thereof is clear: conservative political idea could not oppose authoritarian regime. In fact it desired such a regime. King Aleksandar in his decade-long rule effected four coups and changed three Constitutions. One of the most incredible dates of the Serbian history was 25 March 1903 when King Aleksandar an hour after carrying out a coup and suspending a constitution, passed a decree on re-entry into force of that very Constitution! Serbia has a long-standing experience with political and legal arbitrariness, but that act of King Aleksandar was without precedent. From the historic hindsight it looks odd that a young man (he was killed at the age of 27) in such a way played with a country and his people. But one must say that he was free do whatever he fancied for in that period the conservative idea prevailed, and conservative thinkers could not stop or counter such a conduct. Such authoritarian regimes if they are not opposed by strong political ideas, lose objectivity and become absurd. That is exactly what happened to King Aleksandar: he was not killed by Serbia, but conspirators in 1903 committed political euthanasia. Foreign factor did not play an important role in all the aforementioned. Russians conducted a public and secret policy aiming at toppling Obrenović, but they would not have succeeded in their designs, if the regime had not destroyed itself. In its last phase Aleksandar's power rested only on army, but he could not handle the army as well as his father did. Conspiracy against him was well planned, but its secrecy could not be preserved because of involvement of too many people. Belgrade at the time was just a provincial town. Foreign diplomats also knew about the conspiracy, as indicated by a letter written by Benjamin Kalaj, who even hinted at the date of the coup. Serbia could not mount resistance to Aleksandar's government, he could not oppose the conspirators. All male Obrenović had problems with women, but King Aleksandar, unlike his predecessors, was not toppled because of unhappy marriage, but because his government was exhausted. The only odd aspect of the coup was the brutality with which conspirators cut up the corpses of King and Queen. All shame, hatred and impotence of Serbia exploded in that crime. After ousting of Obrenović dynasty, conservative political idea was widely promoted.

The first result of establishment of conservative political idea was establishment of parliamentarism under the 1869 Constitution, accompanied by freedom of press and fairer elections. Serbian parliamentarism was free-minded in comparison with parliamentary systems in other countries. But basic generators of conservatism remained untouched: full centralism, interference of state in many non-state matters, a kind of economic etatism through sale of concessions and many privileges, etc. All this indicates that the state was the only subjective moment of customs life, while its prime movers were those who belonged to a narrow circle of Belgrad'e politicians and businessmen. Indebtedness of Serbia grew gradually, and there was no proper documentation on the state of finances. Final balance for 1901 was made only in mid-1903. It is simply incredible how politicians plunged the country into high indebtedness, overlooking the political aspect of the issue. On the one hand they declared their readiness to pursue independent foreign policy, and on the other hand they made Serbia financially very dependent. Loans were raised mostly in Vienna, but also in countries considered allies. Thus foreign policy of Serbia was paranoid, for it demanded independence from Austro-Hungary, but also money. And the two things were not compatible.

In 1903 Serbia got a ruler who fully suited the structure of the country. He was relatively pro-Parliament, and in comparison with other Balkan rulers almost refined. But he was also chronically indebted. That chronic indebtedness of King Milan gave a lot of manoeuvring room to politicians, for they bowed to his wishes if he promised them hefty pay rise. Occasionally King Petar raised foreign loans which ultimately the state of Serbia had to repay. In their conflicts with King Milan Radicals learnt that the indebted ruler was ready to destroy his proper state. Hence they kept him in a state of tolerable indebtedness.

Far greater co-operativeness of King Milan than of all Obrenović together was conditioned by his coming to power. Since he came to power after ordering the murder of his predecessor, he lost the opportunity to be internationally recognised as a legitimate ruler. The British diplomacy was especially unwilling to recognise his legitimacy. The King himself became a hostage of conspirators who became the true rulers of Serbia in the first few years of his reign. The principal conspirators were dismissed or retired only in 1906 thanks to a very strong pressure of Great Britain. They were indeed arrogant in the first year of King's Milan rule. They even ordered physical liquidation of their opponents, notably of captain Novaković who was killed in prison, just because he was the conspirators' main opponent. After removal of conspirators Serbia indeed had an exemplary parliamentary regime, for the will of the government was impeded only by the parliament. There was a succession of governments, and the king rarely overstepped his authority. Difference between the Old Radicals and members of Independent party was of a declarative nature. It emerged only in concrete instances, when the opposition hindered government's moves. The regime was stable not because it was progressive or because citizens were satisfied with its economic and other performances, but because subjects of the state agreed with the foreign policy pursued by the ruler. Like during the era of the Duke Mihailo, there was a popular consent about the foreign policy, which the top leadership generated and accepted. That is why King Milan was forgiven many of his errors. Serbia was not ruled by people, as desired by the young Radical Party, but by the consent of people, which was a major success of the old and factious Radical community.

Those were years when either war or settlement of the South Slav issue were expected. The future did not augur well to Serbia considering that its foes were its neighbours, notably Bulgaria, Turkey and Austro-Hungary, and that the Montenegrin ruler was not a sincere ally. Big powers were not inclined towards resolution of the South Slav issue and revision of the Berlin Congress. Russia stuck to its old and new deals with the Austro-Hungary which often skirted Serbia's interests, while Austro-Hungary started pursuing a very active policy in the South-East. Decisive moment was appointment of Baron Erental to the post of Foreign Secretary of Austro-Hungary (he replaced Baron Golunovski). Golunovski used to discipline Serbia by banning exports of agricultural produce. It was an age-old method. But Serbia became immune to such bans, for it managed to open channels of export to the West. Erental synthetically combined foreign and internal policy of his country in the South-East, namely having understood that the South Slav issue and problems with Serbia are an identical problem he embarked upon resolution of the South Slav issue. He knew that if Austro-Hungary did not solve the South Slav issue, it would become the cause of the empire's undoing. As Duke Andradi used to say: "the Austro-Hungarian ship was overloaded with the Balkans burden, and it should be relieved of that burden. The idea was to make a third entity within the framework of the dual monarchy, in which the South Slav people would rally without being enemies of Vienna. The old political rule: to give in order to get, was at work. That rallying would be effected in the territory with the majority Catholic population, making that entity more inclined towards Vienna, than Hungary itself. The basic problem of that idea were relations within the framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority Serb population would not surely accept such an idea willingly, while not so numerous Croat population was too weak to impose itself. Hence direct involvement of Austro-Hungary was necessary. And Vienna decided to intervene after the young Turkish revolution broke out in Turkey. First proclamations and conduct of the Turkish revolutionaries were very liberal and there was a potential danger of Turkey giving to minority peoples autonomy, thus exacerbating the Bosnian issue. That is why annexation was effected. Nobody expected major international protest because the issue of annexation of B&H was the internal issue of Austro-Hungary. Russia as usual was interested in seizing Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and was ready to compensate generously Austro-Hungarian's backing. On the other hand Russia was not militarily strong enough to pursue the policy contrary to Austro-Hungary and Germany.

Austro-Hungary started tackling the South-Slav issue when it annexed B&H. At the same time it definitely distanced Serbia from active participation in that settlement. Austria and some Croat parts of the empire favoured anti-Serb and conservative manner of settlement of the crisis. To put it simply by resolution of this crisis Austria wanted to preserve the status quo, while Serbia wanted to settle the crisis by transferring its institutions to the B&H territory. Two conservative political ideas—the Austro-Croat and the Serbian collided. One cannot say that all Serbs and Croats were advocates of such conservatism. Namely in Croatia the ruling Serb-Croat coalition was the only one which had a different, neo-conservative approach to everything. The biggest loser in the ensuing developments was the idea spawned by that coalition. History of Balkans would have looked different, had the South-Slav issue been solved by logic of the Serb-Croat coalition, and not by logic of Belgrade or Vienna. Unfortunately for Serbs it had not happened.

Annexation of B&H was preceded by the 1906 Customs War. Although many assessed that Austro-Hungary embarked upon that war because of political reasons (its design was to weaken Serbia so much to remove it from the possibility of being the centre of the South Slav rallying and to annex it in the future) one must note that such assessments were somewhat one-sided. There was a markedly active political dimension in decision-making, but reasons thereof were much more complex and not only of the Balkans nature. This was confirmed by statements of former Foreign Secretary Goluhovski tantamount to his conviction that the customs war would not harm Serbia, for it had Danube and railways system, while it would deprive Austria of sizeable revenues. Austro-Hungary had already waged such a war against Romania. The customs war was in fact a foreign policy expression of a deep political and economic crisis in Austro-Hungary. It was in fact a failed community which by external aggression compensated internal impossibility of carrying out fundamental reforms. The basic political crisis was the one between Austria and Hungary. Austria in fact could no longer prevent open Hungarian dissatisfaction and was compelled to introduce a military dictatorship there in 1905 (Fejervari's regime). Erental had seriously intended to resolve the secondary issue, the Slavic one, but he did not have a serious political power and backing for such an enterprise. In fact the time had run out for resolution of that issue.

Austro-Hungary was more developed than Russia, and could not keep up with economic explosion of the neighbouring, friendly and competitive Germany. In the late Ninetieth and early Twentieth century Germany experienced an incredible economic growth and was seeking an adequate political status. Germany and Great Britain were the biggest importers in Europe, while German market determined economic trends in the Central and Eastern Europe. Although Germany was industrially developed it had agricultural problems which had inherited economic and political privileges. Epoch of liberalism in trade and politics was dying out, and the era of internal and external state intervention was coming.

Twentieth century is the century of predominance of the state. Due to internal reasons and European trends Germany opted for the protectionist policy in agriculture and in 1902 passed a new customs tariff which practically prevented import of many agrarian produce. This German move threatened its most important agrarian provider, Austro-Hungary. Protectionism from Germany started spreading across Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Epoch of imperialism economically and politically devastated smaller communities, to which Serbia belonged. In his analysis of that protectionist trend Mihailo Vujić foresaw the open conflict between Austro-Hungary and Serbia.(27)

Unlike Austro-Hungary, Serbia had courage to oppose Germany. Trade with Germany was one of the indicators thereof. In the last decade before the May coup growth of trade with Austro-Hungary was 22%, and with Germany as much as 76%. German industrial goods were of a better quality and cheaper than the Austro-Hungarian ones. Pigs from Serbia were cheaper than the ones from Austro-Hungary. In the German-Serb trade Austro-Hungary emerged as an unnecessary mediator. In the customs war that trend peaked, for since 1906 share of Germany in Serbian imports was only 16%, while share of Austro-Hungary was nearly 60%. But in a very short period of time Austro-Hungarian exports to Serbia fell to 20%, while the German exports rose to over 40%. Since then Germany has been the most important economic partner of Serbia. From the tariffs war Serbia emerged unscathed, not thanks to its export to the West (to France and

Britain), but to north (to Germany). The same thing happened in the customs war between Austro-Hungary and Romania, which indicated how dangerous German policy towards Austria was.

The customs war was imposed to Austro-Hungary and Serbia, but Serbia was more prepared for it. Danube and links with Bulgaria were important factors of optimism. Added to that for the first time after many decades Serbia had resolved the issue of its public funds. This was achieved notably through tax increases and regular tax payments/collection. Debts were enormous, but the threat of bankruptcy was removed in the last years of Obrenović dynasty. In fact Serbia at that time was in a stable phase, for the king had been disciplined comply with the constitution, and conspirators were eliminated from the political arena. The biggest problem was the army which after King Milan was not taken proper care of. Hence the campaign of arming the military was launched. After many negotiations and troubles major weapons purchases were effected. Weapons were bought from the French producer and not from Škoda as Austria wanted. Arms purchases were effected through an unfavourable loan, which threatened to jeopardise anew this relative financial stability of Serbia. But no-one considered economic categories. But there were strong motives behind such a risky economic moves. Namely Serbia was resolved to use the new weapons to solve the South Slav issue. By annexation of B&H, Austria embarked upon resolution of that issue to save itself, while Serbia's purchases of arm indicated the country's readiness to get involved in the settlement of the South Slav issue. Almost a decade before WW1, the Balkan countries were ready for the war, but other countries were not ready for a major conflict. That is why the war broke out later. In fact the war without armed conflicts began in 1905 when the Serb-Bulgarian customs alliance was proclaimed and when the Austrian-Serb negotiations about the trade agreement were suspended. The Serb-Bulgarian customs alliance was essentially only a simple trade contract, which due to some political reasons had a pompous name, but was in fact full of mutual reservations and falsities. As such it was a good motive for proclamation of the customs war.

The Serb-Austro-Hungarian silent war did not produce a visible victor, for Austro-Hungary won the annexation crisis, and Serbs won the customs war. The second victory was more important. As regards the annexation crisis, many in Vienna and in Budapest, were aware that it was a victory produced by impotence. Some contemporaries even assessed that the said annexation was a clear sign of collapse of Austro-Hungary. Through annexation Erental failed to achieve his ideas about re-arrangement of two-entity monarchy into a three-entity one. This in fact indicated the impotence of Vienna to become the prime mover of the settlement of the South Slav issue. Paradoxically enough Serbia was the one who got most from annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for its national program became the only alternative to the Austrian one.

The Customs war helped economically strengthen Serbia. First, the structure of production was changed, for the protective measures versus Austro-Hungary boosted the domestic industrial output. The growth of industrial production was extraordinary. The beer industry doubled its output, the bread industry also increased its output twofold, mining output registered a fivefold increase. All in all industrial production in only four years grew fourfold. Export grew by 15%, import grew by 40%, but the agrarian output was sluggish. While export of wheat and other cereals increased, thanks to the Belgian and German market, export of cattle dwindled considerably. Serbia accelerated its shift to

industrial production, and in agriculture land cultivation became more attractive than cattle-breeding.

Second, new trade channels were open. It became clear that Thessaloniki and Varna became very important, but also the biggest advantage of Serbia was Danube, for a vast majority of commodities was exported via Danube.

Third, new markets were open, notably the German, Turkish and the Belgian one. The German one was the most important.

Fourth, industrial and trade capital was centralised and concentrated. Small merchants disappeared in a very short period of time, while the big ones consolidated their grip over the capital market.

Fifth, in a very short period of time, the social picture was changed. Rural areas grew very poor, many peasants lost their land, and the industry could not absorb them. Workers' class was slowly emerging. In 1910 Serbia had only about 15,000 workers. Stratification in the urban areas was in its initial stage: there was a very narrow circle of the very rich and a lot of poor people. But, there was no major social unrest. Nationalist propaganda helped ease social tensions.

Sixth, Serbia was no longer totally economic dependant on Austro-Hungary which meant that it had a more favourable international position. But the historic claim that the victory in the customs war made Serbia establish links with the West enabling its consequent political and military co-operation with Western countries does not hold water. Over two-thirds of total trade was realised with three countries: Germany, Turkey, and Austro-Hungary. In fact in the next period Serbia waged wars with those countries. Moreover, Serbia's fourth economic partner, Belgium, was also dominated by the German capital. Trade with Great Britain and France in 1910 was negligible 3%, and Russia in fact was not a foreign trade partner. In fact Serbia was economically dependant on its 'enemies.' Hence the external position of Serbia was paranoid: it had disputes and waged wars with its economic partners. As regards oft-mentioned friendship with France and major French credits, one can say that the 1909 French credit was granted to Serbia under less favourable conditions than the one granted to Bulgaria and Turkey. Austro-Hungarian MP in Belgrade in his report assessed that terms of loan granted to Serbia in private trade transactions would have been considered -a criminal offence. Decisions to take French credits were politically motivated. Added to that Serbia was still economically linked to the German factor, but it had shown an extraordinary economic ability. It made a lot of profit from the customs war, although it was assisted to a certain extent by greedy German traders.

But annexation crisis and the customs war as two forms of silent war had a downside: Serbia needed to speedily build up its arms arsenal. Open war was often announced, and Serbia was ready for it. After raising the 1906 loan and purchasing cannons from France, other military branches had to be provided with weapons too. Internal reserves were depleted, as was part of the old loan intended for building the railway system. Although it was heavily indebted Serbia could have stabilised its public finances had there been no weapons purchases.

For example in 1909 a 150 million loan was raised. It was to be repaid within 50 years. Three fourth of loan were from the French sources, and one fourth from the German sources. Over 25 million was used to repay in advance interest rates, a large part to overdue annuities and money spent from the previous credit for building a railway

system. With that loan Serbia's foreign debt rose to almost 700 million dinars, and its foreign trade balance amounted to 150 million dinars. Every citizen of Serbia was indebted by over 250 dinars, which was an incredible burden. Almost 30% of all public revenues was used to cover annuities.

State of Serbia was one of the most indebted European countries. Its economy was dependent on countries politically hostile to Serbia. Its only advantage at the end of customs was its modern weaponry and markedly nationalistic political scene. In essence war for Serbia was the only way out from its economic and political troubles.

All those years of the customs war were accompanied by thriving parliamentarism. It was a paradoxical parliamentarism, for despite principled liberal statements, it tended to develop strong interventionism in economy. State was all in Serbia: the biggest debtor, the biggest creditor, the only important economic subject, etc. Important economic initiative was in the hands of large traders or capitalists, who had close ties with the state. In Serbia many things changed, but the state remained the pillar of the practical life of its citizens. A citizen had a state which demanded more than it gave in return, and was even ready to ask him to sacrifice his life too. Such an arrogant position of the state on its citizens was in line with the conservative political idea on external plane. Internal and foreign policy are interconnected. Similarly to the epoch of Duke Mihailo and Garašanin, internal policy served the purpose of the foreign one, but this time around the war also loomed large on the horizon. Garašanin's principle that Serbia had to organise itself in a centralised manner, under one authority, to be able to successfully militarily conquer territories inhabited by Serb and South Slave people, and then to transfer its institutions and political and economic system to those areas, was now feasible.

That was a ruling political concept, welcomed warmly and sincerely by many. But there were also numerous opponents among civil and other circles to that idea.

The most prominent opponent of that idea in civil circles was Milovan Milovanović, and in other circles Dimitrije Tucović.

Milovan Milovanović was perhaps the most respected Serb politician in the West. He studied and took his doctoral thesis in Paris. He was a professor of public law at the High School and above all a diplomat. He was the best diplomat that Serbia has ever had. Diplomacy indicates coming of age of a state and people, that is, whether they are able to take a position on other peoples and states in the time and process. Until then Jovan Ristić was the most important name of Serbian diplomacy and he cast a long shadow. Principles of his action have been clear: independent position between powers (primarily between Austria and Russia) and always present national interest. Ristić's moves were frequently designed to compel Russia and Austria to do something. To put it simply behind his moves there were always naked domestic interests. Nikola Pašić followed suit: in his diplomacy he tried to forge closer ties with Russia, as he was irrationally convinced that Russia is the only channel which could lead to success of the Serbian national policy. In contrast to Ristić, who was formal and stickler to procedure, Pašić combined diplomatic means with different actions, even half-military ones. In this he was similar to Garašanin. But both Ristić and Pašić were obsessed with the idea of the Serbian national pre-determination and mission. They entertained very romantic ideas which in Ristić's later years were bizarre, and in Pašić's lethal. Essentially they were advocates of Ilija Garašanin's ideas and followers of "Načertanije": Serbia must be so strong to liberate

Serb and South Slav-inhabited territories and transfer its institutions to them". That conservative concept did not recognise anyone's subjectivity, except for the subjectivity of the Serbian state, and diplomacy had to serve that purpose only.

Milovanović introduced a fresh concept of diplomacy according to which the state had to serve the purpose of diplomacy and not vice versa, or "decisions of the state authorities had to be in line with well-assessed and long-term diplomatic moves". Thanks to Milovanović diplomacy became an autonomous sphere, as subjective as the very state. Such concept of diplomacy even for the then European conditions was very progressive and new, for it determined that the national state was not a goal per se. Milovanović earned a great reputation in the West thanks to implementation of that principle of his (the same thing happened to Josip Broz Tito who had a similar concept of diplomacy and state). He was considered "the biggest European among the Balkans leaders" and the great Georges Clemenceau said "in Europe Milovanović is the greatest statesman". Milovanović said about himself: "I respect myself as much as an average Serbian minister tolerates me". He cut a superior figure in the European courts, power centres and diplomatic circles. He was a hedonist too, unlike Garašanin, Ristić and Pašić. At the age of 49 he led a more full life than all other Serbian Foreign Secretaries. He had good relations with all politicians and power-brokers, barring Pašić. The latter who outlived Milovanović, destroyed Milovanović's greatest success, the Serb-Bulgarian alliance, and imposed the old Balkans concept of politics.

Milovanović did not like national myths and romantic megalomania of the national program, imbued with conservative political ideas of his times. He considered Serbia a small community, with small chances to have its national program implemented, and Serbs - a small people. He also thought that the Serbian politics had to be harmonised with interests of big powers, and that Serbia could not impose its program. In his opinion Serbia had to have a protector, and to try to convince that protector of the fact that its interest was similar to Serbia's. He avoided war solutions of political problems and thought that Serbia had to avoid them because of its minor biological and economic power. The price which Serbia paid in the WW1 best indicated how right he had been. Serbia kept touch mostly with Austria and Russia. Milovanović outlined policy towards Austria in a letter to MP Simić in Vienna: "Serbia must open its gates towards Austria and build bridges connecting it with that country. A question apart is whether Serbia shall cross those bridges and enter those gates. But they should exist, firstly to be used and then to be seen by Bulgarian". Austria is the biggest threat to Serbia, hence we should pursue a sincerely pro-Austrian policy, in order to avoid any defeat, notably the military one. At the time of annexation crisis Stepa Stepanović told Milovanović that according to his assessment Serbia would lose war with Austro-Hungary within 7 days, Belgrade would be conquered and the King and our government would be imprisoned. To make the things worse Vienna could get consent of other big powers for such an intervention. With such a military, diplomatically and economically superior neighbour, the policy of confrontation cannot be pursued, but neither the Obrenović style policy of servility and subordination. Milovanović as a young man gave his answer to the question where was the possibility of such an active policy in the article "Serbs and Bulgarians": "in getting closer to Bulgaria". Not a single Serbian politician perceived a major importance of Bulgaria in the Balkans. That state was often derided despite Slivnica and an already lost war. For Russia and Austro-Hungary Bulgaria was more important than Serbia, notably

because of its position (proximity of Bosphorus and Dardanelli) and military strength. If Serbia and Bulgaria grew closer or established allied relations, then their position towards Austro-Hungary would be more favourable. If they did not do that, Serbia would have to get closer to Austro-Hungary or to demand compensations in the South. Thus Milovanović formulated his famous slogan: "Either with Bulgaria to Skoplje, or with Austro-Hungary to Thessaloniki. There is no third way". Nikola Pašić in the Second Balkans War and the WW1 showed that that there was the third way: the one against Bulgaria and Austro-Hungary which unfortunately exacted human sacrifices. Milovanović has not been ready for such a policy, and told Pašić that it was against interests of the Serb people. The two of them could not understand each other.

If Serbia does not get closer to Bulgaria, it will have to enter protectorate of Austro-Hungary, and forget about Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak. Consequently it shall become a mailed fist of Austro-Hungary in its campaign towards Thessaloniki. It means that Serbia would also realise its program towards the South and Mediterranean.

To approach Bulgaria Serbia must first solve the Macedonian issue, which is the cause of the past Serb-Bulgarian disputes. Milovanović thought like a vast majority people then that Macedonia would not be able to survive as an autonomous country, because of its non-self determined ethnic mixture of population. That was the basic limitation of Milovanović and his idea of political borders. That is why he refused proposal of Dimitrije Rizov from September 1909 that Macedonia be given an autonomous status in order to end all squabbling and disputes. One must wonder whether that Bulgarian proposal was sincere and how much it was dictated by the position that in autonomous Macedonia Bulgaria would have a far greater interest than Serbia. But although he was one of rare Serbs who was not a nationalist, he could not accept autonomy of Macedonia not because of tactical, but because of historic reasons. Milovanović instead urged a political division of Macedonia. Moreover he was one of the rare politicians who thought that Macedonian population was neither Serb or Bulgarian, that Bulgarians had a stronger influence there, but that everything was annulled by a several decade-long Turkish influence. Milovanović did not attribute Serbian origins to Macedonian population, but thought that they were not able to develop its own subjectivity. Although Macedonian nation was shaped only after the WW2, it probably would not have happened had there not been decades-long 'appropriation' of Macedonian population by Serbs and Bulgarians.

Rapprochement with Bulgaria could become an active policy, only if it is backed by a major power. According to Milovanović, only Russia's backing was needed. But according to his assessment Russia would never back a strong Slav state in the Balkans, for such a creation could hinder its influence, but it would back an alliance of smaller Balkans states, representing a sanitary cordon towards Austro-Hungary. That assessment of his was true as, indicated by the history of the Twentieth century, namely, first the Soviet, and then the Russian opposition to establishment of a strong state in the Balkans. Conservative politicians took different stances on Russia's role in the Balkans. Except from Garašanin no-one saw that Russia was not willing to back a strong Slav state in the Balkans. Conservatives still think that the Russian interest is a strong Serb state or the Greater Serbia. Milovanović clearly saw that Russia would never back the Greater Serbia, and that truth clearly emerged at the end of the Twentieth Century. By adjusting the Serbian policy to Russian interests, Milovanović had to sacrifice conservative dreams about Serbian Macedonia and share them with Bulgaria. By giving a larger part of

Macedonia to Bulgaria, Serbia would have the possibility of active policy towards the West and North in order to implement its national program. Some ideas had to be relinquished. If the political demand for territory of Macedonia were relinquished, the possibility of expansion to Austro-Hungarian territories was guaranteed, and if the political demand for territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was abandoned, the possibility for expansion at the expense of Turkey was ensured. Milovanović thought that the first variant was better and worked many years on it. And finally he managed to realise it in the shape of the Balkans alliance.

Milovan Milovanović also took a progressive stance on the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the conservative political idea Serbs lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina too and the task of Serbia was to bring them into the mainstream fold. That was the opinion widely shared by politicians and common people. The annexation crisis indicated that a radical interpretation of principle of self-determination of peoples was not backed by the Western countries. British politicians told Milovanović openly that Serbia should relinquish its aspirations towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, for that was an issue with a bearing on relations between Austro-Hungary and Turkey, that is, of major powers. The Vienna Congress determined relations in Western Europe, and the Berlin one relations in Central Europe, in the Balkans, and decision of Austro-Hungary on annexation was not contrary to that heritage. In Serbia no-one understood it, the least so politicians and intellectuals. At a secret parliamentary session, immediately after proclamation of annexation, Milovanović espoused the stance that big powers did not recognise the right of Serbia to Bosnia and Herzegovina (which was obvious to many). Even Russia agreed with that action of Austro-Hungary. Such a stance of all big powers was not only based on their interests and contracts, but also on the impossibility to apply the right to self-determination of peoples to Bosnia and Herzegovina because of Croats and Muslims, who were indigenous and authentic population there (which everybody seemed to disregard). Milovanović came to realise that that the assertion about one people was controversial (Serbs and Croats were permanently at loggerheads in Bosnia and Herzegovina.) and that insistence on that thesis confronted Serbia with the big powers. That Milovanović's historic realism and lack of dogmatism were very much at odds with the mainstream conservatism. But Serbia had a Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister who luckily enough was ready to accept the subjectivity of Croats and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such a stance suggests that the concept about annexation of that territory was controversial, for other peoples who could not accept that lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina too.

In addition to Pašić Milovanović was the most important Serb politician. Hence one cannot but wonder: would the course of history have be different in the Balkans had that man lived longer? His death was also unusual: he died because of kidney insufficiency, although he never had problems with kidneys. Autopsy had not been effected, and the Austro-Hungarian MP reported to Vienna that Milovanović was poisoned.

During all the wars conservative political idea prevailed. The reason thereof was consolidated parliamentarism in the country, substantial economic growth, better armed army, and the Turkish-Italian war. Unfortunately Milovan Milovanović died before his life achievement, the military part of the Serb-Bulgarian alliance, that is the Balkans alliance, was activated. Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro surprisingly easily attained their goals in the First Balkans War. That indicated the extent of Turkey's weakness. Small Balkans peoples destroyed the old Eastern empire which obviously did not have the strength to change and modernise itself. Balkans allies had a 600,000 strong army. Montenegro began operations on 8 October, and the others on 18 October. As early as on 4 November Turkey asked big powers to intervene. On 25 November Turkey urged that talks on truce be initiated. And the truce was signed as early as on 3 December. That war indicated the true significance of the Balkans alliances and what they could mean in the future. Balkans countries tripled their territories and population and independently solved the Eastern issue.

Much was written later about the character of that war. Tucović called it the war of conquests, while the other thought it was a war of liberation. The war was waged in line with the principle of self-determination of peoples. The four Balkans countries started the war in order to liberate their fellow-citizens in multi-ethnic Turkey. But territories separated from Turkey have not been inhabited only by Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians, but also by other peoples: Macedonians, Albanians, Jews, Turks, Slavic Muslims. Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians experienced that war as a liberation war, but what about the others? Turks experienced that war as a major defeat and emigrated in large numbers to the rest of the Turkish empire. While Jews were very concerned about their fate in the wake of the war. Jews, being urban dwellers, and because of their long history, were resistant to assimilation. In principle Jews were used to living in a multi-ethnic community, and they felt at ease under protectorate of the Turkish sultan. Their trading power developed unhindered, and thanks to Turkish tolerance of other religions, they developed as a nation too. Thessaloniki was full of Jews, like other Mediterranean towns in Turkey. But after the Balkans wars the situation changed. Epoch of national states in the Balkans was in fact unfavourable for Jews. Slavic Muslims were in the most difficult situation, for their religion linked them to Turkey, and their origins to foes of Turkey. Moreover their status during the Turkish administration was more favourable than in the new epoch. Reason for the former is a multi-ethnic character of Turkey, that is the national aggressiveness of the new Balkan states. Slavic Muslims throughout the Twentieth century searched for their identity but like Jews their unique opportunity for development was in a multi-ethnic community. And Serbs, as winners immediately started assimilating them. They were partially successful in that campaign, as many strong Slavic Muslims communities have survived to date in Sandžak, Macedonia and Bulgaria. Albanians unwittingly emerged victorious from the Balkans wars, without having practically participated in them, and even when they did, they sided with Turks. The London Conference on 17 December decided to recognise Albania, because Austro-Hungary took the stance that Serbia should be prevented from having access to the sea. Albanian people proper were divided in three religions with tribal organisation of life, surrounded by aggressive neighbours (Serbia, Montenegro, Greece and Italy). But they were not able to form their national state. Albanian people are more primitive than other Balkans peoples, and their national formation happened only in late Twentieth century.

Such an immature community could have existed only in multi-ethnic Turkey, but in competition with other national states of its neighbours it did not stand any chance. That is why their 'transfer' to the Austro-Hungarian interest zone was the best possible solution, for it protected them, although not always successfully, from their aggressive neighbours, and enabled them to find themselves under protection of a multi-ethnic community. This means that they were not forced to establish national cohesion, for which they were not obviously ready.

But the biggest losers of the Balkans wars were Slovenes of Orthodox religion, who had their own language and certain subjectivity. They realised that Turkey was not the most adequate community for them. And then thirty thousand people organised Ilinden revolt in 1903. In contrast to Jews and Albanians, who had their interests in staying in Turkey, Slavs of Orthodox religion, being aware of their need to leave the Turkish empire, welcomed Serbs and Bulgarians as liberators. Greece even today treats that population in a nationally aggressive way, that is, fails to recognise it, while Serbia and Bulgaria waged a long propaganda and religious war in that territory, in which Bulgaria had more success. Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece saw that population as the object of their expansion. The majority position in Bulgaria was that they were Bulgarians, while in Serbia some considered Macedonian Slavs as Serbs, and some as a neutral ethnic community. The second position was espoused by Jovan Cvijić, and it was accepted by Pašić and other important politicians. Cvijić thought that Macedonian Slavs had not constituted themselves as nation, but that it would happen within a very short period of time by their assimilation into the Serb or Bulgarian national body. Cvijić, like all conservatives saw religion or state as the only national basis, and could not understand the process of national coming of age. Cvijić's stance was that Macedonian Slavs were second-rank citizens. Kosta Stojanović later wrote: "If one travelled through Macedonia and old Serbia during early stages of our administration, one could immediately see all mistakes of our crazy administration. When we were forcibly thrown out of those areas, all of us had the impression that the people whom we had liberated from the Turkish slavery, were glad to be rid of us too".(28) (29) That population was burdened with many tax and duties, but in their subjective and voting rights was not equalised with others. All that was also followed by large-scale plunder and corruption. Even members of government bought for nothing enormous estates, and Macedonia gradually became a private property of Serbian politicians and bosses. Serbian administration in Macedonia after the Balkans wars showed that Belgrade considered a foreign country as its war booty, and not as a liberated country. Although Macedonian Orthodox Slavs were half-way between national definition and national apathy, conduct of Serbia made them regret the Turkish Administration. But "appropriation" of the Macedonian nation remained a constant of the conservative idea, and unfair conduct of the Serbian Orthodox Church towards Macedonians was only an expression of that general attitude.

All in all from the national position one could say that the First Balkans War meant liberation for members of the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek nations who lived in the newly-conquered territory, and arrival of a new and a worse master. As the majority of that population were members of other ethnic communities, one could say that the First Balkans War could not be called a liberating war, although it was to a certain extent. All four states perceived the newly-conquered territories as a war booty and tried forcibly to impose onto them their selfish interests.

The second aspect of the First Balkans war is the social one, for the Turkish, Eastern relations were replaced by the European rudimentary capitalist ones. But emergence of capitalist relations did not entail a genuine improvement for population, as they were imposed onto them externally, and moreover in their worst shape. It took Serbia and Bulgaria almost a whole century to spawn their bourgeoisie, and it was an arduous process. But that bourgeoisie was very greedy and bent on seizing everything that Turkish agas and begs had left behind. After the Belgrade rifles Belgrade brokers came, and after them, came tax collectors and police. Retrograde relations were eliminated by the First Balkans war, but other, new relations have not been established. Territories were in fact in the state of neo-colonialism. Thus the First Balkans war could not be called a liberating one even in social terms, although it had some elements thereof.

The Second Balkans War best indicated that the First Balkans War was not an emancipating one. Of four allies Montenegro was at a much lower economic, social, military and political level than other three countries which had a similar historic development. Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece then formed the being of their nation on the conservative political idea and national homogenisation. Bulgaria had the strongest army Greece won the international backing and Serbia had most problems.

Result of the First Balkans War was not good for Serbia, for it attained one war goal (Vardar Valley), but not the second one (access to sea). It got over 30,000 km² of territory and 1,5 new inhabitants. Serbia was not completely dissatisfied. A dominant thesis in a national historiography is that such war results compelled Serbia to revise the 1912 treaty under which Bulgaria was given Macedonia from Kriva Palanka to Struga, which meant that Serbia lost its direct territorial links with Greece, in view of joint borders of Bulgaria and Albania. That was unfavourable for Serbia, but maybe it was not the reason for relinquishment of the 1912 Treaty. That treaty was a brain child of Milovan Milovanović and Pašić opposed it openly. Pašić rejected the idea of division of so-called disputed zone with Bulgaria from the very moment he took the reins of power, after Milovanović's death. Moreover he slyly tried to create arguments for revision of Milovanović's contract. That happened before the creation of the Albanian state, which indicated that Pašić would not have handed over agreed parts of disputed zone to Bulgaria even if Serbia had got the Skadar area, that is, access to sea in Northern Albania. Pašić was not compelled to revise the contract because of the issue of access to the sea, but Cvijić's conviction that the entire disputed zone could be incorporated into the Serb national body. Milovan Milovanović was the only man in Serbia who espoused a different view written down in 1898: "the only right, useful and lasting solution of the Macedonian issue for all the Balkans peoples, for Serbs and Bulgarians in the first place is a fair and sincere agreement on the basis of clear separation of interest spheres of Serbia and Bulgaria, in view of vital needs of Serbia and Bulgaria. Implementation of such an agreement can ensure their state independence". After his death the political will for division of Macedonia with Bulgaria disappeared. Very bad situation in Bulgaria did not relieve Serbia of responsibility for eruption of the Second Balkans War, although Bulgaria formally provoked that conflict. One could say that the dominant conservative politicians in Serbia refused the solution of the Macedonian issue, in line with the principle of self-determination of Macedonian Slavs, and the one of division of Bulgaria. That was one of the most decisive moments of modern Serb history, for until the end of the WW2 unsolved relations with Bulgaria created problems first for Serbia and later for

Yugoslavia. In both the WW1 and WW2 numerous lives would have been saved, if aggressive policy towards Macedonia had not been pursued. Serbia indeed cheated Bulgaria and that assessment was very true. That was a widely shared opinion in Europe and the world historiography today. The fact that the national Serbian historiography has a different opinion indicates persistence of very conservative ideas.

On 30 June 1913 Bulgaria made a wrong move: Bulgarian troops attacked Serb position on Bregalnica. Although Bulgaria was right in its claims, because of that attack it was considered the prime mover of war. All Balkans states, each out of its specific reason, formed a united front against Bulgaria. As early as on 27 July Bulgaria was ready for truce, and under the ensuing Bucharest peace treaty Serbia preserved already seized territories, and Greece and Turkey expanded. Even Romania made some gains. Thus Bulgaria turned out to be the biggest loser of the Balkans wars, even the bigger one than Turkey, which managed to recover part of lost territories and ensure European background of Istanbul. Although Serbia was convinced that the Macedonian issue was finally settled, it in fact remained open until the creation of the Socialist Yugoslavia and recognition of Macedonia as a federal unit. Socialists, and not conservatives solved that issue. But in the meantime that issue remained open and continued to weigh down on Serbia. That major Bregalnica military victory was a major triumph of a conservative political idea, but the unravelling of that idea has already begun. Macedonian issue was resolved exactly in the way Garašanin had recommended it: by military conquest and annexation of new territories. Population of those territories and economic and natural resources and wealth were considered a war booty. That pattern would remain dominant in the state reasoning of Serbia in the WW1, in the post-WW1 period and in the late 20th century, when the conservative ideas were again revived.

CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA IN THE WW1

Since August 1912 until the end of the WW1, there were many governmental crisis and resignations of Pašić's cabinet. But Old Radicals managed to survive that most important period of Serbian history. Contrary to Milovanović's assessments Pašić, like the majority of intellectuals, and even ordinary people, thought that he could oppose both Bulgaria and Austro-Hungary. His statements in the period after the Second Balkans War and Sarajevo assassination, and later ones, indicated that he knew that the war with Austro-Hungary was in the offing, but he hoped that it could be delayed. According to some sources he thought that the optimum respite for Serbia was three or even 10-15 years, due to diplomatic and practical reasons.

Having emerged as a winner from the two Balkan wars, Serbia earned a great international prestige, notably among South Slavs. Its position improved with respect to the period of annexation crisis, when most diplomats did not understand why Serbia was rebelling against Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the basis of its expanded territory and population it threatened to indeed play the role of the South Slav Piemonte. Although two-thirds of Slavs lived in Austro-Hungary, Serbia after the Balkans wars gained in importance in overall process of resolution of the South Slav issue. That is why it had to be very considerate in its diplomatic actions.

But behind that international reputation hid a very sad reality of Serbia. Balkans wars have additionally depleted the country, its public finances had long been bankrupt, it had large foreign and domestic debts. Serbia was financially ailing. Status of army was similar to status of finances. Glorious army, army composed of good officers and soldiers, of high morals, was without ammunition and poorly equipped. Balkans wars burdened the Serbian village, and potential conscripts were in a desperate economic and social position. Newly-conquered territories in the Old Serbia and Macedonia did not yield substantial revenues, for they were an exclusive area of 'business operations' of the Belgrade politicians, traders and bankers. The smallest problem seemed to have been 20,000 lives lost in the Balkans wars. For Serbia it was always easy to sacrifice lives of its subjects, or rather heads of peasants. In such a situation wise persons did not desire a quick confrontation with Austro-Hungary. But, was it really so?

Austro-Hungary proper was in big troubles. Its economic development was lagging behind the one of other European powers, and was only economically superior to Russia. Agrarian character of Hungary weighted down not only on its economy but also on internal relations. Too many Slavs opened too many crisis. South Slav issue was on the verge of explosion. Austro-Hungary had a solution for that issue, the third entity, but internal opposition to such a settlement was too strong. War for the very Austro-Hungary was not a happy solution, for it threatened to radicalise all open issues, notably the Austro-Hungarian and South Slav ones. Austro-Hungarian conduct during the Balkans wars indicated that the country despite all external aggressiveness was not ready for the war, not because it was afraid of Serbia and Russia, but because it feared itself. Russia used the Balkans wars only to test Austro-Hungary.

Why have those two countries become involved in the war, if it did not suit them? Answer to that question is very simple: because of broader European processes.

WW1 in fact began in 1912, and not in 1914. Until 1912 Europe had two big multi-ethnic states: Turkey and Austro-Hungary. Although they were different, they were similar too in their stances on ethnic minorities. Both states had a high degree of tolerance towards their numerous peoples and existed on the principle of mutual national fear. That balance of fear was based on predictability of position of victim, for any people who upsets the balance becomes a victim. Those two communities guaranteed an extraordinary status for Jews, for they could tolerate super-national Jewish principle. The Balkans alliance defeated militarily Turkey, but it did not mean much, for Turkey had already lost too many wars, and was not destroyed. This time the defeat was not external, but essential, for Turkey lost from the young, burgeoning national states. The First Balkans war in fact polemics between principle of multi-national states and principle of one-nation states. Principle of national state had easily prevailed. That autumn of 1912 the principle on which Austro-Hungary rested was defeated. Its position of a major power and internal problems prevented it from getting directly involved in that polemic. It seemed to many that Turkey failed because of Islam and Orientalism, while Austro-Hungary survived because of its Catholicism and oldest European values. But more realistic people understood that at play were deeper European processes. Simply the time was ripe for development of national states in the Balkans and in Central Europe.

Serbia spearheaded that process, because of its geographical position and results of the Second Balkans War. An internal logic or rather historic principle of a national

state compelled that poor country in disarray to destroy the second big European multi-ethnic state and to pay a high price for that in human lives and ideas.

But that was only one cause of the First Balkans War, for the others were, of purely economic nature. Order in Europe established by the Vienna Congress, and which survived the year 1848 has not collapsed because of political competition of big powers but because of competition of their economies. Imperialism is a necessity of the civil way of production, and not a coincidence. Economic sphere of civil life in Europe and in the US in the late Ninetieth and early Twentieth century was marked by progressive growth of population and industry. Middle social strata were developed and their needs had to be satisfied too. This led to specialisation of labour, and dependence of social strata on the total social process of labour. Craftsmen were replaced by less resilient class of industrial workers. Logic of industrial capital compensates galloping specification of labour by progressive massovisation of process of production and property. The one who does not belong to higher strata slowly separates himself from all advantages of civil society, advantages of education, self-respect and religion. On that plane, in line with economic processes, the number of power-brokers increases, even in liberal communities, like the British and American. In the very liberalism the position prevailed that one should rule with the consent of the majority, without allowing the rule of the majority. Accumulated property did not mean accumulation of spirit and progress. Vast differences between those who have and those who don't have could not be solved by non-economic means, even if a good welfare policy was pursued. That became manifest during the Great Economic Crisis and in Roosevelt's and Keynes' solution. Illegal getting of livelihood beyond the process of work was contrary to the main principle of the civil society, and if welfare logic were dominant civil society would collapse. The need to pacify those with whose consent one rules leads to nationalism and chauvinism. The workers' movement on the one hand, and nationalism and chauvinism on the other hand are the only two dominant expressions of impossibility of the civil society to solve its basic autonomy during imperialism. The simplest way of resolution of that antinomy is imperialism, which transfers that hurdle to countries of lower or non-extant historical development. The London poor have already been a bigger generator of the British imperialism than the London aristocracy. In other words the London aristocracy lessened the problem of the London poor through imperialism and colonialism. At the same time imperialism had its clear economic power, for against its principles Thirteen colonies rebelled: on the one hand the raw materials base, and on the other hand consumers of industrial goods. Due to all the aforementioned the civil society outgrows its national body and strives towards planetarisation. In that expansion competition between national civil societies begins, and consequently that competition leads to confrontations. Such confrontations can no longer be local or regional, but international, for at play are ambitions of a concrete civil society to reach planetarisation. Paradox of the WW1 is in the following: result of that war was known before its beginning. Planetarisation of civil-economic society. But the said result was also a reason of that war.

The Balkans and Central European story about disappearance of two big multi-national empires is only an expression of that process, and not its gist. Military superiority of national principle over Turkey in the first Balkans War indicated that the said principle could be a big hurdle to attempt at planetarisation of a concrete civil

society: concretely the German one. That kind of reasoning prompted Serbia to wage the war, at the end of which it became the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

The WW1 denied the Vienna Congress results, and the Balkans wars denied results of the Berlin Congress. Vienna Congress provided the most lasting European order in modern history and it was not easy to mount a challenge to it, while the Berlin Congress by solving the Eastern issue, established relations in the Balkans which were not of a general European nature. That is why the Balkans wars broke out before the WW1. Links between Vienna and Berlin Congress determined links between the Balkan wars and the WW1. Berlin Congress solved the Eastern issue without imperilling the balance between the big powers, and results of the Vienna Congress. That is why destruction of results of the Berlin Congress by the First Balkans War imperilled the balance in Europe. The First Balkans War led to the situation contrary to principles of an age-old, post-Napoleonic European order.

At the Berlin Congress the central issue was the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country in fact only changed hands, or masters: Turkey was replaced by Austro-Hungary. Annexation crisis and conduct of big powers, notably Russia, indicated how much B&H was left at mercy of Austro-Hungary. Destruction of results of the Berlin Congress was completed by revision of solution regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina. Milovan Milovanović tried during the annexation crisis to carry out that revision, by linking Serbia and Montenegro through territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and consequently to avoid the war as a solution. But he failed in his intent. Through results of the Balkans wars Pašić carried out revision of a large part of results of the Berlin Congress, but the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina remained unchanged. Serbia was compelled to finish that task Hence the Sarajevo assassination.

International historiography rarely included events of Serb national history but it did include the issue of responsibility of Serbia for the WW1, that is, for the Sarajevo assassination. International historians widely believed that Serbian government knew about the preparations for Sarajevo assassination, or even organised it, and was thus responsible for the break-out of the WW1. What is indisputable are links between the assassins and the Black Hand and the fact that they were armed and trained by that organisation. What is still not known is whether the entire organisation was behind the action, or just the main faction composed of Apis, Tankosić and others. As regards Austro-Hungarian side one cannot help but wonder why Franz Ferdinand on the Vidovdan holiday appeared in Sarajevo, why Serbian government warnings have not been taken into consideration, and most importantly why the Prince's bodyguards failed to do their duty. It is simply incredible that security team of one of the most important European political personalities allowed a handful of young men, almost children, to shoot at the Prince at such a close range. After precise reconstruction it was established that preparations for assassination were very unprofessional, if not amateurish. All in all the impression is that the heir to the throne, Prince Franz Ferdinand, a renowned hunter became suddenly and easy prey. Dogs did such a good job that even poorly armed and unskilled poachers could not miss their target.

Organisation Black Hand and Apis were not controlled by legal centres of power, but in addition to the government, they were the most important political factor of Serbia. Black Hand sometimes worked against the government, sometimes in collusion with it, and sometimes with it. But it did not occur to anyone in Serbia to thwart the activities of

that organisation. On the contrary! Although the history of the Black Hand is the history of murders, conspiracy, and ignominious acts, it is still hyped as an honourable and nationally important organisation. In its ideology primacy was given to the national moment, but the ideology itself was based on the conservative political idea. Whether government knew about the action of training and arming of the future assassins was not important. But what was important was the fact that government did not even try to prevent actions of that organisation. And that passivity was not compatible with the parliamentary democracy which Serbia then had. It is needless to say that Pašić was the most skilful tactician of the Serb political scene. He knew how to manipulate his opponents. Milovanović belatedly realised that Pašić used him in the annexation crisis, that is put the blame for the crisis squarely on his shoulders. Similar thing happened during the Balkans alliance and before the assassination. Pašić, the old tactician, must have known what they wanted to do and were ready to do. He used them on several occasions, but they never succeeded in manipulating him. They were politically immature and very dangerous.

To put it simply, government of the Kingdom of Serbia was objectively responsible for the Sarajevo assassination. Although on the territory of Austro-Hungary Austro-Hungarian citizens shot down the Austro-Hungarian prince, arms, organisation and ideas originated from the other side of Drina. And that was the second mistake of the conservative political idea, while the first one was non-compliance with the 1912 Treaty with Bulgaria.

By causing the war Serbia made itself vulnerable, that is, became a recipient of the heaviest military blow. Serbia started the war without much premeditation and consequently had to pay a high price for it. That impatience of conservatives regarding the war, was understandable, for they did not care about lives of their subjects, and cared only about their political and economic gains.

Although we established that objective side of responsibility for the Sarajevo assassination existed, it should be established whether the Serbian government was aware that it was causing the world war?

Post-assassination conduct of government indicated that it did not intend to provoke the world war, but rather something else. On the eve of war Serbian Ambassador in Petrograd sent the following letter to the government: "This is a unique moment since Russia is resolved to do its historic feat. We must wisely avail ourselves of this opportunity and realise full unification of Serbs. We must hope for an Austro-Hungarian attack and then - we shall do what we have to do in the name of God". Although some tend to link those assessments of Ambassador Spalajković to his impassioned temperament, that statement rather mirrored an utterly conservative reasoning. Pašić thought that Serbia should impose its goals to Russia or any other big power, while Milovanović thought that Serbia should adjust its interests to those of big powers. That report of Petrograd Ambassador clearly indicated that the government intended to start war with Austro-Hungary. The government thought that the war would not last long, firstly because Europe has not had a military conflict for a long time, and secondly, the Balkans wars were always short, and their ramifications very important.

All the aforementioned indicates that the Serbian government did not start the world war, that is, the revision of results of the Vienna Congress, but rather provoked the Third Balkans War, in order to revise results of the Berlin Congress. The last Balkans war

was intended to bring to resolution the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and consequently the entire Eastern issue. Principle of resolution of the Eastern issue would be a national one, hence the newly-emerged state would be a national Serbian state. As the position of Austro-Hungary was not determined only by the Berlin Congress, but also by the Vienna Congress, its involvement in the war enabled revision of results of the Vienna Congress, that is, caused the world war in which the fate of Austro-Hungary would be uncertain. But that was the concern of the Austro-Hungarian, and not of the Serbian government. And Austrians were aware of the aforementioned. Tzar Franjo Josif made a famous statement: "If the Monarchy had to fail, then it should fail decently". Opinion that Russia would wage war because of Serbia, and not because of its own interests, speaks of traditional Serbian arrogance, and also of misunderstanding of European order, established by the Vienna Congress. All in all in 1914 the Third Balkans War began, and only in 1915 the WW1 war began for Serbia.

The Third Balkans War ended relatively successfully for Serbia, for after the Kolubara battle, Serbia managed to preserve its pre-war borders and throw Austro-Hungary out of the country. The Serb soldiers who in the previous years managed to wage war well on the foreign country, now on its soil showed fantastic results, despite chronic shortage of basic military means. That soldier was a peasant who saw Serbia as an expanded village and fought for the land and family. That is why many of them did not want to abandon Serbia in 1915. Officers cadres were the biggest asset of that army, for they were hardened in previous wars. Crimes committed by the Austro-Hungarian army (there were many examples in Mačva of crimes committed by Croats and Serbs) against civilians, have additionally strengthened the morals of the troops. Serbia scored a military battle on its territory, but failed to achieve its second war goal: transfer of war to territory of Austro-Hungary. Transfer of troops to Srem resulted in withdrawal and reprisals against local Serb population, while the plan for staging an uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina failed. So Bosnia, unlike in the past, remained calm. What has pacified so much the Bosnian Serbs? Austro-Hungary entered consciously into the war, that is was prepared to prevent the uprising, and even attacked Serbia, which did not make much sense. On the other hand Serbian side did not grasp the position of Bosnian Serbs. A story apart is the conduct of the Montenegrin army on the B&H battlefield, which was - ignominious. The Third Balkans War, like the First one, ended with partial results: one goal was attained, but the more important one was not, for there was no spill-over of the armed conflicts into the enemy territory.

During the Third Balkans War pressure was brought to bear on Serbia to revise results of the Second Balkans War, that is to fulfil the 1912 Contract and divide Macedonia with Bulgaria. Serbia refused that from the standpoint of the Balkans wars, and allies refused that from the standpoint of the world war. That was a principled difference. Serbia refused to correct its mistake from 1913, that is failed to see that Bulgaria was still its bitter military and diplomatic opponent. This in turn resulted in a crushing military defeat for Serbia in 1915. The second consequence of the wrong reasoning of Serbia was its military intervention in Albania. As early as in January 1915 Pašić tried to transfer his troops to Albania, but General Putnik declined to obey that order. Pašić managed to realise that intent of his only in late May, and on 11 June Tirana was occupied. General Putnik and all well-intentioned politicians posed the question what was the army of Serbia doing in a neighbouring state, when Serbia was surrounded by

enemies, barring Greece. Although Serbia claimed that it had acted so in order to prevent the anarchy, and that it was a pre-emptive military move, Serbia in fact occupied a part of Albania, and committed many atrocities against civilians there. That short-sighted policy or failure to realise that the remains of the Serbian army would have to withdraw from the territory in which massacres and atrocities were committed, was based on unfulfilled results of the First Balkans War. Pašić thought that expulsion of Austro-Hungarian troops from Serbia cleared the way for attainment of unrealised war goal of Serbia from the First Balkans War, that is access to the sea in Albania. Allies proposals on Macedonia and Bulgaria, contained also a proposal on yielding a part of Albanian territory to Serbia, in order to effect a territorial link between Serbia and Greece, but Pašić was not interested in such a proposal, for it was not tantamount to revision of the Second Balkans War. He was merely interested in completion of results of the First Balkans War. That narrow-minded reasoning of Pašić was the cause of his errors at the beginning of the WW1, errors towards Bulgaria and Albania. Serbia paid a high price for such a viewpoint in autumn 1915.

It is true that Allies directed Serbia to pursue a strictly regional, Balkans policy, that is a revision of decision of the Berlin congress. Allied actions were not fully coordinated, each ally had its different interest, but one can say that Serbia in 1914 could have achieved without major allies' resistance the following goals: unification with Montenegro, annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and access to sea plus Dubrovnik, and maybe Northern Albania. That is why it had to return to Bulgaria what it had taken in the face of the 1912 contract. Allies then still did not consider the issues of Vojvodina and Croatia, let alone of Slovenia. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs after the war was amazed to learn that there were a Slav people, called Slovenians. But his job was to effect the seizing of isthmus, and not to memorise differences between Slovaks, Slovenes and Slavonians. Allies obviously 'guided' Serbia to try to establish new order in the Balkans, that is to try to revise results of the Berlin Congress. The most important issue was the Macedonian one. Allies brought pressure to bear on conservatives to meet their obligations stemming from provisions of the 1912 Contract. But conservatives continued to consider those provisions unjust. It had nothing to do with Pašić's stubbornness. Russian diplomacy tried to re-establish the Balkans alliance to embroil Bulgaria in the war against Austro-Hungary, while Western allies wanted to turn Bulgaria against Turkey. Russians for the umpteenth time were coveting isthmuses, and Allies backed them in that desire. But the allies also saw that they could manipulate that Russian appetite. The Bulgarian foreign policy was focused on revision of results of the Second Balkans War, and was not interested in isthmuses.

The Adriatic issue, or the issue of access to the sea was imposed to Serbian politics in 1914. Italy became a major power, and it had big military and demographic potential. Although it did not exist when the Balkan Congress was held, it was reasonably believed that revision of the Congress' s results could not be done without Italy. Its revolutionary, unifying nationalism evolved into an imperialist, conquest-minded reasoning. Italy was in fact a very poor country, with terrible problems. That conservative nationalism held all those problems under control. Emergence of fascism after WW1 had clear ties with the manner and principle of Italian unification Primary interest of Italy was Adriatic, and its principal opponent was of course Austro-Hungary. Italy had good reasons to consider Serbia as a possible competitor in realisation of that interest. Italy also

flirted with King Nikolaj, but it was unrealistic to expect that Montenegro could be an obstacle to Italy's access to the sea. King Nikola had very good contacts with the Russian court through his daughters and sons-in-law, and through the logic of family politics he connected Italy and Russia, in order to preserve his dynasty and expand Montenegro. Even in spring 1915, a month before the London contract with Italy, he dreamed of expansion of Montenegro. He allegedly told general Mitar Martinović the following: "I received a letter from the Archduke Nikolaj Nikolajević in which he informs me that due to major Russian victories and arrival of Russian army to the Hungarian flatlands Austria offered a truce...I think we should ask Bosnia to give us Sarajevo and its greater area, the whole Herzegovina and from Dalmatia, Split and southern part of Dalmatia up to our coast". Obviously Dubrovnik, Boka Kotorska and Skadar were included in that claim. General thought that "King's demands were a bit excessive", but that access to sea, in the Dalmatian area, had to be reckoned with, "up to Makarska. As regards Bosnia I would not ask more than Romania and Ivan mountain" This territorial avidity of the King Nikolaj, which borders with an old man's puerility and general's answer which was as pretentious, indicate that the Serbia's access to the sea was quite feasible. If Italian combination with Montenegro was not strong enough, the one with Croatia could be. The idea about independent Croat state or a Catholic state of Croats and Slovenians emerged occasionally. Creation of such a state presupposed a clear national principle. Italy could not accept such a development for then it would get from Austro-Hungary, a Croat or a Slovenian state. One has the impression that no-one was too willing to implement that combination, although it would have enabled Italy to prevent Serbia's access to the sea, and facilitated the creation of the Croat country under the heavy Italian influence. The Italian political idea in the WW1 was of a conservative-nationalist nature, and it could not reckon with the principle of nationality. Italy joined the war with the reasoning of a major power: it planned to wage a war for territories about which it had brokered a deal with allies, and not for liberation of some other peoples, even parts of its people. That was the basic Italian handicap in Dalmatia and that is why it could not prevent Serbia's access to the sea. Croat emigrants were against that combination for they thought that independent Croatia would be an easy prey to Italy. Supilo feared that that Pašić's stubborn stance on Macedonia could make Croatia an easy prey of Italy. He wrote: "Croatia that gravitational point of culture, civilisation and politics of Western part of our peoples and the wasteland of Bregalnica, Egri Palanka with locals of Greek-Albanian and Bulgarian origins, devoid of genuine national awareness-are they equal people, can they be exchanged?"

To Serbia the aforementioned war goals seemed too modest, as they did to Macedonia. Serbia was gradually adopting a European policy, which basic goal was survival of Austro-Hungary. In spring 1918, when the US side finally accepted the fact that Austro-Hungary should be carved-up the allies agreed with that idea. Serbia had espoused that idea as early as in 1914. But allies realised the necessity of such move out of their interests, and not because Serbs convinced them of the need for such move. Tomaz Masarik was to be credited with the maturing of that idea and not Nikola Pašić. But it bears saying that Serbia in realising its Balkans goals also gradually managed to effect revision of results of the Vienna Congress. An expression of that development is the Niš Declaration from December 1914, which empowered Serbia to independently

start tackling the issue of borders, which consequently changed the principles and borders of the post-Napoleonic Europe.

Thus Serbia in late 1914 ended the Third Balkans war and was priming itself for the WW1. The reason for the latter was the fact that Serbia only preserved its territory and has not realised any of its other war goals. It was not even able to unite with Montenegro. That defence war took too many lives (130,000 people died of typhoid fever), without producing any significant results. In fact no clear winner emerged from the war, which nonetheless had a taste of victory for Serbia. Very naïve and very widespread impression that the war ended with Kolubara battle and that the peace conference was imminent boosted the decision to give primacy to territorial pretensions instead to allies' offers. Attempts of historians to find out who formulated so wrongly the war goals in the Niš Declaration is a futile job. The Niš declaration was written long time ago, and was always touted as the document of utmost national importance. In the first version it was called "Nečertanije". European conservatism personified by Adam Čartoriski in a silent, delicate and long-term channelling of European trends against basic principles of the Vienna Congress and the role of Russia in Europe, after seventy and odd years yielded unexpected results: thanks to efforts of a young, burgeoning and impassioned nation, conservative ideas were restored partly with Russia's assistance. Odd and uncontrolled are ways of the great political ideas.

There are many pointers that Pašić had defined war goals long before the start of armed conflicts. Pašić spoke about borders of the future state along the lines "Klagenfurt-Margburg-Segedin". The circular letter of 4 September 1914 notified Serbian diplomatic offices abroad about Serbia's war goals, and they were: "Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srem, Banat, Bačka, Dalmatia, Croatia, Istra and Slavonia". Montenegro was tacitly understood as the war goal. What Pašić was not sure about was the identity of Serbia's enemies. He hoped that Russia would get involved in the war because of Serbia, and not because of its interests. In the first days of war, when the government was evacuated to Niš, a session was held in which all heads of parliamentary parties took part. When asked whether Serbia would have an ally in the war, Pašić after a lot of shilly-shallying answered: "We shall not be alone in this inevitable slaughter-house, Austria shall be with us". European war declarations took shape of a chain reaction: "On 1 August Germany declared war to Russia, on 3 August Germany declared war to France, on 4 August Britain declared war to Germany, etc. All those declarations amply indicated that in the looming war Serbia would stand alone. Every country had its war interests and goals. Serbia set its goal: a state stretching from Klagenfurt to Gevgelija, from Timok to the Adriatic Sea. That goal was pretentious and contrary to the allies' goals: namely Serbia aspired to abolish Austro-Hungary.

The first indicator of such a high goal was seen in the Proclamation of the Regent Aleksandar to the Serbian army of 4 August 1914:

"Heroes,

Biggest enemy of our state and our people suddenly and without any motive aggressively attacked our honour and our life. Austria, our northern neighbour, with a large army tried to make several incursions into northern parts of our country and to conquer our wonderful homeland. It wants more, and in its greed forgets that we have been listening for years to complaints of millions of our brothers living in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Banat and Bačka, Croatia, Slavonia, Srem and in our coast, in our Dalmatia..."

Proclamation ends with the following words:

"Providence has written a more clear message than our battle cry:
Let us fight for freedom and independence of Serb people!
Long live Serbia!
Long live our brave army!

Supreme commander of the army,
Regent Aleksandar

Kragujevac, 22 July 1914"

That proclamation indicated the basic war goal: freedom and independence of the Serb people, and not freedom and independence of Serbia. The text clearly indicated which territories belonged to the Serbian people: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Banat, Bačka, Croatia, Slavonia, Srem, Dalmatia, and Montenegro. Thus it was indirectly, but also clearly said that the war goal of Serbia is to solve the South Slav issue by liberating South Slavs, which entailed destruction of Austro-Hungary. Slovenians were excluded, but they were mentioned later in the September circular letter. This shows that the Regent Aleksandar and Prime Minister had a very clear picture of war goals of Serbia and that Serbia entered the war not only to defend its territory, but also to realise its national program, written 70 years ago. After reading those documents one gets the impression that the regent and prime minister thought like Ambassador Spalajković in Petrograd: they were all convinced that the time was ripe for implementation of their national program, and that from that standpoint it was very good that Austro-Hungary attacked Serbia. Serbia was perhaps not ready for the war in terms of its military capability (guns and ammunition), but it had very clear war goals, unlike any other country who took part in the WW1.

Serbia's war goals were most clearly set in the famous Niš Declaration (Statement of the Serbian Government in the National Parliament of 7 December 1914) in which the national program was presented to the allies in the war:

"Serbian government, convinced that the parliament has faith in it as long as its military forces serve the purpose of attainment of a big goal of the Serbian state, considers as its first duty to pay homage to those who have willingly sacrificed their lives for their homeland;

Serbian government, convinced that the entire Serb people is resolved to persist in its struggle to defend its holy hearth and freedom, considers as its uppermost and in these fateful moments only task to quickly bring to an end this war, which from its inception was the struggle for liberation of all our enslaved brothers, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes".

The government shall try to faithfully express that popular resolve, and it shall confidently await the hour of victory".

Declaration made it clear that the "big goal of the Serbian state" is "liberation of all non-free brothers, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" In other words the war goal was

destruction of Austro-Hungary. Not a word was said about the character of the future community, it was too early for something like that, but it was clear that the community would be shaped as a state, and not as a community of states or something similar. Three weeks later Regent Aleksandar in his address to the Serbia army, said the following: "We must continue to perform our difficult duty and stand by our powerful allies, who fight for us too until they crush our common enemy ...and then the peace shall be established, a long peace, which shall reward sacrifices for our Greater Serbia. Then our homeland shall be much bigger, powerful and happier, than it has ever been". This address indicated that the regent saw expansion of Serbia as his war goal. And that opinion of his was shared by Pašić and common Serbian soldiers. Long-standing legacy of conservative national program became part of the collective mind-set of people. Spirit of Ilija Garašanin was the most lethal weapon of Serbia. Against the others, and against Serbs proper.

Pašić in October 1914 in his oral instructions about establishment of the Committee of Yugoslav political emigres, spoke about the need to "create a unique Yugoslav, or possibly, Serb-Croat states" which "without a special organisation shall preserve national characteristics of every tribe". Pašić always thought that the position of Serbia in the new state should be superior, for Serbia was to effect liberation of all other nations. All in all he urged a unitary and centralised state, with primacy of Serbia. That concept was dominant among politicians and intellectuals. Barring Social-Democrats, although they gradually accepted the pro-national line after Popović became the head of the party, only Slobodan Jovanović and Stojan Protić had different views on that issue. Stojan Protić was sceptical about readiness of Croats to accept the unitary concept due to their historical experience of independence after the Croat-Hungarian deal. Despite his conservative and unitary stances, Joavanović was also cautious. On the other hand Protić was espousing ideas of local self-management and decentralisation. As early as in 1914 he opted for the concept which was half-way between federalism and centralism. He was very persistent in that stance and the tried to translate it into reality through his constitutional proposal after the war. Unfortunately that proposal was no widely backed so Serbia got Vidovdan and not Protić's Constitution.

From the end of Kolubara battle to the attack of Germany and Austro-Hungary, that is for whole 9 months there were no armed conflicts in Serbia, barring some in Albania. There was no will to engage in military activities despite allies' demands. Serbian military experts assessed that Serbia would be military engaged in battlefields far away from the Russian and Italian troops, and therefore could be easily defeated. Added to that attack of Bulgaria was possible, because Macedonian issue was not solved. Serbia was in fact engaged in war since 5 October, when Germany and Austro-Hungary attacked it. Nine days later Bulgaria assaulted it too. On 12 November withdrawal across Albania began and in late November in Serbia there was no Serbian army. That was a crushing defeat, and is one of the most bitter defeats of Serbia in its modern history (in addition to the ones experienced in 1813, 1941 and 1999). Serbia then had an extraordinary army, military personnel, high morals, but could not face alone such a powerful army. It is to be blamed for the aforementioned, as it did not even try to solve the Macedonian issue, and moreover committed atrocities and crimes in Albania. Insincere and wrong policy towards Montenegro was a continuation of that same Balkans conservative logic. Towards the allies Serbia was not sincere as it perceived everything from its Balkans

angle. Message sent by the British Foreign Secretary Gray to his ambassador in Serbia best demonstrates the wrong reasoning of the Serbian government:

"One could finally say something about arguments related to sacrifices of Serbia. When it pulled out its troops in January 1913 from Albania and relinquished one port in on the Adriatic coast, and when in late 1913 it was told to concede Bitolj to Bulgaria, it denied to do that because of its many victims and material losses. That argument wins sympathy and understanding, but Serbian government must be aware that in the territory in which the British army is fighting, Serbia shall never have any sovereign right or gains. Serbia has sided with allies who don't fight for some national gains, but for establishment of a peaceful international order. If Serbia cannot contribute to the latter, its sacrifices shall be useless, even it manages to preserve each peace of land which belongs to it".

In late 1915 all those sacrifices seemed useless, for Serbia did not exist any longer, although formally and legally it enjoyed its international sovereignty with government in exile. In the course of the two autumn months 150,000 people died. Hence the human toll in the first year and a half of war was over 1 million people. Only 150,000 soldiers and refugees managed to leave Serbia. One of the most terrible data is the death of 40,000 very young recruits, almost children. Only 8,000 of them survived and arrived in Corfu. Serbia had in fact sacrificed its biological future. The Supreme Command and government were at odds, for the former suggested an attack on Bulgaria, before mobilisation was effected, but Pašić could not agree to that because of his policy towards allies. In fact the army should not be blamed for such a terrible move, but rather persistence of conservative idea in its Balkans policy. Once Supilo called exponents of conservative idea, asses, because of their Macedonian policy, but they should have been termed "executioners" because of their treatment of their own people. There were even suggestions to avoid withdrawal across Albania, but rather to rally all people in Kosovo, next to a monastery or Patriarchy and fight till the last man. That was more an expression of folly than of national idealism.

DEFEAT OF CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA BY AUTHORITARIAN WILL OF REGENT ALEKSANDAR

Soldiers arrived in Corfu half-dead, but with a precious burden—an internationally recognised sovereignty. That sovereignty was the purpose of withdrawal through Albania. And Serbia? In Serbia were left behind people without sovereignty, women, elderly and children. That terrible defeat in 1915 was the defeat of a political idea, a conservative idea, which dominated since the murder of the last Obrenović. Defeat of conservative idea meant the end of the monarchic kind of parliamentarism. There had been a shift in the power balance, as the civilian authorities grew weaker and withdrew in the face of a growing strength of the crown and military authorities. But the civilian authorities were nevertheless to be blamed for that terrible defeat. In Corfu government still had representatives of civilian authorities, Black Hand wielded most influence in the army, and monarchy was represented by the Regent Aleksandar. Within that triangle changes in politics and future of Serbia were decided. It is indisputable that a conservative political idea had to withdraw in the face of a new authoritarian order, for the defeat in 1915 had compromised and weakened it so much that it could no longer be

the subjective power of customs in Serbia. It could not have been succeeded by a new idea, for the latter was yet to emerge. Liberalism in Serbia was long-forgotten, while the socialist idea was too weak. That is why the only solution was an authoritarian regime. There were two clearly profiled candidates for prime movers of such a regime: the crown and the army, that is Apis and the Regent. In Corfu the groundwork for a major confrontation between those two candidates was laid. Position of the army was weakened, because it did not have an independent command, but in fact had to bow to the plans of allies. Added to that after dismissal of the Supreme Command, influence of the Black Hand was lessened. Regent's power remained unimpaired because he was not responsible for the 1915 catastrophe. The Crown became the only link with Serbia and with the state idea. The time was anyway on the Regent's side but he decided to do something for himself, namely to eliminate his rival through the notorious Thessaloniki process.

In the early October 1916, Regent sent a request to the government to immediately introduce court marshals for officers. And those courts did not envisage the right to defence counsels. Government first resisted the regent's will, but with the passage of time it yielded. A compromise was reached: the government was to launch a probe into the recent assassination attempt, while the regent decided to suspend his decision on establishment of court marshals. Results of probe were modest, and indicated that there was no legal basis for the prosecution of Black Hand members. Despite the aforementioned Apis and others were arrested in December and government had to agree to put them on trial. The trial was a legal farce, and did not even look like a political process, but rather like a murder. Assassination attempt was a sheer fabrication, and the accused were put on trial because they were members of the organisation Unification or Death, and not because they took part in preparations for or execution of assassination. Some of them were tried in absentia, some were in the dock. Capital punishment was meted out easily, but some convictees were later pardoned. It was a veritable legal scandal. Dimitrijević-Apis, Major Vulović and Rade Malobabić were sentenced to death. Their pardon appeals were rejected by the Regent and government. Before they were shot by a firing squad, sentences were read to them for full 2 hours next to open graves. According to some claims the Regent wanted them to suffer very much. By administrative measures, mostly retirement, the Black Hand was definitely defeated and Regent was free to rule at will. Serbian government was an accomplice in this murder, which demonstrated that it no longer upheld legal principles and parliamentarism. Pašić many times mistreated Regent's father and finally forced him to withdraw. But now Pašić was forced to bow to a dictatorial act of a young ruler. Dispute between the Black Hand and Regent about candidacy for the prime mover of an authoritarian regime was resolved by Regent's victory, and the first act of authoritarian regime of the Regent Aleksandar was the Thessaloniki Trial. By that trial he humiliated principles on which conservative political idea and his rule rested; his victory over constitutionality and parliamentarism was much more convincing than its victory over the Black Hand. He would treat the conservative idea unlike King Milan and Aleksandar Obrenović.

The only gain for the government, in the wake of the Thessaloniki process, was confession in writing of Dragutic Dimitrijević-Apis about his principal role in organisation of the Sarajevo assassination. By that confession Apis fully assumed responsibility for murder of Prince Franz Ferdinand and thus suspended speculations

about involvement of the Serbian government in assassination. It is difficult to assess what that confession represented: a patriotic move or a part of deal with Apis, but it is indisputable that conditions under which the confession was given were not regular and hence one could not talk about an expression of free will of Apis. Apis's involvement in preparations for the Sarajevo assassination was indisputable, but what was controversial was his wish to save from responsibility the very government in the situation when his life was jeopardised and when that government and regent could pardon him.

Apis lost because he was not ready for an authoritarian regime, due to objective situation, but also due to his poor assessment. Regent Aleksandar was a man of a great political intelligence and an adequate doze of courage. Consequently he seized the opportunity. Frequently his authoritarian stance is linked to his blood ties, namely no-one could expect a docile character of a man related to King Nikola and Karađorđe, but that family pre-disposition was given a free rein after defeat of the conservative idea in 1915 when the need for the establishment of an authoritarian regime arose.

Conservative political idea had to run the foreign policy of the country without an internal policy, and territories. The basic problem of emergence of that new state, was the problem of unification. In all that long process conservative idea was not successful, and unification was effected directly by Dynasty.

In March 1917 Pašić sent a letter to Trumbić inviting him to come together with representatives of the Yugoslav committee to Corfu. Trumbić was in France, and he was desperate because defeat of Serbia at the battlefield to a large extent was the defeat of the Yugoslav emigration. According to some testimonies he was even getting ready to leave for Latin America and abandon the whole project. After consultations with the British Ambassador and Supilo in June he arrived in Corfu. Conference lasted from 15 June to 20 July. The Yugoslav Committee represented Croats, Slovenians and Serbs. The conference lasted long, ran into obstacles and there were many discussions. Invitation sent to the Yugoslav Committee meant that the government of Serbia recognised that Committee as a representative body of the South Slav peoples in Austro-Hungary and that it renounced the concept of being the only protector of the rights of those peoples. By the Niš Declaration the government presented itself as the protector of rights of those peoples, and also recognised them some subjectivity. Although members of the Yugoslav committee were not legally elected representatives and were not prominent public figures in their homeland, but were rather political emigres, they nonetheless had legitimacy, for their homeland was on the militarily confronted side, and was not ready to articulate its interests in case of victory of allies. At play was a kind of a political civil war of South Slavs in Austro-Hungary, for part of the elite of those peoples remained loyal to Monarchy, and the other part accepted war goals of allies. The first draw up the May declaration, the second the Corfu Declaration. The first wrote their declaration together with Vienna, and the second, together with Serbia. Both declarations were products of a compromise. No other solution was possible.

The May Declaration is very short and intentionally abstract, and it reads:

"National representatives of 'the Yugoslav Club' together state that on the basis of the national principle and the Croat state right they demand association of all countries into monarchy, in which Slovenians, Croats and Serbs would live, that is into an independent body, free from mastery of foreign peoples and based on democratic principles, under the sceptre of Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty: They shall urge realisation

of claim of their people. All those who have signed this declaration shall take part in the work of Parliament". 31 signatures are seen under the text, and four signatures were placed subsequently.

Declaration shows that the signatories recognise continuity of Austro-Hungary and that they don't want separation, but re-arrangement of community. Their reference to "independent and free state body" is not contrary to principles of positive arrangement of Austro-Hungary, for it has already been postulated as the community of two independent states. In fact at work was simply re-arrangement of Austro-Hungary into a three-entity monarchy. Cohesive tie would be, alike in case of dual monarchy, the crown. Signatories insist on legalism and consider political struggle in Parliament as the mode of attainment of their goals. Interestingly enough in Declaration there is a paragraph on the one people composed of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats. There is no big difference between the Serbian conservative position on the nation with three names, for this idea was conservative too and could not accept the right of people to self-determination. The main issue was who would unify and proclaim those people a subject: Belgrade or Zagreb. Had Austro-Hungary won, or had it managed to achieve a separate peace, and tried to do that all the time, unification of South Slavs in Austro-Hungary would have happened under the auspices of Zagreb. Even if Austro-Hungary lost and continued to exist in another shape, the same thing would happen. That was a realistic assessment, for situation in the battlefield was undecided, and after the February revolution Russia ceased to be a major power. As regards allies, even Italy was not interested in destruction of Austro-Hungary. Only Czechs and Serbs pressed ahead with that idea.

Declaration invokes the Croat state right, that is presupposes privileges which Croatia already has, and above all the status of autonomy of Croatia within the framework of Hungary, which has already been established under the Croat-Hungarian deal. The whole idea was subject to bargaining.

Idea of a third entity was nothing new, it had its advocates at the court, and the Regent Ferdinand was in favour of it. Many key issues are raised by that Declaration. The first one is its conservative aspect in denial of the national independence and blending of Serbs, Slovenes and others into a political people of that future entity. Conservative idea has already made inversion of status of citizenship and nationality. The second problem was survival of Austro-Hungary without Slovenia, to which extends the original Austrian right. The third issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a too large bite for such a community, for a small number of Catholics there are not very popular, because of their direct and long ties to the Vienna administration. The fourth issue is: what about Serbia and Montenegro, is a South Slav entity possible without them? One gets the impression that had the third entity been realised it would not have been a stable one, and would have probably ended in trouble in which Yugoslavia had ended, that is, it would have disintegrated. The problem was obviously in the basic conservative stance which was not mature enough to create a wiser political community.

The competing Corfu declaration was much more concrete and clearer. It started out with the same conservative concept of one people: "Representatives of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians stress that the people of ours with three names, are one people, judging by their blood ties, written and oral language, feelings of their unity, continuity and wholeness of territory and vital interests of their national survival and development of their national and material life". The Corfu alike the May Declaration in a very insincere

way invokes the principle of self-determination of peoples, for it tries to prevent expression of nationality through a stance on the people with three names. Both declarations invoke principles of self-determination out of opportune, and not principled reasons. But the Corfu Declaration is above the conservative position, for its starting point is that the future community shall be a new state and that Serbia blends its statehood into it. That is a departure from the old Garašanin idea that everything could be solved by expansion of state bodies of Serbia to others, as it was done in Macedonia and in Old Serbia. In this aspect the Corfu Declaration is above the May one, for in the latter we have a pronounced conservative moment of the Croatian state right. By such a position the Yugoslav Committee achieved great affirmation and everything moved towards a reasonable solution of the South Slav issue. Unfortunately that issue would not be solved in accordance with the text of the Corfu Declaration by members of the government of Serbia, headed by Pašić, but it will be solved by the Regent in the capacity of Unifier. Declaration was made with the wrong people. One could not expect that those people in emigration could understand the change which had happened in the Serbian political scene. Even Pašić still did not know that the conservative idea was defeated by the Regent and that an authoritarian regime was in the making.

Declaration clearly specified that the future state would be a unitary one, and there wasn't much dispute about it. Croats and Slovenes were for such a solution. They feared federalism might raise anew the "small issue", that is enable Serbia to set up a federal state unifying a national body, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and parts of Croatia. The fact that peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Vojvodina were mixed, also increased loathing of federalism. The issue of centralism and de-centralism was avoided. Trumbić was an old advocate of de-centralism, not because of selfish reasons, but because of principled ones. He was aware of the fact that the contemporary state mediated in its functions and that the time was coming when the state would not have a complete monopoly on politics. In that regard he was far above his Serbian interlocutors, and even legal intellectuals, barring Stojan Protić. He obviously could not convince the other side of his convictions, and vice versa. And the issue was eliminated, barring the article 14: "The Constitution shall give to people the possibility to develop their special energy in self-managing units, marked by natural social and economic circumstances". This position excludes the possibility of shaping self-management along the national principle, for something like that would be reminiscent of federalism. However the sticking point in the debate was the manner of adoption of Constitution. Namely Trumbić with others espoused the view that it was necessary to adopt the Constitution by a qualified majority along the national (tribal) principle, for he feared majorisation of the majority Serbian population. The other side rejected it, seeing in that again-federalism. A compromise solution was given at the end of Declaration: "Constitution must be accepted in full, in the Constitution-making Assembly, by a numerously qualified majority". Unfortunately Pašić in 1921 even failed to observe that compromise solution, and instead compelled the MPs to pass the Vojvodina Constitution by a simple majority and consequently imposed it onto non-Serbs in the state.

The Corfu Declaration is the most healthy and wisest document on which the future community could rest and the big misfortune of the South Slav peoples is the fact that they failed to do that, but instead based their community on pure principles of conservative ideas advocated and favoured by the Regent. The basic problem of

Declaration is its negation of federalism as a solution, which stemmed from the Croat fear of new borders with Serbia.

The Corfu Declaration simply happened, for acceleration of developments in that decisive 1917 exacted it. The biggest change was the emergence of a new power-America. Although Russia was a big military power, America was a more important ally, for its economic power, principality and political power by far exceeded the force of guns and cannons. For Serbia sidelining of Russia was very unfavourable, because the government had tied all its efforts and program to that big power. The open issue was who would defend interests of Serbia at the future congress. The biggest fear was of Italy and its ambitions, for Italy was now in a better position to resolve the Adriatic issue according to its wishes. Fortunately for Italy America was a more unpleasant ally than Russia, as it did not take part in reaching of the London Treaty, and consequently did not have the commitment to implement it. The US principled stand against secret contracts and bilateral negotiations weighted down on the Italian government. But the biggest problem of Italy was its weak army and its defeat at the hand of Austro-Hungary. Pašić could not anticipate all that, and moreover he could not anticipate what the Austro-Hungarian attempt at reform would spawn. Hence he was compelled to resort to the Corfu Declaration. Judging by many indicators he first floated an idea that the Declaration might prompt the Western allies to back the Serbian position in view of a weakening Russian support. Later conduct of Pašić indicated that he understood the Declaration as a document of a tactical, and not of strategic importance. That document was intended to keep the Yugoslav issue as a sticking point and an obstacle to Italy's aspirations. Sonino rightly assessed that Declaration was aimed more against Italy than Austria. As Western allies did not respond in a more serious way, that is, they failed to back the Declaration, it ceased to be important for Pašić, for it was no longer a lever for exerting the tactical pressure. But people from the Yugoslav Committee, alike many emigrants organisations perceived the Declaration as a document of a strategic importance and expected it to be the basis of the future political struggle. The Yugoslav Committee and the Serbian government were once again at odds because of their different views on the Declaration. It has never occurred to Nikola Pašić to treat the Yugoslav Committee as an equal interlocutor, and to allow another factor to play a major role in unification. That was his basic political stance and he was not ready to bargain about it. All in all the said Declaration simply did not stand the chance to be realised, because of the Serbian, and not the emigrant side.

The US declaration of war to Germany and severance of diplomatic ties with Austro-Hungary on 6 April 1917 was a watershed event in the political sense. America entered the war without a previous legacy of secret contracts and obligations, and the burden of a long European history. Americans indeed had a vision what should be done with Europe and the world in the post-war period. They tackled the problems in a principled way, and also very rationally. They could not anticipate and prevent many developments, notably the emergence of the Soviet Union, as it was a product of a long and specific Russia's development, but they tried to ensure in Europe proper a longer period of stability, resting on values of their community.

When the big miracle of the October revolution happened, allies faced major problems, for there was much tension in the Eastern front, and the Brest-Litovski peace indicated that a forcible attack of Germany could be expected.

However there were many speculations about a secret plan of Germany to realise its goals in collusion with Bolsheviks. It was proved that a heavily escorted train ferried Russian Jews with the radical socialist leanings from Switzerland to the Russian border. Vladimir Illich Uljanov, wrote earlier that his generation was unlikely to effect revolution in Russia. A year later he became president of the revolutionary government. The aforementioned train was transporting also the most explosive German arms in the WW1, but at play were simply transport favours of the German railways. October revolution was a result of development of the Russian history from Peter the Great to the WW1, and not of perspicacity of the German intelligence services.

Soviets and Americans alike had clean hands in that bloody war. In the early spring of 1918 the former disclosed secret documents of Russia, bringing to light the London Agreement. That also brought to the fore imperialist policy of Italy. All in all Italy was the weakest link of the Western alliance, for it was military weak, and politically greedy. In fall 1917 it experienced a military debacle which indicated that it could not be reckoned with as a serious military force. To make the things worse Italy was losing her battles with Austrian troops, made up of many Slovenians, and the London Agreement envisaged that Slovenia would be given to Italy. Aware of a possibility of a military defeat, in 1918 allies negotiated a possible exit of Austro-Hungary from war, that is, a separate peace. Carlo had such leanings, but lacked the political authority to translate his intentions into reality. French made the things even more complicated when they disclosed a possible pull-out of the Austro-Hungarian troops. In fact they compelled Carlo to publicly opt for the continuation of armed conflicts. For allies the Austro-Hungarian front was secondary and they reasonably considered that victory over Germany was a key aspect of the war. That is why it was assumed that no effort should be spared in defeating Austro-Hungary. US policy to a large extent toed that line, although it considered that the future peace should rest on a principled basis.

Formulation of principality of the US policy are famous "14 points", that is a message of President Wilson to Congress of 8 January 1918. Opening lines of the message express the basic US views on the possibility of the New Order of Europe.:

"It is our wish and our goal that negotiations on peace be fully public and that possibility of secret negotiations be discarded. Times of conquest and expansion have passed; the same applies to the time of secret deals made in the interest of some governments, which could be detrimental to the world peace".

Americans had broader views than Europeans and considered that reasons for war should be removed. According to Americans if a victory were achieved, because of a continuing imperialist policy of concrete states, a military conflict was likely to happen again. This principled stand was aimed at conflicted sides, but also at allies, notably Italy, which led the most open imperialist, secret policy. Point 9 established that "borders of Italy should be corrected along the nationality line". That was in fact rejection of the London Agreement, with which the US were not related. With such a formulation the Yugoslav Committee and the Serbian government got a big incentive for their hopes, but the next point called into question that very hope: "Peoples of Austro-Hungary whose place we want to see secured and established among peoples, should be given a major opportunity for their autonomous development". Point 10 guaranteed the survival of Austro-Hungary and its reform in the direction of federalisation. Such a stance corresponded much more with the May Declaration, than with the Corfu one. To make

the matter even more serious three days earlier the British Prime Minister Lloyd George stated that "Britain did not fight to destroy Austro-Hungary or to deprive Turkey of its capital". He made a similar statement on 9 January in the Parliament. It was obviously a co-ordinated action. The Yugoslav Committee responded shortly to Lloyd George's speech and on 11 January in London the following communique was issued (and published in the "The Times"):

"there is only one way, and that way is: full liberation of subjugated peoples on the basis of their right-recognised to German colonies- to self-determine their future.

Yugoslav people have irrevocably sanctioned for themselves that principle in the Corfu Declaration of 20 July 1917..."

Response of the Serbian government was even more violent and very emphatic, the 17 January note sent to the British, American and French government read: "In this desperate moment, the Serb people, after having stripped of Western assistance, joined the fray with the slogan: it is better to honourably perish than to live like a slave". The aforementioned indicated how wrong was Serbian government to expect destruction of Austro-Hungary. Wilson in his address only mentioned Serbia's access to sea, and nothing else. That was much less than in the initial stage of war, when Serbia could have got Bosnia and Herzegovina too. It is to be assumed that no government official was willing to raise the issue of responsibility for over 1 million dead subjects. In fact "desperation" was caused only by the territorial issue. Five days later Pašić sent a telegram to the Washington envoy Mihailović, instructing him to attempt to annul the Act on Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That initiative of his was simply his adjustment to the newly-emerged situation. He simply tried to save what could be saved. He probably considered the aforementioned as his big personal defeat. He tried similar actions in London and Paris. But Ambassadors openly boycotted him, and Mihailović openly opposed him, and paid a heavy price for that. Ambassadors had a better insight into the situation than Pašić and reacted as very brave men. This time around Nikola Pašić was not able to assess events and to make the right moves. One has the impression that everything happened almost accidentally. Only the Regent, and not the government without the country and authority, had the strength to make moves.

Spring brought a completely different situation and change of the allies' policy towards survival of Austro-Hungary. Failure to establish a separate peace led to the real danger that the Austro-Hungarian army could defeat Italy. Austro-Hungary was destroyed by its military superiority with respect to Italy. Had the Italian army been stronger, allies would have changed unwillingly their stance. Paradoxically enough survival of Austro-Hungary suited Italy best, for the London Agreement was brokered in keeping with that assumption. Had Italy been able to wage war with Austria more successfully, it would have contributed to the survival of Austro-Hungary, and would have got concessions on the other side of the Adriatic Sea. Luckily enough for the Slavic peoples it did not have the strength to do that. Logical assessments of allies was that Italy had to find another way to hinder Vienna, for after disappearance of the Eastern front threat of defeat loomed large. Russian example showed how internal matters can easily eliminate a major power from the war. That was the reason behind the internal elimination of Austro-Hungary, since the external one was debatable. This could be achieved only by nationalism of the Slavic peoples. And it happened. In March the shift in the British position, and in the position of other allies was very visible.

All that was preceded by a certain tactical withdrawal of Italy, occasioned not by its voluntary change of policy, but rather by the one which was extorted. Italy agreed that the Congress of Peoples Subjugated by Austro-Hungary be held in Rome in early April. Italy gave its consent in faith that the Congress would be a propaganda and a tactical moment, and not an essential change. Other allies seemed to have convinced Italy of such a nature of Congress. Statements and documents from that Congress had a major impact on Austro-Hungary as they confirmed the tack which should be taken towards allies. After Ludendorff's offensive at the main front, there was no more space for any deals, for every soldier and day were important. All illusions about survival of Austro-Hungary were crushed. Italy continued to oppose allies moves, and was frequently at loggerheads with both official and unofficial US policy. Americans ended the life of Austro-Hungary, by Declaration of 29 May 1918, when the Congress of Subjugated Peoples of Austro-Hungary was backed. The matter became definite when on 3 September the US recognised the Czech national sovereignty. The issue of recognition of the Yugoslav sovereignty then remained only a technical question.

Not a single government of allies could be blamed for doctrinaire intolerance of Austro-Hungary, on the contrary. Because of their impotence allies were compelled to opt for a radical solution. They would not have probably opted for such a solution if there had not been the October revolution and Russia's exit from the war. Revolution demonstrated how such states were vulnerable to internal problems. Russia and Austro-Hungary were two aristocratic empires, most retrograde big powers. Russia collapsed because of social issues, and Austro-Hungary because of the national ones. With such aristocratic and obsolete elites those two countries were not able to solve their basic problems. There is currently a nostalgia for Austro-Hungary in the West, for it was a multi-ethnic community. It is an indisputable fact and it is very difficult to defend the thesis that the Dual Monarchy was the prison of peoples. Majority of those peoples who did not have a dominant position, had had a more favourable development within the framework of Monarchy than they would have had independently. This held particularly true of the Serb people. Serbs in Austro-Hungary, and notably Serbs in Croatia and Southern Hungarians experienced an incredible economic affirmation and shaped themselves as civil people. After de-commissioning of the Military Krajinas (areas) the Serb people were in a very unfavourable position, for they were compelled to accept early capitalist relations, to which they have not been used. Institutes of Military Krajinas held it in the embrace of the patriarchal style of life. But after establishment of the Associated Alliance and the Serbian bank, Serbs in Croatia started shaping their national being on civil basis. Soon they surpassed Croats and became an economically dominant factor in Croatia. Politically they first extended their support to Count Herdeveri, and later they reached the civil, political self-awareness. As regards the civil development it was superior to what was happening in Serbia, in which the civil class was emerging as a derivative of state privileges. Serbian bourgeoisie from Croatia and Southern Hungary are quite different in their economic origins and social reasoning. Descendants of Austro-Hungarian Serbs still remember a very rational and successful community called Austro-Hungary. The same could be said of other Slav peoples. But discontent simmered because of the two privileged people, Germans and Hungarians, and other key issues. If Austro-Hungary was not the prison of peoples, it was the prison of freedom of peoples. It had the strictest electoral census in Europe, and in contrast to other European countries it did not

develop the body of civil liberties, including the national rights. There is one fundamental misunderstanding about Austro-Hungary, for two levels of national relations were confused: relations between peoples and civil expression of nationality. It is very difficult to claim notwithstanding a dominant position of Germans and Hungarians that the community favoured one people over the other. Peoples were in a balanced situation regarding their fears, influences and interests. That balance was very dynamic. Hungarians who were agrarian people were very poorly treated by landowners, even worse than some other people. A very old elite made up the basis of community in a pre-civil way. Because of that it was repressive towards a wide body of civil liberties, and the national feeling consequently suffered. Austro-Hungary, because of shortage of civil liberties, alike Russia, brought itself to the brink of extinction. Austro-Hungary would have disintegrated even without the pertinent allies' decision and the WW1. The problem was not its collapse, but effects thereof. Governments of allied countries should assume full responsibility for the aforementioned. Moreover they created a new order in countries which have emerged from Austro-Hungary, which was less just, less rational and more conflictive than the earlier one. Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes top the list of unjust, irrational and conflictive newly-emerged countries.

As regards the US policy towards Austro-Hungary it was best represented by one of its authors Lansing. Woodrow Wilson like the majority of US Presidents has never seriously interfered into that policy. In his "Memorandum on politics regarding peace offers made by Germany and Austro-Hungary" of 7 October 1918 he wrote that "Austria should be left to drown in shallow waters of its troubles and in the mess which it had created". He also noted that "games should be played with the hope of German people and desperation of the Austro-Hungarian state". Americans had very little illusions, despite rhetoric of their president. Their bureaucracy then contemplated all issues as a major world power, if not like the master of the world. One of basic postulates of their foreign policy was that it is always cheaper and more efficient to make it possible for the others to work for their interests, instead of implementing them directly. That is why they backed Slav peoples of Austro-Hungary, for their efforts were cheaper and more efficient, than the US direct intervention. It was a rational, and not a selfish line.

Thus Americans and other allies decided to destroy Austro-Hungary out of fear that they might lose war in the battlefield. They decided to back national claims of Slav peoples, for they feared that Italian army could not defeat Austro-Hungary. Serbian government was on the sidelines, its only influence were activities of good ambassadors in allied countries. Czechs were more influential, for they pursued a more active and wise policy. For the same result only few Czechs and many Serbs perished. A high price was paid for the old misconception of Garašanin, Pašić and Ristić that diplomacy was not necessary, or that Serbia could impose its interests to the allies. Ultimate decision had been taken far away, and allies did not take into consideration Serb interests in taking that decision. Allies did not even take heed of Italy, let alone of the Serb government in exile. These are the rules of the world. Serbia lost its military power, its government did not have a territory or a country to rule over, and consequently ceased to be an important factor in the global calculations. Vestiges of the Serb army strengthened by volunteers and former prisoners were deployed in less important, Thessaloniki front. All in all Serbia was in a political and military dead-end. Perhaps a 73-year old man with a beard

sporadically imagined that he and Serbia were still important, but after 1915 it was not true.

As regards Croats, Serbs, and Slovenians from Austro-Hungary, they became a very important factor thanks to the new allies policy, for they were tasked with destroying the monarchy. One can say that they completed their task excellently, but they did not know how much to charge for their services. In fact they were military manipulated and conquered by the Regent and government. Their position was very favourable: Czechs paved the way for their 'liberation' by diplomatic means, their main opponent Italy was in a very precarious diplomatic position, and the main rival in the unification process, Serbia was thrown out of the game because of its impotence.

Austria disintegrated very quickly. Before the defeat at the Thessaloniki front it had had some successes. But then political forces of South Slavs decided to take a unified action. After reaching an agreement and holding a founding session of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, a Declaration was issued:

"National Council authorised by all national parties and groups, shall from this moment on run the national politics. There shall be no separate policy, nor any separate political negotiations by any political party or parliamentary group. National Council shall be in the future the only representative of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs and a decisive factor in shaping of their destiny".

Such a declaration was essentially of a state-forming character, for it presupposed the monopoly of political decision-making. The first article of Declaration determined that the state-forming character was temporary:

"We demand unification of our peoples, of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs in their whole ethnic and geographical territory, irrespective of provincial or state borders, into a unique, fully sovereign state on the principles of political and democratic democracy, which entails annulment of all social, and economic injustices and inequalities".

It is noticeable that this Declaration did not prejudge the form of rule or determined principles of future state. It did not have such a task. Principles of future community were outlined on the day of Proclamation of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs on 29 October 1918:

"The Croat State Assembly on the basis of full right of national self-determination, recognised by all the warring sides, concludes: All legal-state relations between the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, on the one side, and Kingdom of Hungary and empire of Austria, on the other side, are being dissolved...Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia with Rijeka are proclaimed wholly independent states from Hungary and Austria; hence in accordance with the modern principle of nationality, and on the basis of national unity, Slovenes, Croats and Serbs decide to join a common national, sovereign state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in the whole ethnic and geographic territory of those peoples, irrespective of their territorial and geographic borders. Pan-national constitution-making parliament of united Slovene, Croat and Serb peoples, shall be elected by a qualified majority, pre-empting any majorisation, either in form of rule, or in internal state order of our state, resting on equality of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.

The state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs asserted itself as a temporary state, but also manifested its will to become a permanent state by joining the South Slav community. Hence the sovereignty was included in the future community, as something already won, in contrast to the Corfu Declaration which did not mention state sovereignty

of South Slav peoples living in Austro-Hungarian areas. The May Declaration laid claim to the sovereignty, but in terms of a permanent community on the basis of the Croat state right. The 29 October 1918 Declaration however presupposed something else: indisputable state sovereignty introduced into a new community. Therefore one can say that Austro-Hungarian Slovenes, Croats and Serbs joined the new community not only as peoples, but also as state subjects.

It was assumed that the new community would be constituted by a constitution-making assembly and that a qualified majority would be tasked with a decision-making process. Qualified majority might be numerous, as determined by the Corfu Declaration, or national. Although there are some vague elements in the text it is clear that the national principle prevails, for "full equality of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs" is mentioned. The issues of form of rule (monarchy or republic), and internal order (unitary state or federation, centralised or decentralised state) were left open. Those qualifications were more unfavourable for the conservative Serbian concept of unification than the ones spelled out in the Corfu Declaration, which by the way was not seriously taken into consideration by Pašić. Svetozar Pribičević gave the following explanation of the proposal:

"High Assembly! There is no doubt that we hope that our common state shall be a big, powerful and strong one. But we must stress that in that common state Serbs, Croats and Slovenes must be equal; no people should be nullified or majorised".

Pašić's explanation given in 1921 on the occasion of constitution of Parliament is well-known, namely he said that no majorisation would be allowed among one people, for Slovenes, Croats and Serbs were one unique people. But Pašić's Parliament rested on a clear majorisation, totally disregarding qualified decision-making of people, and even numerical qualification. Decision was taken by a simple majority of the majority of present MPs, without MPs of the Croat Republican Peasant Party of Stjepan Radić, the strongest Croat party. Pašić prevented its attendance by demanding its early oath of allegiance to the King.

Decisive moment in the whole discussion about the manner and character of unification was victory at the Thessaloniki Front. For allies that Front was a defensive and minor one, for they considered that the main one was the German one. But soldiers on the ground thought differently and two very stubborn and talented French generals managed to convince politicians of the need for active operations on the Thessaloniki Front. But as those persuasions were slow and difficult operations began on 14 September 1918 with artillery preparations, and the infantry attack was effected the following day. The French military plan was in line with the Napoleonic tradition, for it rested on the position that speed was more important than mass of soldiers. And alike their great predecessor, they quickly defeated their enemy. At the Thessaloniki Front Allies had about 600,000 soldiers, but the most decisive action was taken by the Serb and French Troops. Losses were minimal. Bulgarian resistance was weak, and after only 12 days Bulgaria was ready for truce. After negotiations, Bulgaria capitulated, and allies won the WW1. That fact that the Bulgarian army was 300,000-strong was a factor of lesser importance. What helped the allies win the war was isolation of Turkey from the centre and military advances into the heart of Austro-Hungary. On 12 October Niš was occupied, and on 1 November Belgrade too. Even allies were not aware of successes they achieved. Consequently they intended to set up a new defensive front at the conquered

positions. General Depere, commander-in-chief at that front, unwillingly accepted such order, but developments accelerated and slow centralised decision-making process keep up with the urgency of changes. Austro-Hungary was collapsing and there was need for a speedy intervention. In line with the aforementioned General Depere on 18 October issued the following order:

"I Changes which have come about in recent days, and a volatile situation in Austro-Hungary exact some modifications in our plan...that is, we must set up a solid defensive front in Northern Serbia.

II Serb army. It looks that Yugo-Slav movement is gaining momentum...The Serb army should be well-organised and used to our benefit...

With that goal in mind it is necessary to directly interfere..."

The Supreme Command of Serb Army immediately obeyed that order. Added to that Pašić from Paris urged a quick military occupation of key localities in Austro-Hungary. On the ground there were autonomous actions, and the most efficient action was taken by Major Majstner who single-handedly and independently separated Maribor from Austria, and held it with his volunteers.

What Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee failed to achieve in a diplomatic way, that is, recognition of unification, was achieved on the ground. The very act of unification was no longer related to Serbian government, it was a matter of the army and the Regent Aleksandar.

AUTHORITARIAN WILL OF REGENT ALEKSANDAR AND THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF SLOVENES, CROATS AND SERBS

The National Council in Zagreb set up a delegation tasked with establishing ties with the Serbian military command and the Regent to co-ordinate activities. Delegation was made up of Bogdan Medaković, Laza Popović and Major Dragutin Perko. Bogdan Medaković cancelled his trip on health and old age grounds, and he was hastily replaced with Valerijan Pribičević. Drinković asked in writing government of Serbia to send its troops to the Osijek-Šamac line because of danger which the country and population of Srem and Eastern Slavonia faced. Svetozar Pribičević, who was the prime mover in Zagreb, at a secret meeting told Laza Popović to disregard the instruction, and instead to demand that the Serb troops be transferred to the West. Laza Popović was Svetozar's best man, and Valerijan was Svetozar's brother. That delegation was in fact a private delegation of Svetozar Pribičević. One can say that thanks to Pribičević's intervention the Serbian army was allowed to deprive the National Council of its genuine sovereignty. This is best proved by the delegation's report drafted by Laza Popović:

"As it is well-known my mission was tasked with making contacts with Serbian government and to ask it, in line with the written note of the National Council, military build-up from the line Osijek-Šamac to Zemun in the east. I have overstepped my authority to the extent of asking Serbian government to send in its troops to Bačka, Banat and Baranja, and Međimurje...and reinforcements to Ljubljana and Zagreb..."

That report is incredibly cynical; Popović speaks of 'overstepping his authority', although in fact he handed over the state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs to Serb army, was instructed to deploy troops along Osijek-Šamac line, and send reinforcements to Vojvodina, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Svetozar Pribičević enabled Serb army to effect

unification through annexation of South Slav countries of former Austro-Hungary and the Regent Aleksandar to become an authoritarian leader. Although later, in his pamphlet "Dictatorship of King Aleksandar" he blamed immorality of Aleksandar for the authoritarian nature of the regime, it is indisputable that Pribićević played a key role in establishment of Aleksandar's authoritarian rule, for he made it possible for Aleksandar to become the only factor of unification. On the other hand Serbs in Croatia were disgraced by such conduct of brothers Pribićević and Laza Popović, for they acted single-handedly and by-passed Slovenes and Croats. That means that unification in fact happened in the way contrary to interests of the Croat and Slovene people. Paradoxically interests of Serbs in Vojvodina were betrayed even more than those of Croats and Slovenes by their very people.

The Geneva Conference and subsequent events indicated that unification could have been effected in a more exemplary way than it had been done. The Geneva Declaration was preceded by a recognition of the National Council in Zagreb:

"On behalf of Serbian government I have the honour to inform you that the government recognises the National Council in Zagreb as a legal government of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, who live in the territory of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Today I have sent diplomatic notes to governments of France, England, Italy and Northern USA, asking them to recognise the National Council in Zagreb as a legal government of Yugoslav countries which belonged to former monarchy of Austro-Hungary and recognise that the volunteer troops of those countries are a warring side or one side in the conflict". That happened on 8 November, and the following day the Declaration, stressing parallel sovereignty of the two entities, the Kingdom of Serbia and the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, was passed. Formation of the common government was also envisaged, as was the survival of full sovereignty of the two entities. Monarchy and dynasty of Karađorđević were not mentioned anywhere. Pašić was not included in the central government. That document was wholly contrary to Pašić's principles of unification and the motives of Pašić's signing were questionable. He was under great pressure of international factors and the Serbian political opposition and he did not have access to most recent home news. His idea was to first accept the document out of tactical reasons, and then to undermine it and continue to toe his line. He confirmed the aforementioned in an unusually emotional letter to Protić written on 13 November, after the Regent and Protić had already undercut the Declaration. 30 In that letter Pašić explained that he was adhering to his original plan to first effect unification and then to talk about the state order from the standpoint of the majority, that is through majorisation of the will of the new areas. He thought that the "natural course of affairs was for Serbia to run political affairs in the same way it used to run military affairs". He furthermore maintained that he was compelled to sign that unfavourable document because that Trumbić and company were joined by the Serbian opposition and he remained isolated. He considered that the document had to be accepted because of tactical reasons, and later destroyed by an expression of popular will, that is, by declaration in line with the principle of the majority people.

Declaration was undermined by the governmental crisis, that is by walk-out of Protić and several ministers. The Regent was behind that move, for he opposed the Geneva Declaration on two grounds: Serbia was deprived of primacy in the new state and the right of House of Karađorđević was not reconfirmed. Declaration was thus eliminated

and Pašić was left high and dry. The Regent and the army wielded all the influence in matters political. Serbian army was as early as on 15 November in Temisoara and Rijeka. Annexation was essentially completed. The Geneva Conference confirmed that the conservative political idea lost its importance, while the Regent became the primary political factor. Many wrongly thought that Pašić manipulated the Geneva Declaration, but his true intentions were clearly outlined in his letter to Protić. To put it simply

Pašić and conservatives became powerless. They could only try to shilly-shally and attempt to effect majorisation. Romans said that the army, glory and money were the basis of power. Regent had the army and glory, and was about to get money.

Decisive moment was arrival of Colonel Dušan Simković in Zagreb, in the capacity of a delegate of the Supreme Command of the National Council of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. That happened just a week after the Geneva conference. Simović openly rejected results of the Geneva conference and addressed the leading figures of the Council with the following words:

"I have no authority to make any statement regarding the issue of sovereignty and I am not familiar with intentions of the government. But as a soldier I must tell you the following: Serbia, which in this war sacrificed 1,5 million of its citizens for liberation and unification of their brothers across rivers Sava, Danube and Drina, cannot allow the formation of a new state on its borders, of a state comprising all Serbia's fellow-nationals. It cannot allow its sidelining after four years of suffering and defeat of the enemy. It cannot allow the others, who sided with the enemy during the war, to collect all the rewards of Serbia's victory. According to the right of arms and on the basis of a truce treaty with Hungary, signed by General Mišić as envoy of General Deperi, Commander of Allied forces in the Thessaloniki front, the following territories belong to Serbia: Banat, up to the line Oršava-Karansebeš, Maroš-Arad-up to Segedin, Bačka up to line Horgoš-Subotica-Baja; Baranja up to line Batasek-Pečuj-Barč and area along river Drava up to Osijek, Srem and Slavonia up to the railway line Osijek-Đakovo-Šamac, the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dalmatia up to Planka. Beyond that territory you can form your separate state or join Serbia".

That was an unacceptable offer for it would have reduced Croatia to territory around Zagreb, and Dalmatia would have been obviously divided between Serbia and Italy. At play was simply a blackmail and not a demarcation attempt. The Regent and the army poised themselves as victors dictating the terms of capitulation, as they have been already dictated to Bulgarians and Hungarians, and not as allies: either you accept annexation or we shall eliminate all possibilities of your state survival.

Pavelić floated the idea of a federal state with the following federal units: Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Croatia, Dalmatia and Slovenia. Simović obviously rejected that idea.

Under such terms the leading figures of the National Council in Zagreb had to accept unification in the form of annexation, and to resolve the issue of arrangement of the country later. On that day the State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs, through capitulation, *de facto* became part of Serbia.

AUTHORITARIAN WILL OF REGENT ALEKSANDAR AND UNIFICATION WITH MONTENEGRO

Conservatives viewed Montenegro as an "unnecessary" state, for they thought that the most important link between the states, were the people, and as in Montenegro Serbs lived, existence of another Serb state was superfluous. Dynasty of Petrović was viewed as a competing dynasty and any idea of survival of that family was rejected. Petrović themselves during the war disqualified themselves through their actions in the eyes of allies. The aforementioned conservative stance was grounded to such a large extent, that a vast majority of common people were in favour of unification of Montenegro and Serbia. Nikola Pašić in December 1916 submitted a plan to the Regent and government in which basic principles of unification were outlined. The plan was signed by all members of government and the Regent, and as far as Serbia was concerned, the manner of unification was resolved. In fall 1918 an earlier decision was implemented.

Montenegro was an internationally recognised state, an ally in the war against Axis Powers. In the past 6 years Montenegro was also an ally of Serbia in six wars. Hence such a stubborn desire of conservatives to effect unification, through annexation, had to be viewed as - mindless. Conservatives treated South Slav peoples of Austro-Hungary as defeated peoples, for their state was the enemy in the war. Conservatives overlooked the fact that those very peoples rejected the Austro-Hungarian empire. Conservatives treated in the same way Montenegro. Ally or enemy, internationally recognised or not, conservatives, in their Garašanin-style treated Montenegro as yet another country to be incorporated into Serbia.

All allies, and not only the French, also contributed to such a conduct of Serbia. From the beginning of the war Serbia was offered the right to unification with Montenegro, but the manner thereof was treated superficially. Conservatives thought that Serbia had an absolute right to incorporate Montenegro into Serbia. Italy was the only country which opposed unification. Many wrongly thought that Italy cherished an unfair ambition to occupy Montenegro.

Such a concept of unification was also favoured by the position of dynasty of Petrović in Montenegro proper. Long rule of King Nikola was nearing its end. He was often unjustly called by his opponents and contemporary historians an authoritarian ruler, but he was in fact a patriarchal ruler. Due to its arrested political development Montenegro in the early Twentieth century had a ruler similar to Serbia's Miloš Obrenović, eighty years ago, that is an untouchable patriarchal master who was there to rule and to be obeyed. There were no differences between the rule of Miloš Obrenović and King Nikola, only external circumstances were different. Serbia was able to remove Miloš, at a high price, that is, reduction of its autonomy, and Montenegro was about to emulate that process. And Bijelaši did it, but in the wrong way, for they removed King Nikola Petrović, but also abolished autonomy of Montenegro. The country then became a vasa-like part of Serbia. Too long rule of Nikola Petrović politically conserved Montenegro, whose young men and new social strata tried to effect changes and be rid of dynasty. Thus many of them accepted Bjelaši (the Whites) concept and ideas. There was an anti-monarchy mood, but there was no pro-unification mood.

In fact unification was effected by the Regent and army. Conservatives had no say whatsoever in that matter. To put it simply from the Thessaloniki process the Regent was

the only prime mover of Serbia's political life. The Regent Aleksandar asked the government to appoint one man who would have a task to implement in Montenegro the policy of Serbian government and government complied with that wish of his. On 15 October Svetozar Tomić became a special envoy of Serbia in Montenegro. He was previously head of the Montenegrin department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tomić's task was simple: organise annexation of Montenegro and consequently prevent a possible Italian action, or attempt of Montenegro to hand-over its sovereignty to the future South Slav community. The second Regent's move was setting up of the Skadar troops and giving them several tasks. General Mišić on 21 October sent instructions to Skadar troops: "in addition to military duties, you will have to work on unification of Montenegro and Serbia". Colonel Dragutin Milanović was appointed Commander of the Skadar troops. Before leaving for Skadar he had confidential talks with the Regent. The latter told him "not to shilly-shally in Montenegro" In fact Milutinović was an absolute master of the whole operation. He even censored Tomić's reports to the government. He was empowered by the Regent, who had faith only in the army.

Newly-formed Central Committee for Unification of Serbia and Montenegro was tasked with organising unification, while the army was tasked with 'pacifying' population in order to prevent any opposition to the work of the committee. Dragutin Milovanović had an obligation to militarily occupy Montenegro and Svetozar Tomić to elevate that occupation to the political and legal level. Both fulfilled their obligations.

The Skadar troops did not need to carry out their military tasks, ordered by General Mišić, but only political tasks. The reason thereof was the attempt of Montenegrins to effect their self-liberation. On 13 October insurgents liberated Andrijevića and disarmed 1,500 soldiers. The following day they liberated Berane and disarmed 1,000 soldiers. Then in short campaigns they liberated Plav, Gusinje, Kolašin, Rožaje and Bijelo Polje. As such success had a major resonance in Montenegro, in the next two weeks insurgents practically liberated whole Montenegro. Serbian army helped them only once, during liberation of Podgorica. As Serb troops did not play a major role in liberation of Montenegro, Milutinović in carrying out his tasks first disarmed and disbanded Montenegrin insurgents. A paradoxical situation was created: the people took to arms and successfully got rid of the occupation army, and then an ally army arrived and started disarming that people. Was the status of that people forcibly changed?

Milutinović established military control over entire Montenegrin territory and neutralised attempts to restore old rule. He did his job very seriously, just as the Regent required -"without any shilly-shallying". The first order of the commander of a position in Cetinje was the following:

Order no. 1 of the Commander of a position in Cetinje for 23 October 1918.

The Supreme Command of Serbian army orders the Serbian troops to enter Montenegro as the factor of order, peace and justice. In the general interest I also issue the following orders:

1. I ban carrying of arms and ammunition by all those who have not been authorised by me and my bodies.
2. I ban any random shooting and inappropriate behaviour.
3. I introduce curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m.
4. Authorised bodies must be obeyed.

5. I ban anyone to disturb order and peace, either by looting or harassing peaceful citizens

All those who have any request or claim must turn to the local military command in the municipal building.

Anyone who breaches order and laws shall be arrested and put on trial.

Such orders of local commanders were followed by the order of Head of Joint Staff of Serbian army who through the command of former Skadar, and current Adriatic troops, was handed over to all district authorities:

"Transfer from municipality to municipality of the same district shall be effected in accordance with announcements by municipal authorities.

Transfer from district to district shall be effected in accordance with announcements of the district head.

Longer journeys shall be announced exclusively by the command of the Adriatic troops or they shall certify such announcements by district heads".

One could cite many similar documents or actions, for example removal of the Montenegrin flag from the Cetinje court (which even Austrians had not done), then beatings and arrest of individuals declaring themselves as Montenegrins or of those who exhibited any symbol of dynasty Petrović, etc.

The aforementioned amply indicates that Serbian army recognised only its supreme command and did not even try in any way to hint at independence of Montenegro. Curfew was introduced, freedom of movement was limited, summary arrests were enforced, as were summary trials. It was a clear case of occupation stricter than the Austrian one. In fact Serbian troops entered an internationally recognised state, an ally state, in which no major enemy troops were deployed, to de-commission liberating troops which had defeated the enemy, in order to introduce military administration and behave as occupation forces. Colonel Milutinović completed his task, as a true Serbian officer: without objections and to the letter. Regent had every reason to be satisfied with his conduct.

But Regent was also satisfied with his second man, Svetozar Tomić, an envoy in charge of the civilian part of annexation of Montenegro. Initially pro-unification rallies were held in many towns, and on 7 November in Berane the Central Executive Committee convened the Montenegrin constitution-making parliament which was to pass a decision on unification with Serbia. The Central Executive Council called the elections and drafted electoral rules, just three days after the last Austrian soldiers had left Montenegro. What was legally questionable was the fact that foreign nationals or appointees of Serbian government who made up the CEC, called the elections and drafted electoral rules, without any reference to the Montenegrin Constitution. Montenegro was an internationally recognised state and had its seat, albeit an empty one, at the Versailles Conference, governments of all allies, including Serbia, had diplomatic relations with and ambassadors in Montenegro, and suddenly a group of people who came with the Serbian troops started organising elections for a parliament, a move not envisaged under the Montenegrin Constitution. There is only one legal qualification for that development: a coup was effected with assistance of the Serbian army.

Moreover elections were neither proper nor democratic under the then standards:

1. They were not general elections, but delegates were elected at popular rallies by shouting out their names. This facilitated manipulation.

2. Those delegates were not automatically elected for delegates of the future assembly, but they mutually appointed a smaller delegation. At play was a principle of majorisation, for a narrow majority determined the whole delegation.

3. Elections were to be held ten days after their calling. Thus the period for any campaign was too short. All this suited the side behind which was the Serbian army.

4. Provision of the Montenegrin positive electoral law that an MP had to have at least 30 years was changed. The age limit was reduced to 25 years, in view of evident pro-Serbian mood of young people.

5. Serbian army and its officials distributed food to curry favour with voters, etc. Elections were both illegal and illegitimate.

Result of the elections was a parliament composed of MPs favouring unification. Moreover Colonel Milutinović in a bid to bring pressure to bear on delegates on the eve of the first parliamentary session sent in reinforcements to Podgorica, where he and his headquarters resided.

During Cetinje elections a conflict between the two different options happened. Those two factions were called Bijelaši (Whites) and Zelenaši (Greens) because of the colour of papers on which they put the names of their candidates.

Parliament had 165 delegates and convened for five days, from 24-29 November. It passed four decisions:

1. to overthrow King Nikolaj the First Petrović Njegoš and his dynasty

2. to effect unification of Montenegro with Serbia into one state under dynasty Karadžević. Such a unified state shall then join the common homeland of our people with three names, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

3. to elect the Executive Popular Council. 5 members of that Council shall run all the affairs, until unification of Montenegro and Serbia is completed, and

4. to inform of the aforementioned parliamentary decision former King of Montenegro, Nikolaj the First Petrović, government of the Kingdom of Serbia, friendly allied forces and all neutral states".

The first decision was a precondition for the second one, the most important and the purpose of the entire Regent-and army-organised operation. Without ouster of King Nikola, annexation of Montenegro was not possible. Regent Aleksandar did not want annexation at any price, notably union of dynasties or similar, but was bent on annexation under Karadževići. King Nikolaj was the regent's grandfather and the whole affair had a taste of the family conflict. The third decision speaks of both dethroning of dynasty Petrović and also of a clean break with the positive law of Montenegro and its authorities.

Decisions of Podgorica parliament clearly indicated the aforementioned break and one can consequently say that Podgorica Parliament created a new state. That new state Montenegro was immediately blended into Serbia. This annulled the international sovereignty of Montenegro, and was improper, for such annulment could be only effected by Montenegro proper, and not by the newly-emerged state. Allies who were aware of that, declined to recognise decision of Podgorica assembly. The entire annexation operation is a historical and legal scandal. Only on December 17 decisions of the Podgorica assembly were handed to the Regent Aleksandar, who accepted them, in his own words, "with excitement". On 1 December the state of Serbia, according to the statement of the Regent Aleksandar, annulled its sovereignty by joining the new state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and 17 days the new state, Montenegro, followed in its

footsteps. One must pose the question whether all those who joined the new state with Serbia were cheated by that Regent's act, for he acted as Head of Serbia, which no longer existed. But there is another plausible explanation: maybe the Regent was a monarchic homo duplex, maybe he intended to represent both Serbia and the new state.

The whole affair with the Podgorica Parliament caused protests. The major protest was the Christmas Uprising which broke out in January 1919 and in which about 5,000 people took part. It was quelled, but the toll was high: about hundred people were killed or wounded, and many fled into forests and mountains or abroad. The Christmas uprising was organised by the Greens. Although it rallied both Dynasty Petrović loyalists and republicans, most of its members were against unification with Serbia, or favoured so-called conditional unification. Obviously the Regent Aleksandar and the Whites faction were against the mere idea of a conditional unification.

One can say that the mood in Montenegro in 1918 was such that the majority of population was in favour of unification. Hence actions taken by Svetozar Tomić and others were not necessary, that is, they were only counter-productive. Had there been no Serbian soldiers in Montenegro, unification would have been effected in a proper way.

Regent Aleksandar who was spawned by the conservative political circles could not act differently. Serbia could not recognise subjectivity and sovereignty to anyone, nor anyone had the right to join the new state independently. Consequently Aleksandar intended to rule at will and as long as he could over that new state which he and his army had created. Conservatives backed that stance of his, for Aleksandar's future, authoritarian regime was to be spawned from that standpoint. In fact Serbs occupied-Serbs.

That wrong unification brought something to Montenegro on the social plane. Before unification Montenegro had a patriarchal order based on underdeveloped economy, mostly cattle-breeding. In fact it was a vicious circle: basic economic activity generated a similar level of rule, which protected that activity from any change. Expansion of Montenegro after the Berlin Congress in economic terms augured well for the country's economic development, which would remove the patriarchal rule of King Nikola. Montenegro has merged with an economically more progressive community, which boasted a higher level of protection of subjective rights and more developed property relations. In that new community Serbia in economic terms treated well Montenegro, that is, allowed its income to flow into the new 'entity.' But that privileged position of Montenegro unfortunately was linked to the patriarchal forms of mind-set and tribal organisation of customs, which had ceased to exist in Serbia in the Ninetieth century. That acceleration of history led to mutation of patriarchalism into an etatist direction: namely, the state emerged as the primary source of income of life of entire population. The sphere of economic-civil society was by-passed, for a much longer period was needed for its development. All in all the entire Dinarski basin after the unification found itself in the same position as Montenegro: all countries joined the community which had different and more civilised legal and economic aspects, but no country was economically privileged as Montenegro. Serbs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, alike Serbs from Croatia, had to pay higher taxes than Serbs from Montenegro and Serbia. In fact all other countries maintained Serbia and Montenegro. This prevented development of civil ideas and civil set of values for a long time in Montenegro.

One can say that in 1918 the pro-Serbia mood which existed in Montenegro was not channelled in an adequate way, but was rather annulled by an arrogant display of the Regent's will and the clique around Svetozar Tomić. It was an illegal operation, which accorded Montenegro a privileged position. All this created an anti-civil mind-set and a system of values. They got money from outside, and because of that gravity train were deprived of possibility for development of civil values, which was the purpose of development of European and Western peoples.

AUTHORITARIAN WILL OF REGENT ALEKSANDAR AND UNIFICATION WITH VOJVODINA

Vojvodina also directly joined Serbia before emergence of the new community. But Vojvodina's merger was a case apart.

Vojvodina then included Banat, Bačka and Baranja, while Srem was an integral part of Croatia. In that territory less than a third of Serb population lived and 38% of Slavs. Economic power of that region was exceptional, for only greater area of Budapest in the whole Hungary was developed. That was the only territory apart from Zagreb in which Serbs lived a civil way of life and fully embraced civil values. Vojvodina legal order, social relations and economic power were much above possibilities of Serbia, but Vojvodina Serbs did not view benignly Serbia, due to its large scale attempts to root out of their national values. What they managed to preserve were some elements of their old autonomy, notably the church one. Affirmation of Serbs was made possible in the public sector, that is in public activities. For example of several thousand judges in the whole Hungary in 1914 only seven non-Vojvodina judges were of Serb nationality. That is why all Serbs tried to affirm themselves on the civil and subjective plane, thus compensating impossibility of their assertion in the public sphere. Those civil, European Serbs, through an independent development, reached that civilisationally affirmative position.

To understand economic status of Serbs in Vojvodina it is necessary to outline property relations. Vojvodina was an exclusively agrarian region in Hungary. Over 70% of population were farmers, and only 15% were industrial workers. Vojvodina was less industrially developed than Hungary, while the Kingdom of Slovenians, Serbs and Croats would become the second strongest industrial country, after Slovenia, in the new state. Income per capita in Vojvodina was above average income per capita in Hungary. Vojvodina was in fact a more developed part of Hungary. According to 1910 census in 1910 33.5% of Serbs and Croats, 4.5% other Slav peoples, 32.6% Hungarians, 23.7% Germans, and 5.3 Romanians lived in Vojvodina. In property relations we had a similar situation. Germans had more land than Serbs, while Jews, despite their small share in population, had a lot of land. As regards Serbs, they rarely belonged to the category of land-owners, who were mostly foreigners. 10% of Serbs and 40% of Hungarians were big landowners (big land allotments made up 19% of total arable land). National administration in 1919 collected data on farmers without land, but only those related to Bačka. 22% of Serbs of 32% of them in Bačka were without land. 18% of Germans (whose share in total population of Bačka was 23%) were without land, while that 41% of Hungarians (total share of Hungarians in population of Bačka was 33%) did not have land. Similar situation was registered with respect to small allotments of land. Serbs and

Jews were the least poor, that is, had the bulk of big and small land allotments. There are reliable data related to structure of ownership of Serbs in the Srem District for the year 1895: 62% of Serbs had land allotments ranging from 5 to 100 acres, that is two thirds of Serb families lived like middle-class peasants. Share of Serbs in industrial branches and crafts was similar. Hence once can say that Serbs in Vojvodina were not economically underprivileged and moreover they enjoyed a favourable social status. Hungarians had almost as much land as Serbs, but many of them also did not have any land. An old aristocratic people had stratified socially on the vestiges of old feudal relations.

There were major differences between Serbs from Hungary and Croatia, on the one hand, and Serbs from Serbia, even Serbs from Dinarski basin, on the other hand due to consequences of momentous 1848. Serbia was leaving the patriarchal world, was establishing internal and losing external sovereignty. Constitution-defenders developed respect for property, judiciary, administration, etc. As Garašanin considered the 1848 unrest as dangerous for Serbia, he tried to protect the internal order and was successful in that intent. Because of that and many other reasons Serbs from Serbia, unlike Serbs in Hungary, had not felt the effects of the most important European movement in the Ninetieth century. Serbs in Hungary then definitely relinquished patriarchal and privileged status which they had enjoyed. Rajačić's and Majerhofen's action against Hungarians insurgents was essentially the last political and military action taken in line with the old patriarchal principle which upheld the primacy of Patriarch and Military District. In its gist the Serbian patriarchalism in 1848 and 1849, instigated Austrian conservatism, waged war against Hungarian conservatism. And revolution? It was forgotten somewhere, it was killed by a Hungarian hand, and not by a Serbian, Austrian or Russian one. After 1848 Serbs did not get much from Vienna, hence their autonomy and Dukedom was transformed into negation thereof. In fact they could not expect to get from Vienna what even Hungarians were not granted, but that new experience helped them develop a new national awareness and come of age. The peak of that coming of age of people was the liberal political idea.

Added to 1848 the most important historical event of that age was disbanding of the Military District in 1881. Then Serbs definitely lost their old autonomy and were transformed from privileged people into subordinate ones. Military District became superfluous because of the then international relations between Hungary and Austria, and Serbs. Shift in power balance in Europe and weakening of Austria helped Hungarians get what they could not get in a political way in 1848-external recognition. That Deal resolved in the neat way relations between Hungarians and Austrians, while institutionalised relations between Hungarians and Croats were only partially solved. But there was no recognition of Serbs. With the loss of the Military District Serbs have indeed lost subjectivity in that political community. Serbs in Hungary were under great pressure due to attempts at hungarisation. Before the WW1 conservatism reigned supreme in the Hungarian political scene, and Serb had hard time in replacing the old privileges with new political freedoms.

Disbanding of the Military District and disappearance of institutes and style of life of Krajina had a negative impact on local population. Many locals due to grinding poverty left for America, while others continued to exercise the old Krajina professions of soldiers, police and priests (until final disintegration of Austro-Hungary many locals remained loyal to the Crown). But a social stratum together with Serbs from Serbia

managed to achieve such a cultural and economic standing to be in the position to finance founding of independent institutions tasked with improving the status of population at large. In Zagreb in 1895 the Serbian bank was founded. Just before the WW1 it became one of the most powerful financial institutions of the state. But it was only the first step towards establishment of economic autonomy of Serbs, for it was concluded that the next one should be founding of associations of craftsmen, merchants and peasants. On 14 September 1897 the first Serbian Agricultural Association in Sremska Kamenica, in the vicinity of Novi Sad, was founded, and the next year an Association of the Serb Agricultural Communes in Austro-Hungary was founded. Those associations embraced farmers, merchants, priests, lawyers. Thus in a short period of time the entire people were organised in an adequate way. Instead of the old patriarchal property, modern property in the external shape of associations was established. It was the most revolutionary change. Before the war there were nearly 400 associations, that is, one association had about 2,000 members. In late 1912 total capital of the Association was 142,436.251.95 kuna. To understand how much progress was made it bears mentioning that the Serbian Bank had a founding capital of only 9,000,000 kuna. Debts of members of association that year amounted only to 10% of capital, which indicates that the Association was financially successful. The land fund of the Association with over 100,000 acres guaranteed the stability of revenues. In case of crisis or drought the Serbian bank was there to help. Growth of capital of the Serbian bank was steady, hence Serbs from Croatia and Hungary entered the Twentieth century with consolidated economic autonomy. They no longer needed licenses of rulers to guarantee their privileges. Now they only needed one provision of the Trade Law of Hungary to guarantee their economic independence. In thirty years they evolved from patriarchal, warrior people into an economically independent and developed community with burgeoning bourgeoisie. They were the biggest miracle of the modern Serbian history. Other peoples with whom they lived, notably Croats, did not have such economic progress or national self-awareness. That became the seed of discord between Serbs and other peoples (nationalism of the Croat conservative idea was against Serbs and Jews because of their economic prosperity in the country in which Croats felt they were the only political people). But Serbs managed to successfully promote themselves as people through successful co-operation with the Duke, or occasionally with Croats. They evolved their political self-awareness in a continuous conflict with the Hungarian and Croat conservatives. Once objects of Austrian germanisation, Hungarians were now trying to effect a total hungarisation of non-Hungarian population of Hungary. Croats, in the face of hungarisation attempts, thought that they were the only ones entitled to the state rights in Croatia. Serbs on the other hand managed to raise themselves above their own conservative idea. Consequently they stopped considering themselves people unfit for getting rich, having property and culture and civilised conduct. They had to abandon their etatist, patriarchal conservatism in order to survive. Their instinct for survival also boosted their economic power. From sheer need the Serb people elevated themselves to the economic, cultural and political level of civil peoples of Europe.

That progress was interrupted by the WW1 and results thereof. Serbs from Hungary and Croatia joined Serbs from Serbia after establishment of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. That was not done against their will, but the manner and principle of that annexation were contrary to their long-term interests. Annexation was

effected as expansion of the then Serb state. Allegedly Serbs from Serbia liberated Serbs from Hungary and Croatia. The latter in fact entered the state as a politically subjective and self-aware people, so the story about 'liberation' did not hold water. Positive legislation and administrative measures of the State of Serbia were arrogantly enforced in the new countries. Concept of the people with three names, centralist administration, rampant conservatism and Serbization of political life lowered the status of Serbs from Croatia and Hungary. Paradoxically enough, Serbs from Croatia and Hungary who had successfully resisted germanisation, and Croat and Hungarian conservatism, were now defeated by their own people. Conservatives in the new members of that state maintained that their peoples lost very much by joining the new community. It is partially true, but they, notably Croats, also profited very much from that union. Serbs from Hungary and Croatia at the same time lost and got most: they got a common state with the mainstream people, but lost their high-level, civil subjectivity and independence. Aleksandar Karađorđević, that narcissistic heir to the throne, descendant of Karađorđe and grandson of Nikola Petrović, and Nikola Pašić, an aging Balkans revolutionary, and hardened conservative abolished civil subjectivity of Hungarians and Croat Serbs and opened the process of elimination of civil features of Serb people in the Twentieth century. Socialism alike conservative political idea had no tolerance for civil values. The most negative element was the principle behind and manner of the foundation of the Kingdom of SCS.

Serbian conservative idea has always viewed Vojvodina as a prey, and not as a region of a certain subjectivity. Thus Vojvodina was sidelined in all actions taken both by the Serbian government and South Slave emigration. The first Vojvodina representative, Veljko Petrović, in the Yugoslav Committee was elected only in December 1917. Although parts of Vojvodina were earlier mentioned as a region to be covered by activities of the Yugoslav Committee, at a key session held on 27 September 1914, Vojvodina representative was absent. This made more convincing the statement of Vošnjak, Slovenian member of the Yugoslav committee, in 1928, that "this was due to Pašić's hard-line stance that no representative of Vojvodina should be appointed to the Yugoslav Committee for Vojvodina had been already united in spirit with Serbia. According to Pašić keys of Vojvodina had been already handed to Belgrade". Stanoje Stanojević, a Vojvodina Serb, conservative politician, and a nationalist also accused the members of the Yugoslav Committee for "Serbian government and members of the Yugoslav committee were not inclined towards representation of Vojvodina". Later acceptance of Veljko Petrović was done at the moment when the Yugoslav Committee and Serbian government were at loggerheads. Serbian government was not even informed of that move. Pašić and many other important public figures in Serbia were only in favour of direct annexation of Vojvodina to Serbia. In his letter dated 14 October 1918 sent to Protić in Corfu, Pašić strongly opposed the ambition of the Yugoslav Committee to represent Serbs from Vojvodina.

Serbs in Vojvodina during the whole war could not take any important political action, for they were successfully controlled by Austro-Hungarian police and army. Population of Srem bore the brunt of reprisals, notably after attempts of Serbian army to transfer troops to Srem. Reprisals were sporadic and pre-emptive. Civilian authorities of Hungary could not be accused of repressive conduct. On the contrary they often acted in a protective way. In the early stage of the war it was the civilian authorities who opposed military attempts to put on trial 37 Serbs on trumped-up charges of high-treason. That

move was intended to intimidate Serb population. Civilian authorities, backed by very Count Tisa, Prime Minister of Hungary, rejected that attempt. Thus only Jaša Tomić was tried by a military court, while others were tried by civil courts of law. Half of the accused were immediately acquitted of all charges, and the other half was interned (some were released in mid-September). In fact detention was the most frequent form of repression. It was a mild measure compared to the wartime conduct of authorities in Bosnia, notably harsh reprisals and pre-emptive actions. The aforementioned in fact indicated that the Monarchy did not expect major problems with Serbs in Vojvodina. And it turned out that the assessment was good. Despite a large number of volunteers in the Serbian army, Vojvodina Serbs (alike Vojvodina Croats) remained loyal to the Crown throughout the war. They waged another war for Habsburgs and did not resist mobilisation. But when the Monarch's losing streak began, many of them became deserters, or joined the enemy troops. In Vojvodina there were no major attempts at disturbing law and order. In July 1918 Veljko Popović tried to incite Vojvodinans to protest against an action leading to arrest of several dozen people. But there was no response to his request. Vojvodina denizens were very quiet.

One cannot say that Vojvodina Serbs have been fully satisfied with Austro-Hungary, but their discontent was not so massive to lead to major protests and turmoil. Majority of Slav people in Vojvodina were for abandonment of the Monarchy, but had no idea which new direction to take. Some were for forging closer ties with Belgrade, some for closer ties with Zagreb, and most of them just wanted the whole process to end quickly. Hungarians and Germans were leaning towards Austro-Hungary, and Romanians towards Romania. The war divided people in the Vojvodina plain, but not to the extent to stir them up to take a more resolute action.

Vojvodina issue was addressed on the ground only in fall 1918, while the allies and government of Serbia had diplomatic talks. On diplomatic plane there was fear of the Romanian pretension to the whole Balkans, while Bačka, Baranja and Srem were considered part of Serbia.

The first Vojvodina action was taken by Tihomir Ostojić, secretary of the Serbian Matrix, who after being released from detention, held a meeting in Subotica with the like-minded activists. Then on 2 October a resolution was passed: "Serbs and Croats (Bunjevci and Šokci) in Southern Hungary, having no other possibility to express their will, no representative in the Budapest Parliament, and in view of the fact that their public manifestations are obstructed, have decided to pass a resolution tantamount to a claim that status of Bačka, Baranja and Banat be determined at a future peace conference, with the goal of establishing a free community of all the Yugoslav peoples". That was the first open expression of their will, and it demonstrated their pro-Zagreb leanings. The second Subotica meeting of 23-24 October, tried to implement the said resolution. To that end it delegated Vasa Stajić as representative of Vojvodina to the Central Committee of the National Council. Then all former decisions of the National Council were accepted. Bunjevci independently delegated priest Blaško Rajić to Zagreb, and then he and Vasa Stajić had a similar job in that city. But they were by and large given a cold shoulder, that is no attention was paid to the issue of Vojvodina by members of the Central Council. Even the press was very restrained. On the other hand delegates from Bosnia and Herzegovina had been accorded an incomparably better treatment.

As regards the Radicals, they were at the time undecided, were even negotiating the possibility of entering a new coalition government of Karolji (later the Radical party very adroitly presented the act of unification as exclusively their own deed). Some sources indicated that Jaša Tomić and Kosta Hadži in late October gave Karolji guarantees that they would back the government. But on the other hand several prominent Radicals refused to join that government. In fact Radicals did not have any precise information about the future position of Vojvodina, that is, did not have access to important information from Serbia. But they undoubtedly joined the action too late, as demonstrated by choice of Subotica as the first venue of their campaign for secession. Slovaks and Romanians on 18 October in Budapest Parliament directly denied the right of Austro-Hungary to represent them at the future peace conference. This made impossible any collusion between Radicals and Budapest and prompted them to hold the Subotica meeting on 27 October. Later Radicals maintained that the conference played a key role in their decision to establish national committees and the Central National Committee in Novi Sad. But that was not true, for they had already held several organisational meetings in the lawyers' office of Ignjat Palas with a view to establishing the Serbian National Council. But an independent decision was taken in Novi Sad to constitute the Serbian National Council in the building of Serbian Matrix on 3 November and to take over power after withdrawal of the Austro-Hungarian army. And the Serbian National Council was constituted on that day, and in its membership Tomić's Radicals prevailed. But Ignjat Palas, a democrat and Catholic was to be most credited for that act; thanks to his Masonic connections he was informed about the future course of events. But foundation of that committee was a belated act, for the competing Hungarian National Councils have already emerged, and in Banat there was much self-organisation.

Proclamation of the Serbian National Committee reads: "National Committee of Serbs in Hungary has taken on the duty to help Serbs and other South Slavs to attain their right, on the basis of self-determination of peoples, which was recognised by all the cultural world... the Serb people in Hungary, that is its Parliament must take a final decision". The text clearly indicated that the purpose of activities of the Committee was calling of parliamentary session to confirm and articulate the right to self-determination of people.

The Serb National Committee in Novi Sad had committed itself to two courses of action: one towards Hungarian civilian authorities and the other towards Serbia.

First action towards Serbia was taken on 5 November when the Serb National Committee together with the National Council from Petrovaradin sent a delegation to Belgrade to call the Serbian army. Delegation was composed of Ignjat Palas and other five members. Members of delegation carried both Serb and Croat flags.

In Belgrade they met with the Commander of the Danube Division, Dragomir Milojević. He met their demand by sending major Vojislav Bugarski, and 40 officers to set up a batallion from former prisoners of war to be deployed in that territory. Although members of delegation thought that they had contributed to that decision of the Commander of Drina Division that was not true, it was done on orders of the Supreme Command, that is, of Commander of the Allied Troops in that battlefield General Deperi. Major Marinković on 2 November informed the Supreme Command that Deperi ordered him to transfer reconnoissance troops. On that very day Pašić sent a telegram from Paris to the Supreme Command to start transferring troops, for the truce with Germany was in the

offing. And General Mišić immediately issued orders to commanders of armies to first transfer "weaker" units across Drina, Sava and Danube for scouting and contacts. Only General Bojović was ordered to transfer stronger units to Banat to occupy the line Bela Crkva-Vršac-Temišvar, for there was fear of incursions of Romanian troops in Banat.

According to witnesses while the ship "Hrvat" was sailing towards Novi Sad with delegation requesting assistance of Serb army, ship "Milenijum" with delegation of the Hungarian government headed by Prime Minister Karolji was anchoring. Then negotiations on truce between Hungary and allies began. General Mišić in the meantime sent a telegram to Marinković in Thessaloniki explaining acceptable truce conditions. Point three reads:

"We ask General Depere to demand that Serbian troops occupy whole Banat up to line Maroš-Baja-Subotica-Fiškirhen (Pečuj), for Serbia was always mostly interested in the fate of purely Serbian-Orthodox population of Banat. Our right to Bačka was recognised by our allies in 1915".

"Baranja is not mentioned, and Srem is obviously considered the Serb territory. Reply from Thessaloniki was more than favourable. On 5 November General Mišić gets a "special order" from General Deperi. Point two reads:

"The South Slave movement is flourishing. Serb army should try to organise it and put it at our disposal, for the purpose of joint action against central powers. With that goal in mind it is necessary to directly interfere. It will be easy for we need not fear a renewed attack of Austro-Hungarian troops on the Northern Front of Serbia. Serb army should therefore deploy as soon as possible its troops in all territories inclined towards the South Slave movement, in Banat, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia".

The green light was given for all territories which Serbia intended to occupy. In fact that telegram resolved the fate of the future joint state, for France as an indisputable authority on that front, allegedly with military motives in mind, advised Serbia to military occupy all territories which Serbia considered its own, in order to prejudge the borders of the new state and get a decisive advantage in determining the internal order of that country. Hence the new state was to be created with the consent of a dominant international factor, in line with the principle of the situation on the ground. But there were pointers that the Serb army was ready to do that even without General Depere's orders: on 5 November in early morning hours Serb troops crossed Danube in the vicinity of Kovin (the Cavalry division) before receiving the Thessaloniki telegram. The decision had been already taken.

On that same day General Depere in Thessalonki got instructions for realisation of the Plan of Operations against Germany. Point three of that plan directly referred to Serbia, namely General Depere was given instructions to occupy interesting positions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and north of Sava and Danube in collusion with the Serbian government to ensure military protection of Serbia and its political interests. Depere had already done that a day earlier even without Clemenceaus instructions. The only discord between Clemenceau and Depere was due to the fact that the latter took his actions in agreement with the Regent and the Supreme Command of the Serbian army, and not with the Serbian government. But he could not have acted otherwise, for the Regent had become the only serious and objective political factor in Serbia.

On 6 November General Depere arrived in Niš to have talks with the Regent. And in Niš, and not in assemblies of South Slav peoples, the fate of the new state was solved.

Depere and the regent that night created a new state. The following day Depere met with the Hungarian delegation in Belgrade. He treated it as a delegation of the defeated side in the war and imposed on it very strict truce. At insistence of Prime Minister Karolji Deperi sent a telegram to the Allied War Council in Paris with the message that Hungary could accept the truce only if it were analogous to the one signed on the Italian front. Moreover guarantees for integrity of the Hungarian state (including Vojvodina, but not Slavonia and Croatia) were demanded until the signing of truce and functioning of civilian authorities on the whole territory of Hungary. A day later Depere received a telegram from Paris instructing him to renounce all political claims in the negotiations and to adhere to provisions of the Italian front truce agreement, for the agreement was valid for all fronts. The telegram reached Niš. Then Assistant Head of Military Command forwarded it to Belgrade with a few words of his own: "General Mišić orders Head of Command Kalafatović to hand the Paris telegram to Depere only after signing of the truce. Later Kalafatović received another instruction from the Regent: "I do not accept any other border except the one formulated by Mišić, Maroš-Subotica-Baja-Pečuj...until that border is established Serbia shall remain at war with Austro-Hungary". Thus Serbia, that is the Regent, was ready for a separate war. Kalafatović was advised to pass that message to Deperi, if necessary. But there was no need for such a move, as Depere stuck to the line earlier agreed with Mišić and the Regent. Delayed reaction of the Hungarian government also favoured Serbia. The Supreme Command used those several days of delay to military solve the issue of Vojvodina, and Depere did not oppose that move. General Bojović ordered on 8 November that the Cavalry and Moravska division occupy Banat up to the said line, and Dunavska division to occupy Bačka up to the line Baja-Subotica-Segedin. In the meantime Drinska division was to occupy first Srem and then Slavonia and Croatia. The 9 November order of Commander of the Danube Division Colonel Dragutin Milojević, an elaboration of Bojović's order, reads:

"KJF IV (20421) MF 424
Danube Division
Op. No.7905
27.KT. 1918-9 Hours Belgrade

ORDER

Enemy troops withdrew from Pančevo and Slankamen. We also expect pull-out of the remaining enemy troops from Petrovaradin. Parts of cavalry division occupied yesterday after some fighting Bela Crkva and reached the line Karaš-village Jasenovo-Udvar Salas.

Parts of Moravska division were transferred to Pančevo. Drina division and the Second Army continue unhampered occupation of Srem, Slavonia and Bosnia.

Our cavalry squad spent a night in Sremski Karlovci and established contacts with officers sent to organise our prisoners of war.

On order of the First Army Commander no. 19216 Cavalry Moravska Division has to occupy as quickly as possible northern Banat up to the line Maroš, and eastern Banat up to the line Bela Crkva-Vršac-Temišvar. Drina Division has to occupy Srem, Slavonia and Croatia.

That division was tasked with occupying Bačka between Danube and Tisa, up to the line Baja-Subotica-Segedin.

Commander
Colonel Drag. S. Milojević"

This message clearly indicated that the Serbian army considered its operations in Vojvodina as occupation of enemy territories, and not as an action of liberation of population. The wording of order is not accidental: the troops got an order to effect occupation and like any other serious army they carried out that order.

When Karolji's envoys in Belgrade received the Paris telegram they forwarded it on 10 November to Budapest. The Hungarian government tried to react swiftly by empowering War Minister Bela Linder to accept terms of truce as specified by the Paris telegram. In the meantime Depere had already left for Thessaloniki to authorise General Mišić to sign the truce in his name. On 13 November before midnight the military convention with Hungary, known as the Belgrade truce, was signed.

Those several days were decisive, for the Serbian army used the delay in telegram forwarding to occupy territories according to the Regent's wishes, and with no opposition from Depere's part. Thus on 9 November Serbian army entered Novi Sad.

On 9 November a session of the Serbian National Committee in Novi Sad discussed the arrival of the Serbian army and take-over of power. Then it was decided that the Serbian army be welcomed by Jaša Tomić and Ignjat Pavlas, and that the Serbian National Council would take control of the city, but would leave in place the civilian Hungarian authorities. It was furthermore decided that the SNC would send its representatives to each magistrate court. In fact the Hungarian state was recognised the right to keep its civilian authorities in place, while the SNC was tasked with exercising control over them.

Serbian army was welcomed appropriately. But Jaša Tomić, advocate of unconditional unification with Serbia, had a few unpleasant moments. Namely upon meeting Major Bugarski he asked him: "Is not your arrival a bit premature?" Major Bugarski responded first by cussing and then by threatening to take power single-handedly. In fact Bugarski behaved as an occupier, and not as an invited liberator. He immediately showed that he would not only run military affairs, but also civilian ones. In other words the city would be completely taken over by the Serb army. He first disarmed the Serb National Guard, for Serb population outside Serbia could not have independent military and police organisation. After that he issued purely political-legal orders: he annulled the decision of the Serb National Committee on the temporary nature of the existing Hungarian magistrate court, and ordered that the magistrate court be subordinated to the Serb army. Then he ordered that administration be organised in accordance with positive legislation of Serbia. But he was willing to appoint some non-Serbs to administrative ranks.

Analysis of orders of the Serb army shows the following:

1. The Serb army does not recognise decisions of the Serbian National Council.
2. This means that it does not recognise the Serbian National Council, which was not contrary to the international law, but indicated that Serbia does not recognise any subjectivity of Serbs in those territories.

3. Serbian army does not recognise any civilian authority of Hungary. That non-recognition was not grounded in any fact, since no truce was signed with Hungary and Serbia was at war with that country since 1914. According to provisions of the 1907 Hague Rules of Procedure on Occupation, occupier does not have the right to prevent civilian authorities of the occupied country in discharging civilian duties, but only military ones.

4. Serbia deems those parts of Hungary parts of enemy territory, and introduces military administration in them. Under the aforementioned Hague Rules of Procedure Serbia had the right to establish military authority in the territory of Southern Hungary, but was not entitled to extend military power to civilian administration.

5. Serbia expands its positive legislation to the new territory. It was no longer occupation, but an internationally unrecognised act of annexation.

6. For such an action Serbia does not seek consent of local, Serb or non-Serb population, which proves that it was an irregular act of annexation.

7. By expansion of its legislation to those territories, Serbia in fact changes border with Hungary and *de facto* annexes occupied territories. But such a move could have been effected only if approved by a peace conference.

8. Serbia acted in Vojvodina like Italy in Dalmatia, that is, it first carried out an invasion, which morphed into occupation, for the military authorities exercised power without consent of domestic population. Then military power extended to the civilian one, which was tantamount to annexation. All this was done without international consent, that is without a peace conference or truce treaty. Italy and Serbia acted similarly in similar situations population-wise: in occupied Dalmatian territories Italian population was not numerous, and in Vojvodina Serbs constituted the minority.

Only a few politicians and public figures assessed rightly moves of Serbian army, because the Serbian National Council still thought that it represented something, or that, it was an important factor in the process of unification.

In early November people from the Serbian National Council came into contact with political representatives of Serbia, that is with members of government of Momčilo Ninčić. He was the Minister of Civil Engineering, and most suitable man for consultations, in view of his close ties with the Regent. Ninčić first had talks with Jaša Tomić and later with Milan Konjović, a renowned composer. He agreed with Tomić that Vojvodina should directly unite with Serbia and with Konjović that unification of Vojvodina via Zagreb would be a better solution. Main Committee of the Serbian National Council on 4 November session discussed the issue of manner of unification. First Jaša Tomić informed of Belgrade's support for direct unification and then Konjović made public his talks. And the Main Committee split. Tomić was in minority and his Radicals left him too. Finally members of the SNC had to vote on the following proposal:

"Unification with Serbia and Montenegro via Zagreb. The SNC shall send its representatives to the National Council, but if the National Council in Zagreb is against unification, Vojvodina shall directly join Belgrade".

Of 50 MPs only Jaša Tomić and Milan Petrović voted against that position. The Serbian Radical Party for the first time rebelled against its leader Jaša Tomić.

But why then has Momčilo Ninčić made two contradictory statements? Most likely because the Regent was still unsure about conditions under which Zagreb was to join the new state. Zagreb was ready for unification if Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina

and Slovenia joined the new state via Croatia. Despite all Italian threats Zagreb would not have joined the new state without Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why the Serb army in Bosnia and Herzegovina had not effected direct annexation, although it would have been easier then in Vojvodina and Montenegro. The Regent was not in favour of a pan-Serbian solution. As he was given a free hand in his occupation campaign by Clemanceau and Depere he insisted on the South Slave state. Added to the French narcissism, his narcissism also played a major role in the whole matter, for he considered that a purely Serb state would have been too small for a ruler like him. Alike Pašić, the Regent and conservatives resorted to a pan-Serb solution only when they wanted to blackmail Croats with respect to the order of the future community. Jaša Tomić's position was unessential, and spoke more of his outdated attitude. The Regent was ready to offer to Zagreb even Vojvodina in order to effect South Slav unification. Dušan Simović was tasked with threatening with a purely Serb solution, which was totally unacceptable for Zagreb, for it would have reduced Croats to an unsustainable state community. But the Regent was also ready to modify its Vojvodina offer. He was bent on the South Slave solution. Things got complicated in Zagreb, Radić was getting the upper hand and a quick action was needed. Luckily enough for the Regent Simić's threat bore fruit, as Ante Pavelić had to withdraw his idea about the future federal state. This paved the way for Vojvodina's direct unification with Serbia. The most important person in Zagreb was Svetozar Pribićević, whom the French in their confidential reports called "dictator of South Slav countries". And in line with ideas and intentions of the Dictator of South Slav Countries and Dictator of Serb countries, the unification took place in late fall 1918. Svetozar's brother Valerijan in Belgrade acted as a 'liaison' between the two authoritarian wills.

Vasa Stajić testified that before his departure for Novi Sad, Svetozar Pribićević had told him: "Sever your ties with Zagreb". In Belgrade that decision was taken later, after Ninčić's talks with Vojvodina representatives and was linked to various telegrams and information which circulated between Paris, Thessaloniki, Niš, Belgrade and Budapest. On 11 November the Regent decided to take direct political action regarding Vojvodina, while the military one was drawing to a close. Situation on the ground had to be politically confirmed. On that day a delegation from Southern Balkans composed of Democrats and Radicals was instructed by representatives of the Serbian government how to organise the Big Assembly and what kind of decisions to take. Svetozar Pribićević was informed on the same day that the Vojvodina matter had entered the final stage. This was furthermore confirmed by a letter signed by Vasa Vučković and Aleksandar Magarašević, in which Svetozar was informed of a Belgrade meeting on 11 November, in which several citizens of Belgrade, of Vojvodina origins, an authentic Vojvodinan, Milan Konjović, Momčilo Ninčić and his brother took part. At the meeting a decision was taken to set up the Committee of the Belgrade Vojvodinans to work on unification, if necessary "on the spot". The most important part of the letter was the second paragraph:

"The decision was taken to give the following instruction to the Serbian National Council:

B.B.B. demand unification of all Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under Karađorđević dynasty. In case of tribal division, B.B.B. demands immediate unification with Serbia.

On Sunday the 17th a confidential conference should be convened in Novi Sad. A total of 15 delegates (7 from Bačka, 7 from Banat, and 1 from Baranja), shall take part in the conference. Bunjevci and Šokci shall not participate in the conference.

The Conference shall lay the groundwork for the assembly to be held on Thursday, 21st November in Novi Sad: the assembly shall 1) elect provincial administration (government); 2) shall raise the number of its delegates to the National Council of the SCS to 10 and 3) shall elect delegation for Belgrade.

The Regent and brothers Pribičević took a joint stand and decided to handle the issue of Vojvodina together. After the entry of the Serbian army in Novi Sad and annulment of earlier decisions of the Serbian National Council, Vojvodina lost its autonomy and two days later was directly linked to Belgrade and 'given instructions'. Serbs in Vojvodina were compelled to obey the others, and could no longer act independently.

The text indicates that a definite decision on the manner of unification (via Zagreb or via Belgrade) has not yet been taken. 31 The word 'direct unification' still has not been used, but only hinted at. Several days later a delegation of the Serbian National Council from Novi Sad arrived in Belgrade. It was tasked with discussing with Minister Ninčić his exact words and promises. Tomić still enjoyed a great authority, and despite a crushing defeat at the Main Committee voting, continued to fight for his convictions. Delegation was composed of Jaša Tomić, Vasa Stajić and Ivan Pavlas. They were received by another minister Jovanović who was also the Regent's man of confidence. Jovanović openly told them that the annexation decision had been taken. He called the Corfu Declaration a big evil, and after that told them that the will of official Serbia was to annex Vojvodina, independently of Zagreb. Tomić and Pavlas agreed, but Vasa Stajić rejected the instruction. But Stajić, having realised later that the matter was finished, refused to take part in the session of the Great National Assembly and left for Zagreb at invitation of Svetozar Pribičević.

Belgrade favoured Milan Konjović and Ignjat Palat, because of their non-Radical party affiliations, over Jaša Tomić. But there was another reason for that predilection: Tomić was Pašić's close friend from days of youth. They fled from Belgrade together during the Timok Uprising, and spent some time in exile in Bulgaria. They also shared the same ideas. Regent for quite some time considered Pašić his most dangerous ally, although they espoused similar manner of unification. But Pašić, as the leading man of the conservative idea was a certain obstacle to establishment of Aleksandar's authoritarian rule. Although conservative political idea had been defeated in fall 1915, it was still strong and the Regent faced an imminent showdown with its exponents. Conservatives thought that the emergence of the new state was their victory, while Regent thought it was solely his triumph. Regent Aleksandar was in fact closer to truth. That is why he wanted to sideline an old conservative, and Pašić's friend, Tomić. Even Pribičević did not like Tomić, who was short-tempered and often unwise, and occasionally very calculated man. Only party loyalists could tolerate Tomić's character during his long career.

Annexation of Vojvodina was effected in such a way to help affirm the Serbian army and the Regent as the only subjective factors of unification. The Great National Assembly had only a representative character to give the act of annexation a guise of legitimacy. Moreover that act meant a clean break with Hungary and rejection of its positive law. Although the Belgrade truce left Hungarian civilian authorities in place until the peace conference, Serbian army took on also organisation and supervision of civilian authorities. Serb army in Vojvodina acted as the occupation army. Moreover decision on

change of the state status of a territory inhabited by 38% of population cannot be called a legitimate decision. In the territory of Bačka, Banat and Baranja 32% Serbs and 6% of other Slav peoples, while Serbs in Srem were in a more favourable demographic situation. Other 62% of population were not even consulted about the most important issue, the one of the state status. Due to such national discrimination the election of MPs for the National Assembly was illegitimate, while it was illegal under positive legislation of Hungary, provisions of the Belgrade truce and those of the Hague Rules of Procedure.

No-one even tried to hide that obvious illegitimacy. Proclamation of 17 November called elections for the National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slovenes. What is surprising is that a vast majority of historians considered that assembly legitimate. Legitimacy of decision about the state status taken by the majority is very suspicious, for the legal science specifies that such a decision can be taken only by a qualified majority, either of numerical or national nature. Numerical qualification is applied in multi-ethnic communities, and national qualification (each people have a say) is applied in multi-ethnic communities. Minimum of numerical qualification would be two thirds, that is 66%. Hence in a community in which Serbs constituted under one third of population, and Hungarians and Germans above one half, any decision-taking organised by the two communities would not be legitimate in view of their clear majority. When the National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slovenes was elected, no numerical or national qualification was respected, in fact minority "majorised" the majority. After the WWI there were many changes of borders, which were internationally recognised at peace conference. The case of Vojvodina in those terms was most illegitimate. Slav population was divided over the manner of joining the new community, either via Zagreb or Belgrade? Had there been no intervention by Belgrade and Svetozar Pribićević elections for the assembly would have produced different results.

There was another voting in Srem by so-called Rumska Assembly. Žarko Miladinović, a close friend of Jaša Tomić, and a delegate of the National Council of SCS in Zagreb, organised voting in his house on 24 November with the ambition of declaring their position on the state status of Srem. Assembly was illegitimate, for by its earlier decisions the said Council monopolised the right to declare state status, which meant that Srem, as part of Croatia, had to share the fate of the rest of Croatia. As the Serbian government recognised the State of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats, it consequently recognised its borders, and Srem was within those borders. By the way Srem joined Serbia through Vojvodina only in the post-WWI period. Miladinović's actions as a member of the National Council, indicated that he recognised the sovereignty of the State of SCS. As regards legalism the voting was less regular than the one in Novi Sad. In had elements of national discrimination and an undemocratic procedure. Envoys, who were acquaintances were sent, and not elected to the assembly. Moreover principle of representation was not applied, for the biggest settlements in Srem, barring Ruma (and in Ruma, Serbs were a minority) did not have their representatives at that Assembly. There were no delegates of Sremska Mitrovica, Zemun, Vukovar, Stara Pazova, Ilok and Šid.

The assembly adopted the following resolution:

1. Today's assembly of deputies of the 'National Council' from Srem demands that a unified and democratically arranged state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes be established under Karađorđević dynasty and expects that the National Council in Zagreb would contribute to realisation of the joint government with seat in Belgrade.

2. In case of tribal or political division, representatives of 'National Council' in Srem declare that they shall opt for direct annexation of Srem to the Kingdom of Serbia.

3. In the aforementioned case we want to be represented by the King and Serbian government at the peace conference.

The text of adopted resolution indicates that Srem would directly join Serbia only if Zagreb does not take decision on creation of the common state with Serbia. But as the pertinent decision was taken, those of the Ruma Assembly had never been activated. In other words Srem entered the new community via Zagreb, and not Belgrade.

Procedure of election of Novi Sad Assembly was superior to the Ruma Assembly and all other assemblies convened with the purpose of taking stands on unification. In Montenegro delegates were chosen by shouting their names at assemblies. They later mutually elected delegates to the Podgorica assembly. All that had nothing to do with a recognised democratic procedure. The general suffrage was applied for the first time in the Balkans and in Central Europe in elections for the Novi Sad Assembly. Organisers of the Assembly, that is Novi Sad branch of the Serbian National Council opted for the highest voting standards. Its proclamation of 17 November reads:

"The right to vote have all male and female members of municipality of 20 years of age. Those convicted of any offence or younger than 20 should not vote. Any voter may be elected a delegate".

Other parts of this proclamation indicate a regular democratic procedure. Interestingly enough general suffrage, that is, voting rights of women, was not envisaged either under Vidovdan or Octroicted Constitution (women were accorded that right only after WW2), thus everything was much more democratic than in the new state. Compared to the undemocratic socialist elections in the post-WW2 period (on grounds of the party domination) and similar elections in the late Nineties, the elections for National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slavs were most democratic in the entire history of Serbs. It bears stressing that decision on manner of election was not taken under influence of Belgrade and the Serb army. This indicates that Vojvodina Serbs would have preferred an incomparably higher level of political freedoms and democracy than the one they had got in the new state. Subsequent decisions of the National Administration and the work of the judiciary rested on principle "Language of parties is the language of trials". In communication with administration the language of party was used, and in education classes were held in language of pupils". This was a principle superior to the positive Hungarian legislation, to legislation of the new state, and even to administrative and judiciary principles now in place in Vojvodina. The fact that Vojvodina Serbs were not allowed to pass legal-public and private-legal laws, but were imposed legislation from Belgrade is a great historic injustice, for the aforementioned examples demonstrated that Vojvodina Serbs would have enacted a much more progressive and civilised legislation.

Session of the Assembly was held on 25 November. There were 757 delegates, that is, 578 Serbs, 84 Bunjevci, 62 Slovaks, 21 Ruthenians, 3 Šokci, 2 Croats, 6 Germans and 1 Hungarian.

In other words 60% of non-Slav population of Vojvodina (Germans, Hungarians, Romanians and others) were represented in the Assembly with 1% of delegates elected by Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slavs.

Two resolutions were passed, the first on the state status and the second on organisation of power. The first reads:

1. We ask the government of brotherly Serbia to represent our interests at the peace conference.

2. We join the Kingdom of Serbia whose work and development so far guaranteed freedom, equality and progress to us and all other Slav and non-Slav peoples cohabitating with us.

3. This request of ours tends to contribute to striving of all Yugoslavs, for our sincere wish is that the Serb government, in association with the National Council in Zagreb does its utmost to attain a unified state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under leadership of King Petar and his dynasty.

This resolution clearly specifies that Vojvodina joins the new state via Belgrade, or that Vojvodina has become an integral part of Serbia and asks Serbia to include Banat, Bačka and Baranja, in its state, which has already been done by deployment and subsequent actions of Serbian troops. This was just a subsequent legitimisation.

The second resolution reads:

"Banat, Bačka and Baranja within borders drawn by the Allies' Balkans Army, proclaim on 25 November 1918, on the basis of principle of national self-determination, their secession, in state-legal, political and economic terms, from Hungary.

That is why the National Assembly appoints the Great National Council and its executive body -the National Administration. National Council is made up of 50 members elected from that National Assembly. The former passes necessary decrees and orders, appoints national administration and supervises it".

Text of resolution is arrogant, for it speaks of borders drawn by Antante's, that is, Serbian army. French were there just to give the semblance of regularity. In fact the decision was contrary to previous resolution of Allies that only a peace conference could decide on change of borders. But Allies obviously intended to stick to their first resolution, and to revise borders drawn by the Serbian army.

The text was tinged with cynicism for secession from Hungary was allegedly based on the right of people to self-determination. The question was whether such people were only Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slavs, while whether Germans, Hungarians and Romanians were only considered wild hordes incapable of expressing their popular will. At play was not the right of people to self-determination, but national discrimination.

But the most important part of the second resolution was the one related to organisation of power, in view of rejection of the Hungarian authority and establishment of the new one. This was in a way contrary to the first resolution speaking about union with Serbia, for any union presupposes acceptance of organisation of power, and bodies of Serbia, and not establishment of independent bodies. The National Council was established as legislative power, national administration as executive power, or government with 11 ministries (political affairs, internal affairs, judiciary, education, finances, transport, industry, foodstuffs and supplies, social reforms, national health, national defence.) Judiciary and organisation thereof were taken over. The first sentence of resolution in Serb language was passed in February 1919. The resolution reads: "until organisation of our state is completed, the National Administration shall run all affairs in line with the existing laws and legal provisions". In other words positive legislation of the Kingdom of Serbia was not implemented, but rather the Hungarian one was kept in place. It was clear that "until final resolution of our state" meant a state which would be created together by the Kingdom of Serbia and the National Council in Zagreb. It was visible that

the two resolutions were contradictory, for under the first Vojvodina entered the framework of a sovereign and internationally recognised state, the Kingdom of Serbia, which had its positive law. Hence it was to be expected that Vojvodina would accept that positive legislation as its own, for since 25 November it became an integral part of the Kingdom of Serbia. But it had not happened, for under the Second Resolution Vojvodina established its legislative, executive and judicial authority. It even considered the national defence one of its sovereign affairs. Under the first resolution Vojvodina became part of Kingdom of Serbia, and under the second one, it seceded from it.

Joca Lalošević was the first man of the National Administration, that is of the executive power. At the first plenary session it was decided that "the Serb government in Belgrade shall be asked to recognise the national administration and to make necessary steps to compel the Serb army to give us necessary help and inform about it the English and French command". This was a direct invitation to the government of Serbia to recognise autonomy of political, public-legal and private-legal status of Vojvodina, that is to renounce its intention to expand its powers to Vojvodina. All the aforementioned shows that the second resolution written by Konjović was not a fruit of consultations with Belgrade, for subsequent recognition by the Serb government meant that an earlier consent had not been reached. Although the Serbian government gave firm assurances that the National Administration would be recognised, it never happened. Decisive political will in Belgrade, that is, the Regent Aleksandar, was bent on establishing a military rule over Vojvodina, and opposed discharging of functions by the autonomous civil authorities in the shape of the Great National Council and the National Administration. In February Joca Lalošević sent a telegram to Svetozar Pribičević, the then Minister of Interior in Protić's government, complaining about the ignorance and arbitrary conduct of military authorities in Vojvodina. The most serious conflict between the National Administration and military authorities happened in Temisoara, when the army prevented the appointment of Dr. Martin Filipon as the District Head. Military authorities backed Dr. Oto Rot because of his pro-Belgrade leanings, and repudiation of the National Administration in Novi Sad. The principal authority in Temisoara was General Đorđević, who had superior competences.

Government of Serbia never recognised the National Administration, and consequently never asked for its dissolution. But the first government of the new state, Protić's government, formed on 20 December, just 7 days demanded dissolution of the National Administration. The latter positively responded to that demand and in its letter to the government stated: "National Administration of Banat, Bačka and Baranja, hands in its resignation to the central government and asks to be relieved of all duties". But transfer of some departments of the National Administration to Belgrade evolved slowly, so that body functioned until 11 March when its last session was held.

According to testimonies government in Belgrade gave assurances to Joca Lalošević that provincial government would be established and that the National Administration would be designated as the future provincial government. But that remained an empty promise as the new state immediately implemented its centralisation program. It surely did not need a provincial government for Serbia. One gets the impression that many in Belgrade were relieved when the National Administration resigned.

Interestingly enough both the Hungarian and Serbian government took the same stance on the National Administration: they did not recognise it. In legal terms the Hungarian non-recognition was more grounded, for the Hungarian government invoked provisions of the Belgrade truce, under which allies guaranteed Hungary civilian authorities in Vojvodina. Hence establishment of the National Administration was violation of that Convention. Serbian government was not involved in the aforementioned establishment and moreover opposed it, for it represented in a way, pre-judging of state organisation, that is, was an indicator of a de-centralised state. And many people in Serbia would become outraged at the mere mention of decentralisation and autonomy. But Protić's government demanded dismissal of the National Administration, which in turn meant that it had recognised it. National Administration handed in its resignation to the government of the state which it had not joined, for in line with decisions of the National Assembly it had joined the Kingdom of Serbia. In other words Vojvodina had handed its sovereignty and autonomy to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and not to Kingdom of Serbia. By decision of the National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci and other Slavs or under the first resolution Vojvodina joined the Kingdom of Serbia, while under the second resolution it established a parallel state structure, wholly separated from Serbia. Later that parallel and autonomous state structure handed over its prerogatives to the government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In fact Vojvodina independently joined that state, although formally it had joined it via Belgrade.

Kingdom of Serbia did not say anything officially about annexation of Vojvodina. The Regent on 1 December stated that "in the name of His Excellency King Petar the First I proclaim unification of Serbia with independent states of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. Consequently the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is created". On 1 December he did not mention Montenegro and Vojvodina, but on 17 December Regent Aleksandar 'enthusiastically welcomed Montenegrin joining with Serbia". He only mentioned Vojvodina once, in ratification of the 1st December Act, at the session of the National Assembly of Kingdom of Serbia on 29 December. In fact the National Assembly ratified only 2 documents. Address of the National Council and Reply of Regent Aleksandar. Vojvodina was only mentioned in the introductory address of Stojan Protić in the following way:

"On 18 December (1 December) His Excellency Regent Aleksandar proclaimed national and state unity of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with Serbia for all parts or our people. They stated their pertinent decisions officially and handed it to the royal representative on the same day. At the same time similar wishes were expressed in special decisions taken by brotherly Montenegro and our brave Vojvodina, the first on the 13th and the second on the 12th. November. This great historic act, Members of Parliament, was completed without your formal participation, etc".

It is interesting to note that Protić did not say "Banat, Baranja and Bačka", but "our brave Vojvodina". But it was a clear reference to the National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci, and other Slavs held on 25 November in Novi Sad. Analysis of the text indicated that Protić informed the National Assembly that on the basis of two documents Regent Aleksandar merged Kingdom of Serbia with the new state community and that the National Assembly had accepted that Regent's act. National Assembly was only informed of decisions of the Podgorica and Novi Sad Assemblies, but did not express its opinion on them. Even Protić failed to inform the National Assembly that the Regent had

accepted decisions of Podgorica Assembly as early as on 17 December. Hence one could say that the Regent had accepted decisions of Podgorica Assembly, but the National Assembly had not ratified them. As regards Vojvodina neither the Regent Aleksandar nor the National Assembly accepted decisions of Novi Sad Assembly. They were in fact a unilateral act. Consequently one cannot say that Vojvodina became an integral part of Serbia in 1918. From the position of the internal law, it became an integral element of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes by resignation of its executive authorities (the National Administration), and from the viewpoint of the international law Vojvodina joined the new state once the peace conference decisions took force. Thus both *de iure* and *de facto* Vojvodina did not join the Kingdom of Serbia, but joined independently the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

AUTHORITARIAN WILL OF REGENT ALEKSANDAR AND THE FIRST DECEMBER ACT

The 1st December Act is the most far-reaching historical act in the Balkans, and its consequences are still felt today. Its wrong legal provisions caused many problems, conflicts, wars and much bloodshed. In formal terms it was a bilateral act of unification of two sovereign and mutually recognised states: Kingdom of Serbia and the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. The latter was until then recognised only by Kingdom of Serbia, while Allies advocated, in line with their principled decision, that borders might be changed and new states emerge, only at the peace conference. But there was factual respect of the state, as reflected in telegrams of General Depere, Admiral Gosche, and invitations by Clemanceu, Loyd George, Huse and Orlando to talks on the issues of fleet in Corfu. That state determined itself as a temporary state, and envisaged that its temporary status would end after unification with the Kingdom of Serbia and Kingdom of Montenegro. That position was translated into reality at the famous session of 23 and 24 November when certain modes of unification were defined. Session was opened by Svetozar Pribičević, and in attendance was Momčilo Ninčić, Regent's man of confidence. Ninčić, on behalf of government of the Kingdom of Serbia, called on the National Council, to jointly reach an agreement on formation of a new government. A vast majority of delegates was ready for such an act. But they were divided over the manner of election of government. The ensuing, drawn-out discussion produced a compromise proposal. A 7-member (Pavelić, Pribičević, Cankar, Smodlaka, Bukšeg, Svrzo and Drinković) body was named. That body on the same day put forward its proposal which was later adopted by an overwhelming majority (only two delegates, two Croats, Stjepan Radić and Hrvoj voted against it.) That document contained introductory words, and 11 'instructions'. Its basic thesis were the following:

1. The National Council proclaims unification with the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro.
2. It names a 28-member delegation fully authorised to implement organisation of the new state, in co-operation with government and party leaders of Serbia and Montenegro.
3. Formation of the State Council of the new state is envisaged. That body should ratify the aforementioned act.

4. Final organisation of the new state may be determined only by a general national, constitution-making assembly of united peoples, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, with a two-third majority.

5. the constituent body must convene at the latest six months after the peace is signed.

6. Until the meeting of the constituent assembly the State Council shall exercise the interim legislative power. To the state council belong: a) all members of the National Council in Zagreb to be filled up with 5 members of the Yugoslav Committee in London, b) proportionate members of representatives of the Kingdom of Serbia to be elected by the National Assembly in agreement with the local political parties, c) proportionate number of votes of representatives of Montenegro to be elected by the local National Assembly".

7. Regent Aleksandar is accepted as a provisional ruler, for he shall rule until establishment of the constituent-Assembly.

8. Regent cannot influence the State Council or dissolve it.

9. Elections for the Constituent Assembly are prescribed, organised or carried out by the State Council.

10. The state government which shall have the president, ministers and 7 "envoys" for provinces is envisaged. Provinces shall be: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Montenegro and Bačka, Baranja and Banat.

11. There are provincial governments which exercise all power except in areas of: foreign affairs, national defence, maritime transport, finances and posts.

12. Central government does not have the right to control provincial authorities: provincial assemblies are tasked with supervising them.

13. All laws, other provisions, organisation of the judiciary, administrative set up and current bodies remain in place.

The aforementioned indicates the following:

- "Instructions are definitive, that is, they are not subject to any change, notably changes stemming from negotiations. They don't represent a platform for negotiations, but rather a definitive act. Hence no ratification of a decision jointly taken in Belgrade is proposed, for such a decision cannot be different from this document.

- New state is a temporary creation, and it has an interim government tasked with electing Parliament.

- Parliamentary elections are carried out by general suffrage, and parliamentary decisions are passed only by a two-third qualified majority. That majority was envisaged by the Corfu Declaration and proposed by Pašić himself.

- Regent has an interim authority until the election of parliament and must not interfere into governmental decision-making process. A legislative body, government and provincial governments are envisaged.

- Manner in which the State Council is elected indicates that the interim state is formed by merger of three independent and sovereign states: Kingdom of Serbia, Kingdom of Montenegro and the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

- It is considered that Vojvodina is joining the new state via the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

- Interim state is organised as a federal state, and it has only few central functions. It could be called 'a loose federation.'

- Interim character of the new community is confirmed by the fact that positive legislation of all three states making up the new state remains in place.

The above decisions were taken by representatives of all Serbs. Only Stjepan Radić retained was against such decisions. This makes us conclude that Serbs outside Serbia and Montenegro expressed their will to establish the new state as a loose federation and decentralised community. No-one at that session had mentioned unitarism and centralism. "Instructions" went further that the Corfu Declaration, for they determined the new community as a federative and decentralised, while the former defined it as a unitary and decentralised community.

When representatives of the National Council arrived in Belgrade they immediately faced the political will totally contrary to "instructions". Minister Ninčić kept silent in Zagreb and did not indicate that such "instructions" would be unacceptable for the Kingdom of Serbia. At work was the Regent's ploy: let those in Zagreb decide whatever they want, but what is essential is to make them come to Belgrade and then compel them to do what we want them to do. He also thought: time is on our side because of Italians and unrest in the country...our army is there and it can be engaged if necessary. But surprisingly enough part of delegation, after arriving in Belgrade, relinquished the text of instructions and embraced a centralist and unitary option of unification. Behind such change of heart was Svetozar Pribićević, the man who could harm most interests of South Slav population in Austro-Hungary. He in fact presented as a gift to Regent Aleksandar Slovenes, Croats and Serbs from Austro-Hungary. It was written down in historical books that King Aleksandar while introducing Pribićević to the future queen said: "He is the man who gave me the most valuable jewels in my crown". Pavelić and others because of pressure of part of their delegation and Serbian interlocutors accepted something for which they have not been empowered: negotiations. They did it because time was not on their side, and because Italian aggressive conduct threatened to destroy any possibility of survival of the state of Serbs, Slovenes and Croats. In essence the Italian mindless imperialism towards the South Slave peoples enabled the Regent Aleksandar to annex those peoples, instead of recognising their subjectivity. Both the Regent Aleksandar and Italy are to be 'credited for' creation of a unitary and centralist state with an authoritarian regime.

During negotiations delegation from Zagreb renounced many of its demands, but stuck to some, notably to the position that the new community was created as an expression of will of the three states: Kingdom of Serbia, Kingdom of Montenegro and the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. They also retained the position that a parliament ought to be elected and decentralisation effected. But the following stands were relinquished:

- parliamentary decision-taking by a qualified two-third majority
- entire power is handed over to Regent. That power is limited by government accountable to an interim national representative body, to be constituted through agreement.
- Constitution-making assembly may decide on form of rule
- There shall be central authorities, and not federalism of interim community. But autonomy of administrative bodies shall be kept in place. However they would be accountable to central authorities and autonomous representative bodies.

Instead of federal and decentralised government, the agreement was reached to form a unitary and decentralised government. It was a return to the principles of the Corfu declaration, or to what Trumbić succeeded in getting from Pašić. Only the demand for a qualified majority in parliamentary decision-taking was relinquished. Trumbić in fact gained more in negotiations with Serb politicians. The reason thereof was a different position of Serbia in 1917 and the end of war. Now Serbia was a winner and could demand more. In a short period of time Ante Pavelić twice capitulated before the expression of the Serbian political will: the first time before Colonel Dušan Simović, and the second time before Serb politicians and their biggest ally Svetozar Pribićević

But the text was contrary to the Regent's interests, although not to interests of Serbia. Consequently in his reply to "Adresa" in which Pavelić expounded results of negotiations and falsely presented them as the will of the National Council in Zagreb, he put forward his last variant of principle of unification. Regent in fact determined that the new state was created by will of two kingdoms: Kingdom of Serbia and the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Montenegro was not included in that statement, for it was considered an integral part of Serbia under decisions of the Podgorica Parliament (which had yet to be certified by Serbia). Any mention of autonomous state forms was avoided. And the final line read: "in the name of King Petar the First unification is proclaimed". Regent proclaimed the new state composed of two states, and then promised elections for parliament without the right to qualified decision-taking, in other words he gave the green light to majorisation. He also foresaw that a government would be formed by him and people from the National Council. In other words the newly-proclaimed state was to be unitary and centralised.

Zagreb delegation first stuck to its stand that a federative and decentralised state had to be formed, but in the course of negotiations agreed to unitary and decentralised state. But in the end they got an unitary and centralised state, in which the king played the principal political role. It can be said that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed as a unitary, centralised state envisaging an authoritarian regime. Unification for Austro-Hungarian Serbs, Croats and Slovenes ended in the worst possible way. That wrong could not longer be righted for they agreed to parliamentary decision-taking by simple majority, which meant majorisation.

If instructions can be considered a sovereign expression of will of Austro-Hungarian Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, then the 1st December Act annulled that will. It is obvious that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, proclaimed on the 1st December 1918, was created against will of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or that at work was the most blatant annexation of the newly-conquered territories by the Kingdom of Serbia. The National Council was not even entitled to ratify that act. But that ratification was enacted on 29 December by the National Assembly of Kingdom of Serbia. That ratification was necessary in view of the fact that the 1st December Act was contrary to the will of the National Council expressed in 'instructions'. The new state was created by the will of one man, the Regent Aleksandar, although a vast majority of conservative political elite of Serbia backed that will of his. Svetozar Pribićević played a key role in that development. But later he became the victim of persecution by Aleksandar Karađorđević. Serbs, Croats and Slovenes never tried him for all the evil he brought onto them by his wrong moves. But he was 'condemned' by Aleksandar Karađorđević for all the good he did to him.

Pribićević later toed Radić's line, that is an anti-Belgrade line. But he could no longer right the wrongs. One bullet in the gun of Puniša Račić got stuck into his body, but he survived. He died some time later in exile as the most embittered Serb in modern history of Serbs.

In the 1st December Act the Regent said that "by this act I fulfil my duty of ruler". Many believed him, because they had to or wanted to. But the fact is that he exercised power in which he was not vested under the 1903 Constitution of Serbia. Namely the Constitution did not recognise the possibility of unification of Kingdom of Serbia with another state, but only the possibility of exchange of territory or reduction of country. For example paragraph 4 reads:

"The state territory of Kingdom of Serbia cannot be estranged or separated.

It cannot be reduced or exchanged without consent of the Great National Assembly. But in minor cases, for example corrections of uninhabited border areas, approval of ordinary national assembly suffices".

The 1st December Act did not stipulate reduction of territory of Serbia or exchange of territory. Hence no such decision could be taken by the King, government, Ordinary Assembly, or the Great Assembly. Most historians have never questioned the legality of the 1st December Act, for they maintained that under Constitution the Great National Assembly was empowered to decide on that issue. But they are wrong: for constitution did not recognise the possibility of unification of the Kingdom of Serbia with other state, and the one of expansion of Serbia's territory. It is indisputable that the 1st December Act, under provisions of the Constitution of Kingdom of Serbia, was unlawful and that the Regent's Act was a constitutional and state coup, for the Regent had taken power which was not vested in him under Constitution. King's powers are described in Article 25:

"King represents the country in all relations with foreign states. He proclaims war, concludes peace treaties, alliances, etc. and informs about them the National Assembly, if and when interests and safety of the country allow that.

But trade contracts and enforceable contracts entailing payments from the state coffers, or amendments to laws, limiting public or private rights of Serb citizens, shall become valid only after being certified by the National Assembly".

The 1st December Act was not a peace treaty, but merging of statehood of Serbia with the new state, and the King had no authority to engage in such acts under that article.

Article 56 indicates more illegalities:

"Not a single King's Act, related to state affairs, may be enforced unless signed by the competent Minister, who is thereafter responsible for it".

But Regent did not need anyone, let alone a competent minister.

Legal analysis indicates that the King could propose constitutional amendments leading to unification of Serbia with other state or states. He could do that under Article 200:

"The King or National Assembly can put forward a proposal relating to constitutional amendments.

If the proposal is put forward by the King he shall notify the National Assembly, which shall thereafter dissolve and call the Great National Assembly at the latest within four months.

Decisions taken by absolute majority of MPs, as the constitution lays down, shall become valid when the King certifies them.

Added to that Regent had to demand that the Great National Assembly be convened also because that body was to grant permission for ruler's duties in the new state, as article 55 reads:

"The King cannot be at the same time a ruler of any state without consent of the Great National Assembly".

But as the King failed to do that, and instead decided to settle the constitutional matter (in an unauthorised way) by his 1st December Act, he had essentially rejected the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbia and committed a constitutional coup. In view of its consequences, it was also a state coup. Regent did not respect positive legislation of the country whose ruler he was, so it was questionable whether he would observe positive legislation of other countries joining the new community.

One can say that from the standpoint of the 1903 Constitution in place, the 1st December Act was null and void. All later attempts to qualify that Act as super constitutional (an elated Svetozar Pribičević even claimed that the constitution-making parliament cannot decide anything, for everything was decided on the 1st December,) are not legally founded. All contemporaries and even the Regent realised that. It was then decided that the 1st December Act be ratified, to correct its unlawful nature. But one mistake entailed the other, for the Constitution did not foresee the possibility of unification, let alone a person who was to ratify such an act. Then Prime Minister Stojan Protić called the National Assembly. This was contrary to the Article 54 which clearly laid down:

"King convenes the regular or extraordinary session of the National Assembly".

To make the matters worse, Stojan Protić was not Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Serbia, for it ceased to exist under the 1st December Act, but was Prime Minister of government of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, or of a state with which Serbia had already merged. All this was not only contrary to the positive law, but also to basic legal principles. Serbia has a long history of legal nonsense, but that was the biggest one in modern history of Serb people. It was written long time ago that non-law cannot be passed by the state, but only by its body. However one gets the impression that in the legal deliberations in late 1918 the majority of bodies of state of Serbia, that is the very state of Serbia. were doing extremely unlawful things.

At the session of the National Assembly of the state which ceased to exist, introductory speech was held by the Prime Minister of the state which ceased to exist, and present were ministers (including Svetozar Pribičević) who were not from Serbia. Protić notified the National Assembly of the Address of the National Council from Zagreb and the Regent's reply to it. The Assembly approved the document, but that approval could not be called ratification, for the Assembly of Serbia could not ratify a document passed by another state (State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs). Ratification could have been done possibly in accordance with the Regent's reply, but the latter was just notification of the Assembly of a completed state business. To make things worse the National Assembly failed to ratify the Regent's acceptance of decision of Podgorica Assembly, and of the decision of the Novi Sad assembly.

From the standpoint of the international law the 1st December Act was null and void and had only political, and the legal power, due to decisions relating to changes of

borders and emergence of new states could be taken only at a peace conference. That is why the delegation of Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes at the Versailles Conference was treated as delegation of the Kingdom of Serbia, even when the US recognised the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Only much later, when peace was signed with Germany, the Kingdom of SCS was recognised, but as Serbia, Croatia and Slavonia (Trumbić later corrected the name of the state). The German delegation played a key role in recognition, for it agreed not to oppose the legal irregularity of signing peace with the state with which it had not been at war. Hence Germany was to be credited with international recognition of the Kingdom of SCS. Added to that the recognition was effected in absence of Italian delegates.

One must pose the question why the Regent got involved in such a legally scandalous matter of unification. The answer to that question is simple: he was not interested in making a new political community in line with consensus of different wills, or by regular legal means, but he was interested in making a community whose mainstay would be his authoritarian will. Thus the community which emerged in 1918 did not have its monarch, but there was a monarch who made a political community for himself, whereby he had even trampled upon the constitution of his country. Since early October Regent's intentions were very clear. Depere helped him realise that intention, for he arrogantly delayed truce with Hungary, which gave time to Serbian army to take up all positions it needed. Under the international public law before the signing of the Belgrade truce the Serb army was considered as an invading army

First we must establish different ways in which different countries joined the Kingdom of SCS:

1. Kingdom of Serbia. Serbia joined the Kingdom of SCS as a sovereign and internationally recognised state, by expressing its will do that. The latter was tantamount to annulment of Constitution and positive legislation. In fact it was a constitutional and state coup.

2. State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs joined the Kingdom of Serbia as an interim state which had emerged in the wake of disintegration of the Austro-Hungary. There is a clear continuity of legal order of Croatia within the framework of Hungary and the National Council. The Assembly annulled the Hungarian-Croat deal and elevated the state autonomy of Croatia to independence. MPs in Parliament were elected earlier within the joint state with Hungary. Of all territories which joined the new community only Croatia did a good legal job.

3. Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina forged closer ties with Croatia, because they did not enjoy the state autonomy which Croatia had.

4. Montenegro had joined Serbia as an independent and internationally recognised state. Serbian army had occupied Montenegro. Podgorica Assembly effected a constitutional coup. Statement of Serbia tantamount to acceptance of annexation was contrary to the Constitution of Serbia and was made by the Regent Aleksandar at the time when Kingdom of Serbia *de facto* no longer existed.

5. Vojvodina was a part of Hungary without the state autonomy. Serbian army occupied territory of Vojvodina. Due to illegalities surrounding unification and never expressed will to accept decisions of the National Assembly of Serbs, Bunjevci, and other Slavs, which in itself was illegitimate, Vojvodina joined independently the Kingdom of

SCS from the standpoint of internal law, and was annexed by Serbia from the standpoint of international law.

Of five modes of merger, only Croatia legally and legitimately expressed its will, which was annulled by the 1st December Act. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia joined the new state legitimately (there was no occupation, but rather invasion by the Serb army). Montenegro joined the new state by an illegitimate procedure (Serb army behaved as the occupier army), although the prevailing mood in the country was pro-Serb. Serbia joined the new state in the most illegal way, but one could speak of legitimacy in view of a prevailing pro-unification mood. Similarly to Macedonia and old Serbia Vojvodina joined the new state in clearly illegal and illegitimate way-first it was occupied and later annexed.

Since occupation is a factual state in war, that is, an interim seizure of a territory, and under the 1907 Hague Rules of Procedure civilian authorities of occupied country were to continue to discharge their functions, one can say that the Belgrade truce confirmed occupation of part of Hungarian territory by Allies. That occupation was effected by the French and Serb troops. Occupation is not a legal, but an interim state, that is the act of occupation does not mean that the territory may be considered an integral part of the state-occupier. Occupation may end when an occupied state resumes its military actions, which then evolve into a real war. But an occupied state may establish military power, and then occupation ends in a legal state. Moreover an occupier may permanently keep the territory via an inter-state agreement or peace conference, and then we are speaking about annexation. Serb army by interfering into civilian matters indicated its disregard for the Hague Rules of Procedure. The Novi Sad Assembly laid the groundwork for annexation or legitimisation of occupation, or annexation. But that annexation was in fact recognised at the peace conference. Serbian side only failed to anticipate authorities established by the Novi Sad Assembly, which were alternate or parallel centres of power, in view of the existence of the Hungarian authorities. The National Administration was illegal from the standpoint of international law, but it gained ground. Serb and French army were duty-bound to respect the Hungarian civilian authorities, and not the revolutionary ones (the National Administration). But as the Serbia side did not recognise the National Administration, and also failed to respect the Hungarian authorities, one can say that two parallel processes were at work in Vojvodina: occupation and emergence of a temporary state. The second process was not controlled and ended with dismissal of the National Administration (caretaker government) and annexation of Vojvodina or its merger with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. All the aforementioned would have been avoided had Vojvodina entered the new community via Zagreb, for then it would have had a similar status to the one of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia.

Both from the standpoint of international and domestic law the Kingdom of Serbia was founded in an irregular way. Behind the whole move was the Regent's will to have the state subjected to his authoritarian will. Conservatives bowed to Regent's will, just like Ilija Garašanin used to bow to authoritarian will of the regime of Duke Mihailo. In a short period of time Nikola Pašić repeated the fate and moves of his famous predecessor, and became along with Svetozar Pribićević, the pillar of Aleksandars's authoritarian will.

Majority of South Slavs in 1918 wanted to live in the same state with Serbia and such a strongly expressed political will was unprecedented in the Balkans. But the Regent backed by the conservatives imposed the mode of unification, which was contrary to convictions of all those who were joining that state, perhaps even to Serbia's interests. The newly-emerged state could not function for it did not reach elementary political consensus on basic issues. It was a still-born child. Throughout his life first as Regent and later as King, Aleksandar kept alive or together that bizarre creation by his own authoritarian will. It disintegrated after his death. Those attempts of Conservatives and Regent to impose their authoritarian will onto others poisoned so much relations in the Balkans, that atrocities committed in the WW2 were a direct consequence thereof. Serbs outside Serbia, notably Serbs from Vojvodina has fared badly in the new state. By wrong unification they were in fact separated from Serbs from Serbia, and their age-old dream of national unification turned into a genuine state and economic nightmare. Serbs outside Serbia were treated in the new state as the second-class citizens, and they were moreover accused by non-Serbs of Serbian hegemony. In that state European Serbs, that most prospective civil stratum of the Balkans, were humiliated and degraded.

AUTHORITARIAN WILL OF REGENT ALEKSANDAR AND PROMULGATION OF THE VIDOVDAN CONSTITUTION

Conservative political idea and authoritarian politics lived in symbiosis. Regent Aleksandar in fact used the conservative political idea as a legitimising basis of his rule, like Duke Mihailo once used Garašanin. Regent tried to amend the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbia, or rather, he was compelled to embark upon drafting the new constitution. There were many drafts of constitution, but the one made by former Prime Minister, and the incumbent Minister for Election of Parliament, Stojan Protić carried most weight. Protić favoured a unitary and decentralised state, with 9 provinces with their governments and parliaments. That project was destined to succeed, for it represented a compromise between centralism and federalism. Added to that it was consistent, for it rested on principles of the Corfu Declaration. Protić led the party in Pašić's absence, so it seemed that the Radical Party would back the constitutional project. But the most important political factor in the country was the Regent, who took decisions on all key issues, including the constitution. Regent reconciled with Pašić and facilitated his comeback to political life by offering him the post of Prime Minister. Pašić refused that post out of tactical reasons, in a bid to strengthen his political standing, but also to make room for establishment of constitution-making assembly. Milenko Vesnić, and extraordinary diplomat and a prominent conservative politician formally held the government together, but Pašić was in charge of all constitutional affairs. It bears stressing that the third most important man in the state, Svetozar Pribićević, was also a supporter of unitarism and centralism. Elections for Parliament showed predominance of the conservative option, as the Radical and Democratic Party had the majority. On the other hand surprising was the success of Communists, who became the third power in the country. At the local elections they even won most seats in Belgrade and Zagreb. The fourth powerful party was Radić's HPSS, which espoused the republican and federalist concept. Barring Communists, the parties were formed on the nationalist principle, which

was contrary to the ruling position on one South Slave people. Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was simply a multi-ethnic community and that fact had to be mirrored in the political plane. Since Stojan Protić lost battle with Pašić, the government put forward a draft of constitution written by Lazar Marković, Professor of Belgrade University and Minister for Parliament. Groundwork for parliamentary elections was laid by the very Regent. Results of elections were troubling, for qualified majority could not be reached. Thus majorisation had to be put in place. But Regent's notorious rigidity was now welcomed. Vesnić's government adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Constitution-Making Parliament. But the Rules of Procedure were adopted in a summary undemocratic procedure, without previous debate or consent of the Radical Party club. The question was whether the government had the right to pass rules of procedure, in view of the fact that it was a temporary government appointed by the Regent, and the constitution-making parliament were yet to determine the form of order (republic or monarchy). During the constitution-making session the question was immediately posed whether the aforesaid rules of procedure were legitimate. If the government before constituting of the assembly adopts rules of procedure then the assembly is not sovereign, for it can rule on anything but on the procedure of its work. But the government stuck to its arrogant stand. Minister Miroslav Ninčić said:

"We are criticised because of the oath of allegiance. But I can clarify that matter. It is an expression of a special understanding, adopted by the Interim National Representative Office, and upheld by the current Constitution-Making Assembly. It is an expression of perception that the constitution-making assembly is not sovereign".

But the question is why the Constitution-Making Assembly is convened when there is a state body already in place? To defend its position the government indulged in demagogic talk about Serb victims and merits.

Contents of the Rules of Procedure indicate why the government made such a suspicious move. The Rules of Procedure laid down that MPs take the oath of allegiance to the Crown before the Parliament starts its work, and that the parliament takes decisions by a simple majority. That provision was indeed tantamount to pre-judging the form of rule or order on which MPs had yet to take stand. On the other hand it automatically paralysed the work of the republican party. Contrary to Radić, Communists decided to take the oath of allegiance to the Crown, and took part in the work of the assembly, and were its most militant group of MPs. Radić's followers and Communists were Republicans and opponents of authoritarian authorities. The second provision relating to simple majority played a key role in the whole action. The Corfu Declaration foresaw a qualified numerous majority, thanks to insistence of Pašić. "Instructions" also contained a provision on the qualified numerical majority, hence departure from that position was tantamount to annulment of the will of South Slaves from former Austro-Hungary. Rules of procedure prepared majorisation. And the campaign for that majorisation was led by Pašić very openly:

"Gentlemen, you have heard the opposition's reasons against creation of a simple state. They fear majorisation. *But, gentlemen, majorisation among one people is quite a natural thing*".

This mixture of cynicism, incorrectness, conservatism and logical errors, marked the work of the whole assembly. In the constitution-making assembly majorisation was a natural thing.

But conduct of Stojan Protić is to be praised. Namely he left the MP club and did not take the oath of allegiance, because he could not tolerate such level of irregularity and arbitrariness. Hence Protić could no longer take part in the parliamentary sessions.

Rules of procedure empowered the parliamentary speaker and president to censor even MPs speeches and to implement very restrictive rules.

Irregularity and non-democracy was rampant also outside the Assembly, for on 30 December 1920 government of Milenko Vesnić passed a decree known as "Proclamation". Under that sub-legal act the government banned the third strongest party in the country. It was illegal and represented a violation of fundamental human freedoms. But one gets the impression that this governmental decision was produced by relentless parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle of the very Communists. Communists 'survived' relentless police persecution almost 6 months, and then realised that they had to leave the Parliament. Minister Drašković told them directly in the Parliament: "Communism is a movement which did not have any right to be born". Filip Filipović, before leaving the parliament, said the following in his address:

"We state that the formal governmental majority embarked upon the wrong road in its attempt to resolve the constitutional issue...upon a fatal and dangerous road...The ruling bourgeoisie wants to pass a Constitution after preventing any criticism by any opposition party, including ours..."

The first major showdown between the Socialist and Conservative idea in the Twentieth Century ended with an apparent victory of the conservative idea, although in fact it was the victory of an authoritarian will over both ideas. The Communist party was more damaged by policy of Komintern than by conservative political idea. How conservative political idea was impotent in conflict with the socialist one is best indicated by the WW2, when Communists easily won the civil war, when the King stopped backing conservatives. "Proclamation" only increased repression and authoritarian character of the regime.

The opposition lost much when Communists abandoned the parliamentary benches. But despite everything the government only managed to garner necessary 50% plus 1 vote. First a political deal was made with Bogumil Vošnjak, which garnered another 10 votes of Slovenian "kmets", and then the worst possible deal was made with the Yugoslav Muslim organisation and the Muslim MP Club from Southern Serbia and Macedonia ("Dzemijet"). That agreement specified that the government was duty-bound to ensure concessions for Begs (Turkish landowners) during agrarian reform. Thus the agrarian reform was sacrificed in order to garner the necessary number of votes. Moreover a large number of MPs got kickbacks or ambassadorial posts.

In final voting 223 MPs said yes to the constitutional project, and 193 said no (absent was an incredible number of 158 MPs). In different ways over 50% of votes were collected.

Gentlemanly and delicate Ante Trumbić best assessed the whole parliamentary deal:

"Gentlemen, a procedure unusual for the parliamentary life was applied. Governmental draft was not justified. Proposals of disobedient parliamentary minorities were rebutted successively without any justification.

Strong criticism voiced by extra-parliamentary political and legal circles was easily glossed over. In my mind this draft is not a product of a genuine and objective

discussion, it is a dictate of some MP clubs leaders, and a product of some negative compromises reached between them.

Necessary majority was 'garnered' by funds which should not have been approved...The goal was to reach an arithmetic success in the final vote....The assembly was divided...Is this composition of assembly a lawful one?

Shall thus adopted Constitution be a basis on which the state shall be consolidated or shall the open constitutional issue cause new strife with grave consequences...

What kind of Constitution are we facing? It does not contain a single statesman's thought representing a lasting basis of our social life. That basis was replaced by a trend to make participation of population at large in public life illusory and to arrange power over people through a bureaucratic, centralist system.

This constitution shall exacerbate tribal disputes, which are already worse than under Austro-Hungary. That is in fact the sharpest condemnation of the regime's terrible results.

We got rid of the foreign occupier, and people are waiting for internal liberation. But this constitution does not entail liberation".

In this measured Trumbić's expose a note of disappointment is present. Namely he harboured for so many years sincere pro-Yugoslav leanings, only to see Serbian conservatism gain the upper hand and impose majorisation and an unfeasible constitutional project.

The very Vidovdan Constitution was based on the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbia from 1903, which was not so bad. But Serbia was no longer one-nation state, but a multi-ethnic community in which unitarism and pronounced centralism were misplaced. All the problems stemmed from the basic political position, accepted even at the peace conference, that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was one-nation state. It was in fact a multi-ethnic state with different religious and civilisational orientations. Hence insistence on one nation represented annulment of national orientations of other peoples, or national discrimination. It also bears stressing that the conservative political idea from its inception, that is from Garašanin's times espoused the project of a unitary and centralised state. Many notions were in fact confused: Protić was indeed right when he maintained that Pašić confused de-centralisation and federalism, namely Pašić considered any form of decentralisation a division and nothing else. Conservative political idea favouring majorisation imposed a centralist and unitary concept, which furthermore produced national discrimination and was the biggest generator first of the Regent's authoritarian rule, and later of King Aleksandar arbitrary political will. Constitution strengthened the position of the King with respect to government and parliament, and the King became a dominant constitutional factor. Under the 1869 Constitution, or the 1903 Constitution, the King did not have so much power, which compelled Aleksandar Obrenović to engage in so many constitutional coups. Aleksandar Karađorđević could be an authoritarian ruler on the basis of the constitutional text. On 1 December 1918 he made a state which suited him, and on Vidovdan 1921 he gave to that state an internal order which suited only him. Authoritarian will spilled over into the constitutional text. Under the Constitution the King appointed even 33 heads of districts. He had more authority than the executive: of 24 governments which existed until 1929 (when the Constitution was suspended) 22 were both named and dismissed by the King himself.

The 1st December Act was a major fraud and annulment of will of the National Council from Zagreb. Vidovdan Constitution was a mixture of majorisation and corruption which led to further annulment of will of Vojvodina population, and will of part of Serbian population. All the aforementioned was justified in a demagogical way, best illustrated by Pašić's address to the Constitution-Making Assembly:

"Gentlemen, Serbia sacrificed itself for freedom and unification of its brothers... Rest assured that Serbia and Serbs shall avoid doing anything that could damage our brothers. Gentlemen, all that we create, we create for all of us".

1. The 1912 Bulgarian-Serb Treaty
2. Ultimatum of Austro-Hungary to Serbia
3. Austro-Hungarian Declaration of war on Serbia
4. Response of government of Serbia to ultimatum
5. Circular note of 4 September 1914

DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME AND CONSERVATIVE IDEA IN VOJVODINA

An essentially authoritarian regime relied on the police, army and administration, that is, on the state apparatus. Beyond the state apparatus the social basis rested on a narrow circle of Belgrade and Serb families who got rich quickly by using state to their benefit. The authoritarian regime enjoyed a strong popular backing, because population at large got a chance to land jobs in privileged state administration departments. Thus many Serbs were employed by the state, and the people of peasants morphed overnight into the people of civil services, or into a clerical nation.

From the very beginning the state administration treated population of non-Serbian areas of the new state in the similar way they had already treated population of Macedonia and Old Serbia after the Balkans wars. Even during the war the French assessed that the Macedonian syndrome was a constant feature of the Serbian policy. The new state was understood as an expanded Serbia in both territorial and in state-economic terms. No subjectivity was accepted. Whoever tried to espouse it, was immediately labelled as a separatist.

Under the 1931 census the ethnic structure of Yugoslavia was as follows:

Serbs in Serbia	3,095,000
Croats	3,221,000
Serbs in Vojvodina	2,662,000
Bosnian Muslims	729,000
Other Muslims	353,000
Montenegrins	224,000
Macedonians	642,000
Slovenians	1,133,000
Germans	498,000
Hungarians	467,000

Romanians	134,000
Czechs and Slovaks	153,000
Albanians	479,000
Jews	60,000

The census indicated that in the new state there were only 23% of Serbs from Serbia, and a total of 42% Serbs.

Thus no-one could say that the state was purely the Serb state, let alone expanded Serbia.

There were less Serbs from Serbia than Croats and more Serbs from Serbia and Serbs from Vojvodina in the new state. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed through a merger of earlier states of Serbia and Montenegro with parts of Austro-Hungary. Former Austro-Hungarian parts made up 62% of population and 58% of territory of the new state. Minority of the new state could not successfully impose its state organisation and customs on the majority. Thus only 23% of population imposed its history onto others and translated it into the state life. But let us remember that the Roman republic collapsed because it expanded its institutions on the whole Appenine Peninsula in the wake of allies' wars. Institutions and organisations of a small state cannot be successfully implanted into a much larger one (the Appenine Peninsula then already had over 4,000,000 people). Hence the need to install an emperor or establish a kingdom. And as the disharmony between the Serbian domination and Vojvodina reality became more salient, the position of the Crown became more important.

Serbs from Serbia were very poor when they entered the new state: of twenty industrial branches, they were superior to Vojvodina Serbs only in one- the mining industry.

When we compare Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Sandžak as the Serbian part of state, with Vojvodina, we see that the latter accounted for much superior figures:

-in agriculture	77% (Vojvodina only 31% and the entire Serbian block 23%)
-in cattle-breeding	68%
-in forestry	88%
-in mining	39%
-in crafts	69%
-in trade	74%
-in industry	75%
-in banking	75%

In brief the Austro-Hungarian parts brought to the new state about 70% of assets/resources, in contrast to mere 30% of the Serbian block.

Vojvodina accounted for about 80% of exports and 75% of imports. The Serbian block was only dominant in import of foreign capital, as the majority of foreign investments were channelled into Serbia. But payment of interests rates was effected by the whole state.

Various parts of the newly-emerged state also had various levels of indebtedness. Before the WW1 Serbia was one of the most indebted European countries. 7 pre-war loans totalled FF 953 million, while Vojvodina loans totalled FF 43 million. War debts of

Serbia were also very high and it was considered that they would be shouldered by the whole, new community. When one compares pre-war debts one sees that a Serb had 25 times more debts than a denizen of Vojvodina. To make the matter worse only Serbian debts were repaid, while the others were forgotten. Budgetary allocations for repayment of pre-war debts of Serbia amounted to half a billion dinars, while those for repayment of Vojvodina debts approximated only 32 million. A citizen of Vojvodina contributed much more to the central budget than a citizen of Serbia. Thus one can say that population of non-Serbia parts of the new country had to shoulder the burden of the pre-war Serbia's debts.

Even MPs were not aware of a dire situation in the first years of the new state. Added to that the final balance for the year 1924 was completed and disclosed only in 1927. No-one knew the exact budgetary figures for a series of years. Even when they were made public, contributions of historical provinces were kept under wraps. Lies or silence surrounded financial matters.

The first manipulation by the Serbian side was effected in the foreign currency sphere, namely when dinar was introduced as a general currency. In early 1919 five currencies were in circulation: Serbian dinar, Austrian crown, Bulgarian levi, German mark and Montenegrin perper. But of those currencies, most favoured was the Austrian crown due to its large quantity in circulation. But when the new authorities in Vienna started printing large quantities of money, all heirs to and neighbours of Austria were compelled to protect their subjects from that inflationary blow and to try to save not only personal property, but also their national assets and resources. And the Kingdom, alike many other countries started first branding and then marking Austrian marks, but in the process it charged its citizens 20% tax. Thus it seized from its citizens 20% of movable property. It was obviously a major rip off. But the measure was not enforced in Serbia proper, as the crowns were taken out of circulation as early as in fall 1919. After that the Kingdom raised another 300,000 bank-notes from an Austrian bank in order to replace the old ones. This produced another devaluation. Belgrade government in 1919 changed crowns for dinar at the 2:1 rate. But it was unrealistic for at the market the buying power of the crown was equal to the one of dinar. After effecting the exchange, government in Belgrade hyped up new devaluation. For example in March 1920 the parity fell to 1 dinar-3 crowns. The Serbian Treasury in a blatant disregard of the market value of crown later even opted for the exchange rate of 1:4. Therefore in only 6 months Vojvodina citizens who had those Austrian crowns got less dinars than those who had the same currency in Serbia. It bears stressing that in Switzerland dinar was exchanged for 2 crowns. Had the exchange been effected at a real rate, Vojvodinans would have got more dinars. But its citizens were ripped off or robbed of a total of 1 billion and 400 million dinars. It was a huge amount of money: for example the pre-war debt of the Kingdom of Serbia after revaluation in 1925 amounted to 5 billion dinars. In fact the Treasury in a short period of time robbed Vojvodina population of one fourth of total pre-war debt of the Kingdom of Serbia. It was indeed a huge amount of money. The Serbian government immediately started treating new entities like Macedonia. That is started brutally exploiting them. Both Vojvodina Serbs and Vojvodina non-Serbs were simply-plundered.

That foreign exchange fraud was a short-term one, but the tax manipulations were commonplace. When the state emerged in 1918 there were 5 tax systems in place in the country. The Kingdom refused to introduce a single tax system in its whole territory.

Vojvodina shouldered the burden of the heaviest taxes (22%), while Slovenia and Croatia also had to pay high taxes. An average tax in Serbia was only -6%! Most senseless was the war tax introduced in October 1919. In other words all citizens of Vojvodina irrespective of their financial status had to pay 60% tax on land and property (houses, flats). It was officially maintained that money seized by war-profiteering had to be returned to the state. It was implied that every citizen of Vojvodina was a war profiteer. The tax was kept in place even 10 years after the war! Municipal property in Vojvodina was seized, which deprived local self-rule of any revenues. Majority of tax-collectors were Serbs from Serbia. In 1923 the Treasury decided to dismiss all tax-collectors of German, Hungarian and Vojvodina Serb ethnicity, for they were not allegedly able to understand the Serb tax system. They were replaced with Serb tax-collectors. In some archives there are ads related to open competition for tax-collectors born in the territory of the pre-war Serbia.

As regards the land registers, Austro-Hungarian areas had largely regulated documents, while the Serb areas, for want of such documents, imposed so called "estimated" land taxes. This led to corruption and unrealistic estimates. Due to different tax systems in place, citizens of Vojvodina paid for one ha of land of a certain category twice the tax imposed on Serbia's local land-owners. Taxes on real estate were disproportionate: a Croat local paid four times greater and Vojvodina local eight times greater house tax than the one imposed on a Serb owner of a house. Income tax in Vojvodina was 50% superior to the one levied in Serbia.

As we don't have budgetary data for the period 1924-1925 (no final balance was done) we shall present the 1925 data. In the first five months of that year and in the late 1925 directly collected taxes were the following:

Province	budgetary estimates	collected
Croatia and Slavonia	54,208,335	66,889,580
Bosnia and Herzegovina	23,020,666	30,066,204
Slovenia	29,166,666	56,570,775
Dalmatia	6,659,583	10,787,467
Serb block of countries	71,501,898	60,212,689
Vojvodina	70,433,750	131,336,108

Although Vojvodina had four times smaller population than the Serbian block (Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo and Sandžak) it yielded that year 50% more of direct taxes. In other words a Vojvodina local in 1925 paid ten times more taxes than a local of Serbia. Similar are data for the year 1928 published by the Novi Sad Chamber of Commerce.

Direct taxes collected in the period 1919-1928 in the Kingdom:

Province	per capita
Slovenia	1336
Croatia and Slavonia	915

Dalmatia	454
Bosnia and Herzegovina	634
Vojvodina	1846
Serbian block	559

But the aforementioned data were doctored under instructions of the Serbian Treasury. Nonetheless they show the plunder of the non-Serbian parts of the country. After major corrections the following picture emerges:

Province	per capita
Slovenia	507
Croatia and Slavonia	406
Dalmatia	230
Bosnia and Herzegovina	267
Vojvodina	939
Serbian block	180

A Croat local paid two times greater tax, a Slovenian citizens three times greater tax and Vojvodina citizen five times greater tax than a Serb local.

Under the great pressure of the HSS and the Peasant-Democratic Coalition in 1928 taxes were more or less equalised. But after the King Aleksandar's coup and division into 9 'banovina' (districts) the tax situation remained basically unchanged.

42% of Serbs exercised control over 6 districts, while Serbs from Serbia (23% of total population of the country) exercised direct control over 5 districts. Consequently one fourth of population controlled two thirds of the country. Division into districts was simply a new manifestation of a continuing Serbian hegemony.

Here's the breakdown of tax collection in districts in the year 1934:

Districts	per capita/dinars
Dravska	207
Savska	207
Primorska	60
Dunavska	231
Vrbaška	44
Drinska	76
Moravska	69
Zetska	63
Vardarska	55
Belgrade	81

Although division into districts was in fact division into historical provinces, it is evident that a Slovenian had to pay four times greater taxes than a denizen of Belgrade. Inhabitants of Dunavska, Savska and Dravska district (of Slovenia, Croatia, Slavonia and

Vojvodina) paid three times greater taxes than those in Belgrade. On third of the state yielded two thirds of collected taxes. But within each district there were some discrepancies, because, for example Dunavska district embraced Vojvodina, parts of Serbia and parts of Croatia. Data related to taxes on real estate, known as land taxes, collected in Dunavska district are the following:

Area	envisaged per capita	collected	% of collection
Vojvodina	206	214	104%
Croat areas (Srem)	126	171	139%
Serb areas	91	55	61%

Reports on collection of taxes in areas within Dunavska district for the year 1936 best illustrate the aforementioned inequality:

Area	per capita	envisaged	% of payment
Mačvanski	89	31	36%
Mitrovački	130	102	78%
Rumski	194	204	105%

All three areas were equally developed. Mačva was probably the richest part of Serbia after Belgrade, but a Mačva local paid 7 times less taxes than a local of Srem. But there were also inequalities in Drina District, as local living on the left bank of Drina river paid almost 50% higher taxes than those who lived on the right bank of the river. Thus a local of Zvornik shouldered a higher tax burden than a local of Mali Zvornik.

Similar inequality was the hallmark of the policy of collection of other state revenues: customs duties, indirect taxes, monopolies, posts, railway, transport dues, etc. All those taxes were higher in Vojvodina, Croatia, Slovenia and Slavonia than in Serbia. Hence some parts of country were indeed plundered.

The Kingdom was an undeveloped country, and the state interventions in the economy and industry were massive. Economy depended entirely on state investments. Up to 1925 there were no relevant data, but in that year the Ministry of Construction disclosed its budgetary allocations:

Slovenia	22 million dinars
Croatia and Slavonia	38 million dinars
Dalmatia	17 million dinars
Vojvodina	16 million dinars
Bosnia and Herzegovina	53 million dinars
Montenegro	20 million dinars
Serbia	220 million dinars

Slovenia, Croatia, Slavonia and Vojvodina, accounted for over two thirds of budget, but their share in investments of Ministry of Construction was only 17%, while Serbia's shares totalled 57%.

That same Ministry in the ten-year period (1925-1934) spent 2,771 million dinars in investments. 63% of investments were channelled into Serbia, 9% into Croatia and Slavonia, and only 4% into Vojvodina. Vojvodina contributed to one fourth of budget, had only 8% of total population and got about 4% of investments. Vojvodina was blatantly exploited. For maintenance of a vitally important network of water canals Vojvodina got from Belgrade only 4% of funds, therefore it had to cover 96% or remaining maintenance costs. Most investments funds and assets ended in Serbia. But let us see the breakdown of the local and central share in investments over a period of 10 years:

Province	Share of all investments in the country	local funds	central funds
Slovenia	3.9%	46%	54%
Croatia and Slavonia	9%	45%	55%
Dalmatia	3.7%	28%	72%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10%	30%	70%
Vojvodina	4%	61%	29%
Montenegro	6.1%	15%	85%
Serbia	63.3%	21%	79%

While Slovenia, Croatia and Slavonia added to each dinar from Belgrade, one dinar of their own for investments, Vojvodina had to add over 2 dinars, and Serbia only one fourth of dinar. It means that in Vojvodina ratio between local and central investment funds was eight times less favourable than in Serbia.

Other ministries faced similar problems. According to the Transport Ministry data a total of 3, 377 million dinars was invested in construction of a new railway network in 1920-1935 period. The total sum was thus allocated:

Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia	6,8%
Slovenia	2,1%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4,2%
Vojvodina	2.5%
Serbia	84.5%

Such allocations of revenues were justified by the need for reconstruction of Serbia in the post-war period. But that justification did not hold water ten years after the end of war! As regards the post-war recovery the state got war reparations from Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany. The bulk of war reparations came from Germany. In 1921-1931 period Germany paid 666 million gold marks to Serbia. Although war damages were everywhere, and not only in Serbia, although Germany signed peace with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and not with the Kingdom of Serbia, all reparations went to Serbia. It is interesting to indicate how compensatory damage to private persons was resolved: the state issued with war damage bonds with a 2.5% interest rate. Money for those bonds-4.5 billion dinars- was allocated from German reparations. But Germany stopped paying war reparations in 1931 (before Hitler took

power), for it could no longer sustain such a large cash outflow from its national income. Government of the Kingdom of SCS did not withdraw bonds, but continued to service the whole venture from its budget. Vojvodina, Slavonia, Croatia and Slovenia contributed to two thirds of budget, hence former Austro-Hungarian provinces continued to pay war reparations of Germany. Belgrade probably thought that such payments were OK, for those provinces during the war were allies of Germany.

That 'plunder' of money from the aforesaid provinces was unsustainable because of the situation of expensive money which marked the existence of the Kingdom of SCS. Interest rates on a stable currency, that is, on dinar, were as high as 20%. The National Bank generated the following policy. First money was seized on different grounds, then expensively marketed along with high interest rates. The said Bank engaged in all kinds of operations, except those which were considered its duties. It placed money because of its gains and not because of economic policy of the state. Unlike in any other European country, in Serbia the following practice gained ground: according to the 1937 data, even an incredible 60% of profit went to share-holders, and only 40% to the state. And profits were huge. But why was the state so generous with the National Bank? The answer is: because of the set-up of shareholders. Of 60,000 shares, 40,000 were influential ones, and their holders tried to influence the bank policy and were bent on making huge profits. Structure of shareholders was the following:

Shareholders from Slovenia	2%
Shareholders from Croatia and Slavonia	8%
Shareholders from Dalmatia	0%
Shareholders from Bosnia and Herezegovina	0%
Shareholders from Vojvodina	0.8%
Shareholders from Montenegro	0%
Shareholders from Serbia	89%

A vast majority of over 35,000 Serb shares was held by the Belgrade shareholders, that is -35,370. To make the situation worse 9 shareholders from Belgrade held 25,866 shares, or 65% of all shares. Those nine denizens of Belgrade were genuine owners of the National Bank of Kingdom. Thus the state with 15 million people pursued the monetary policy which benefited most 9 major shareholders. That this was not a mere accident, was indicated by the Statute of the National Bank which laid down that at least half of bank's management had to be from Belgrade. When one looks at loans granted by the National Bank one sees that in most years they were given to companies in Belgrade, with a very low interest rate. The whole country was then granted the other half of credits. This led to the following situation: Belgrade businessmen had at their disposal cheap money, which they further invested, while businessmen from the most important commercial centres, Zagreb and Novi Sad, had to borrow from the Belgrade businessmen or banks under very unfavourable interest rate. That was just a continuation of the age-old money-lending practice of the Serbian elite. For example in the Ninetieth Century Belgrade carpetbaggers got loans from the state which they thereafter marketed at a much higher interest rate to traders, inn-keepers and sometimes priests in the interior. The latter then gave unfavourable credits to poor peasants, which ultimately had to sell everything to repay those loans.

Structure of seats of companies which were directly granted credits by the National Bank confirms the aforementioned. We have data for the year 1928:

Bosnia and Herzegovina	385
Croatia and Slavonia	175
Slovenia	270
Vojvodina	309
Dalmatia	81
Serbia	2,865

Analysis of the credit status of the former Austro-Hungarian provinces before the WW1 indicates amply those unfavourable trends. But there are independent data only for Croatia and Slavonia, as they enjoyed the highest degree autonomy within Hungary. Croatia and Slavonia in 1910 received from Austro-Hungarian Central Bank a loan worth 41.3 million gold crowns. When converted into local currency (its value in 1937) that loan was worth 656 million dinars. In 1937 Croatia and Slavonia received from the National Bank in Belgrade a loan totalling 259 million. It bears saying that the Austro-Hungarian Central Bank was a regular national bank, that is, it marketed money at much lower interest rates than those prescribed by the National Bank of the Kingdom of SCS. Thus Croatia and Slovenia, after 27 years, faced the following situation: they got 50% less money from the central bank and at a much higher interest rate.

Similar policy was pursued in other operations. In 1937 the Central Bank granted so-called Lombard loans totalling 272, of which 218 million were immediately granted to Belgrade. In 1927 the National Bank granted very favourable credits: firms from Belgrade received 1,443 million dinars, companies from Zagreb received 145 million, companies from Ljubljana got 70 million, and those from Novi Sad-40 million. Vojvodina got 35 times less money than Belgrade.

The State Mortgage Bank emulated the National Bank. The 1934 and 1936 data indicated that the aforementioned bank invested over 6% of its assets into the Savska area, which made up 20% of the state territory. Data from 1936 indicated that the Savska area got only 3.2% of all communal loans, which the State Mortgage Bank granted to it for resolution of local problems.

Banking system of the Kingdom depended on the state banks: the National Bank, the State Mortgage Bank, the Postal Savings Bank and Privileged Agrarian Bank, Private banks were intentionally stifled, and sidelined. The four state banks engaged in a veritable financial dictatorship. The money market in fact did not exist, everything was done in accordance with the state dictates. Financial plundering of former Austro-Hungarian provinces, notably Vojvodina, through the banking system became as successful as the rip-off effected through the tax system.

Tax and financial dictatorship was based on the political dictatorship. Even before 1929 the court decided on all relevant matters, including politics. King ruled in a near dictatorial way. Façade of parliamentarism was not even necessary. Although the government as the executive power was dependent on parliament under the Vidovdan Constitution, none of 40 governments during the existence of the Kingdom of SCS were dissolved by the parliament. All of them were formed and dismissed publicly or covertly by the King. Electoral system was of a percentage kind, but composition of parliament

did not show the real balance of political power, because electoral rigging was commonplace. Until 1927 the 1910 census of Serbia served as the basis for election of delegates. The 1921 census although it was a proper and regular one, was intentionally avoided, because of high number of casualties in the WW1. Officials feared a new census because the male population was halved in the Balkans Wars and in the WW1, and because the Vidovdan Constitution did not allow women to vote. Serbs from Serbia, who made up only 23% of total population, in the Parliament had over 37% of MPs. Things got worse after promulgation of the Octroited Constitution. The biggest nonsense of the electoral law was that a unique list for the whole country was put forward. Hence the list which got a simple majority, that is half of votes plus one, immediately got two thirds of mandates in the parliament, while it shared other mandates with other parties. Thus the list which got 1,076,345 votes had 67 MPs, while the one which garnered 1,746,982 votes got 303 MPs. But Parliament wielded no power, any party representatives could sit in it. The King and his retinue was the most important political factor, all things were decided by the court.

Until 1937 the kingdom had 35 governments with a total of 656 ministers. Major ministries were the Foreign Affairs, the Interior, the Army Ministry, the Treasury, the Justice Ministry. A total of 252 ministers existed in the said period. Structure of ministries in provinces was the following:

Province	percentage of population	total	percent.	major ministr.	percent.
Serbs from Serbia	23%	399	61%	208	83%
Serbs from former A-H provinces	19%	53	8%	23	9%
Croats	24%	137	17%	16	5%
Slovenians	8%	49	8%	5	2%
Bosnian Muslims	5%	18	3%	0	0

In essence important were only big ministries, and there we had the situation in which 23% of population gave 83% ministers. Thus there were 100 Serbs from Serbia ministers, 7 Croat and 10 Serb from former Austro-Hungarian provinces ministers. Of the latter many were Serbs from Croatia, for example Svetozar Pribićević was a minister in many governments. There were some ministers from Vojvodina, but they served in minor ministries. So the province which paid the bulk of taxes did not have a single minister among 252 most important ministers. Not a single Prime Minister, the Army Minister and the Interior Minister was of Croat ethnicity. In the early stages of the new Kingdom the only high-ranking Croat, was Foreign Secretary Trumbić, but he spent his entire mandate in Paris, as a member of a peace delegation. Similar was the structure of professionals in the government and ministries.

Belgrade ministries organised a large administrative network in the Kingdom. That hyper-centralised state created an apparatus of 350,000 people who were 'under the command' of various ministries. The country's population exercised most often two professions, the one of farmers, and the one of clerks or civil servants. Every ninth household subsisted on civil service pay of its members. As a vast majority of state clerks

were Serbs from Serbia, every third family in Serbia subsisted on civil service pay of its members. Similar situation was noted in Montenegro. That bureaucracy was a scourge in Vojvodina and other, former Austro-Hungarian provinces. But it bears saying that the Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy was the most deft and honest bureaucracy in Europe. It employed many South Slavs. After the collapse of Austro-Hungary, Czechs and Poles asked Vienna and Budapest to "lend" them civil servants until they set up their civil services. Serbian administration was the biggest problem in the Kingdom of Serbia, for it was extremely corrupt. Its sole role was to tyrannise peasant masses. In the second half of the Ninetieth century Serb peasantry were engaged in an uphill struggle against clerks. Pre-Kumanovo Serbia had 2,5 million inhabitants and administration proportionate to that number. After the Balkan wars that administration expanded to Macedonia and Old Serbia, and in the post-WW1 period to other countries, that is, to the state of 15 million people, or to 6 times larger country. The old Austro-Hungarian civil servants and local Serbs in Vojvodina were forcibly replaced by new clerks and tax-collectors. Consequently many unqualified locals from Serbia and Montenegro were appointed to the aforementioned posts. Anyone was eligible for the civil service job. Every clerk was appointed by the central government, so Belgrade became the biggest market for clerical jobs. Corruption and graft were rampant, and there was a lot of nepotism in the appointment policy. The most important position after a ministerial post was the one of Head of District, for he was the boss on the ground. Vojvodina had 24 districts, and of 24 Heads of Districts as many as 22 were Serbs from Serbia.

Police and army were the pillars of the authoritarian regime. The Army Minister was appointed by the King and his position was even more central than the one of Prime Minister. Army was King's private province. Pre-Kumanovo Serbia had only three active generals, and on eve of disintegration of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia it had 165 active and retired generals, of whom only two were Croats and two were Slovenes. Army Ministers, Army Commanders and their deputies were of Serb ethnicity. Police was under the military control. The Army Minister promoted, retired, transferred and gave medals to policemen. Police commanders were always military officers. The police never served the interests of civilian authorities. The police occasionally acted against orders of the Interior Minister.

All the aforementioned indicates that the authoritarian regime and conservative political idea perceived the Kingdom as a temporary political community, to be exploited in a colonial manner. Of all the former Austro-Hungarian provinces Vojvodina fared the worst, and is yet to recover from ill effects of such governance. Subjective moment of such rule was the King, and such a community was not possible without an authoritarian regime. In fact it disintegrated before it managed to consolidate itself. Serbs from former Austro-Hungarian provinces were the principal victims of such a bizarre and mindless state.

THE THIRD EMERGENCE OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA

Socialist Yugoslavia was established when the socialist idea politically, militarily and diplomatically defeated conservative political idea within the fold of the two principal peoples: Serbs and Croats. Like in the first Yugoslavia the liberal idea had been

already defeated by the conservative one, while the socialist idea had to compromise with other ideas in order to realise itself. Compromises were made on the international plane. Results of realisation of the socialist idea were extraordinary, by both domestic and international standards. Conservative and liberal idea survived within the ranks of intelligentsia, and after a certain period of time they politically constituted themselves within the framework of the socialist political idea. After the Brioni Congress and the 1965 economic reform conservative and liberal ideas were given a free rein to organise themselves and take actions. The peak of liberal idea in socialism was liberalism in Serbia, and of the conservative one so-called "mass movement" in Croatia. The Croatian conservatism espoused the concept of the national state and one political people, which were common denominators of conservatism. In other words the party apparatus of the Communist Party became the prime mover of socialist aspirations. The Croat nationalism was so strong that it had to be repressed by very violent means. Liberalism in Serbia was not so stormy. It was a delicate political idea, and also an unexpected one. It was the first such promotion of liberal political idea among Serbs in the post-WW1 period. It did not require a clampdown. It was simply outlawed by purely political means. Liberalism could realise itself only by changing the character of the Communist Party, in contrast to the conservative idea which could slowly infiltrate the party ranks. But results of the liberal policy were more lethal than those of conservative policy, for they tended to change the society. Entrepreneurial enthusiasm, massive promotion of middle class, accelerated vertical mobility, unprecedented cultural and scientific liberties heralded a new form of rule.

To put it simply the Socialist political idea was defeated both by conservative and liberal idea, and since then did not recover. Response of President Tito was consistent: both competing ideas intended to destroy the state community, the conservative one by encouraging territorial division, and the liberal one by separating economy from the political state. Devoid of possibility to strengthen the weakened Socialist idea, despite major propaganda and demagoguery, Tito put himself at the front-line: he introduced a personal regime. Previously removed conservative idea received subsequently and unexpectedly its satisfaction, for its concept of the national state and one people were incorporated into basic tenets of the Socialist idea Hence the creation of the national communist parties, and confederalisation of the political community. Liberal political idea did not get any satisfaction and through positive legislation its attempt to make independent a segment of society, notably, economy, was prevented. The concept of obedience replaced the concept of private interests and entrepreneurial spirit in the sphere of economy. To give legitimacy to the said move personal regime of Josip Broz Tito used an admixture of the Socialist and conservative political idea. It always fought against the liberal idea, but also against the conservative and socialist one when they grew too radical. Mechanism of functioning of that regime was at the same time simple and indirect. The only prime mover of the integrating function in the whole society, and not only in the political state, was the personal regime. Its importance grew as disintegrating elements became stronger. In other words Tito insisted on integration whenever conservative idea prevailed over the socialist one.

Tito's assessments of those processes were probably good. It can be assumed that conservatism directly and liberalism indirectly led to collapse of that political community, which was then internationally unacceptable. Manner of removal of those

processes was not favourable for Yugoslav peoples. For institutionalisation of conservatism and elements of personal regime outlived J.B.Tito and became the prime mover of de-construction of that political community in the late Eighties in a more brutal and painful way that it could have happened in the early Seventies.

Constitutional autonomy of Vojvodina in that period was one of the main levers of functioning of the personal regime. After sidelining of liberalism, Serbia proper had to organise itself along the principle of compromise between the socialist and conservative idea. According to some assessments such Serbia posed a danger to the personal regime and the political community. But that assessment was not grounded, for the SFRY was based on the balance of powers, and such conservative-socialist Serbia would upset that balance, as it had happened in the late Eighties. That is why Serbia was (con) federalised, that is, Vojvodina and Kosovo and Metohija began controlling the rest of Serbia and prevented any attempt at strengthening its political independence. Between the WW1 and WW2 due to supremacy of the Serbian conservative concept "Serbia and its Yugoslavia" the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was destroyed, while the current concept "Weak Serbia means strong Yugoslavia" was destroying the latter community. But under the second concept destruction of community was happening in an indirect way, for the said concept was the principal generator of the newly-awakened Serbian conservatism and nationalism. Instead of preventing that erroneous concept, it was encouraged and developed. The result was contrary to intentions.

In Vojvodina the new political elite composed of incompetent veterans gained the upper hand. Old partisans from Srem were loyal to the regime and supporters of the hard-line policy. Population at large did not react to such process, partially because it failed to grasp implications of the new policy, and partially because that new policy suited interests of some political strata in Vojvodina. Although under liberalism life in Serbia was relatively dignified, there was a spill-over of profit from Vojvodina to Serbia. And it always happened when Vojvodina lacked a high level of autonomy, and not only because of Belgrade, but also because of Vojvodina's agricultural profit. But when Vojvodina enjoyed a high-level autonomy, the spill-over of that profit was stopped. Then the elite distributed in a just way that profit, upheld and promoted the national minorities rights and institutions of its independence (for example, the Vojvodina Academy). The only condition was not to imperil ideological hallmarks of the regime. But and large life was pleasant, but not free.

Although the authoritarian regime was the prime mover of that autonomy, it took root, was accepted by population at large and survived many years after Tito's death. It was eliminated by external processes. In the Eighties the conservative idea gained the upper hand in Belgrade, and after its pre-political constituting by different associations of intellectuals (the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Science is just one of the documents of its kind) it began its political constituting. Conservative idea first clashed first with the liberal political idea which was constituted at the federal level and with which it suddenly had many problems. In those years Vojvodina elite showed a major lack of political wisdom and was inclined towards making wrong assessments (the most salient example thereof was the conduct of the "Vojvodina cadres" at a notorious Eighth Session). It then successfully addressed another major issue: it eliminated the positive legal and party blockade of Belgrade in its bid to prevail over the liberal idea. In that polemics between the liberal and conservative idea the Vojvodina political idea did

not fare well, for its exponents were people of different era and regime, backers of personal regime of J.B. Tito.

The basic reason behind such an easy collapse of autonomy, was the manner of its establishment: it was both established and abolished by external will.

In comparing autonomy in the late Twentieth century with the earlier ones, it can be said that the latter were more easily established and suspended. Autonomy in the Military District was granted by Austria, and was suspended after a series of years because it was simply exhausted as a historical idea. A major autonomous movement of Serbs from Hungary and Croatia, between 1848 and the WW1, was first countered and then recognised by both Hungary and Croatia. But it was defeated by Serbian conservatism. In the late Twentieth century autonomy was granted by the federal state, and abolished again by the Serbian conservatism. The paradox lies in the fact that Vojvodina today badly needs autonomy, in order to counter its main, and to date successful, opponent- the Serbian conservatism!

CONSERVATIVE IDEA AND NATIONALISM

In the past 10-15 years we lived and followed a historical process which led to the collapse of all parts of practical life of people, collapse of a political state by imposition of private interests of a narrow elite, collapse of economy, morals, subjective rights, two-generation family, etc. That historical process in the Balkans unfolded under dominance of nationalism and conservative political idea, which led many to believe that nationalism was the prime mover of all recent developments. The conviction that a man is firstly a member of a certain nation, and only secondly a father, a husband, peasant, worker, military conscript, is wrong. That assumption can be socially dangerous when it becomes part of the political program. In the Balkans the nationalistic assumption is very old and linked to many political ideas, for example, liberals were nationalists and the socialist idea was not immune to nationalism. Hence it is excessive to link nationalism only to the conservative political idea. Nationalism in the late Twentieth Century indeed became a dominant form of mind-set of many people in the Balkans, but the unanswered question is: what conditions nationalism?

A deeper process of morphing of the neglected and abandoned socialist form of rule into an authoritarian regime, gained ground by using nationalism as its legitimacy and basis. Essentially the concept of nationalism as a dominant political program was destroyed in the WW1. But that idea was thereafter occasionally revived through other political ideas, notably Nazism or our form of rule. One can say that Franko's and Salazar's regime ruled by using nationalism. Many in this country perceived that phenomenon, even the genuine nationalists who today speak about "betrayal" of national interests by the authoritarian regime. Slovenia was also under the influence of strong nationalism, but thanks to the liberal political idea it established a liberal regime, and not an authoritarian one. To put it simply if we blame only nationalism, then we fail to grasp deeper processes which generate the very nationalism. And those processes aim to establish not only nationalistic or conservative regimes, but also the liberal ones.

Disintegration of the Soviet Union and socialism happened because of liberal and not conservative idea. And it was bound to happen. Countries of the Warsaw Pact could not keep up with the arms race imposed by the US Administration in the Eighties, without changing a totality of economic and political relations on which they rested. In the Soviet Union the very arms manufacturing became a burden for the economy because it required large funds and did not generate an adequate profit, in a stark contrast to the situation in the US. Top Soviet officials tried to loosen the state control in a process called "perestroika". That political program was not a consequence of ill intentions or amateurish policy of a single man, as many tend to think now, but was based on a good diagnosis. Poor results of the cure were due to restive character of the patient rather to wrong therapy. "Perestroika" separated the state from other spheres of social life, but failed to make those spheres independent for they developed within the system in which the state was everything. Consequence of that withdrawal of the state was a total collapse of all parts of society, even of the political state. The social fibre itself disintegrated when the aforesaid division was effected. Gorbachev himself added fuel to the flames, by accelerating international and national processes which he could no longer control. His amateurism was mirrored in the aforementioned. With the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the Communist Party and society, the good intentions of "perestroika" ended and Gorbachev was toppled in a coup which aimed at promoting a new power, a new man and a new form of rule. And a photograph of that man, Yeltsin, sitting on the tank during the coup, was ran by all the international print media.

That new form of rule was established thanks to assistance of the liberal economic idea, which enabled the new elite to seize a lot of capital, and to position its interests as the supreme interests in the political state. The state became private property both in economic and political terms. After that private capital fled to the West, and population at large was pauperised. Many think that the good aspect of that liberal policy was the fact that the military collapse of the Soviet Union, that is of Russia was avoided. But I think that such a military solution was only postponed, for the surplus of arms threatened to exacerbate the military crisis. The other important aspect was the weakness of the Russian conservative idea. The Russian nationalism had its heyday before the WW1. A further blow to the Russian conservatism and nationalism were actions of Communists, which persistently undermined that idea it and occasionally instrumentalised it (during the WW2 the nationalist thesis was incorporated into the centralist policy of Communists). But as both nationalism and conservatism were too weak, while dangers were too big, the military solution was left for more propitious, nationalism-charged times. The very regime opposed in the long-term such a development by creating single-handedly a right-wing party, to both control and deride conservatism.

As long as Russia was a regional power the aforementioned form of rule was kept in place. It suited both the international factor, as it led to territorial and civilisational carving up of Russia, and the internal one, for it led to further plundering by the elite.

We saw how such developments in the Soviet Union had been possible without nationalism and war. But why then uncontrolled nationalism and war were necessary in the former Yugoslavia?

Firstly, although the SFRY emerged when conservatism and nationalism of the two principal peoples were in principle defeated (the Serb concept of "Serbia and its Yugoslavia, and the Croat concept of Independent state of Croatia), they were still

harboured by intellectual elite and occasionally articulated by the very socialist movement. With the opening up of the country and massive economic emigration, conservative circles in emigration resumed their activities. This was due to the fact that Serbs and other peoples had to live through the phase of a national state.

Secondly: some international factors out of different motives decided to embark upon the war and they assessed that the easiest way to wage the war was by controlling and backing the conservative idea, on a small territory (which in turn meant that it would be a local war). Persistence of conservative political idea among Albanians and its results in Kosovo and Macedonia indicate that the strategy has not been abandoned.

Thirdly: the fact that in the late Eighties the liberal political idea refused to directly agree to disintegration of the country, does not mean that most federal units would have avoided authoritarian form of rule...but it means that the war would have been avoided.

Fourthly: a relatively developed independence of the economic sphere and market ethics made that sphere strongly oppose the political will. It is often overlooked that the SFRY economy was most liberal, and perhaps most successful of economies of all the socialist countries. Although it did not boast market forms of property, a managerial economy which it created could not be destroyed and plundered without the war. Great independence of economic sphere versus the political state is the most important generator of war. Elites of new states in their attempt to impose their private interests on the political state succeeded in their intent through a mixture of nationalism and demagogy, but they needed war to get money from the economic sphere. Russian and Ukrainian elite did not need war to impose their private interests on the economic sphere in contrast to the Serb, Croat, Bosnian and Vojvodina elites which had to wage war to take control over the economy. The principal cause of war was the form of rule which could not be enthroned otherwise.

DEFEAT OF THE CONSERVATIVE IDEA AT THE HAND OF MILOŠEVIĆ'S REGIME

The war started when members of the old political apparatus, key men of the repressive apparatus, even some marginal criminals, several professors of economy and several businessmen, became the elite and got what they could not dream of in socialism-private power. That new elite took key positions in the political community, and with consent of population at large, established a new form of rule in which the only principle was- realisation of private interests. They did not usurp the political state, nor imposed on others what others had not wanted. To put it simply the new form of rule exacted such individuals, although it stemmed from long traditions and weaknesses. That form of rule was established in the majority of countries of former SFRY and USSR, was not imported or imposed. Two hundred million people who live under such regimes in twenty states attest to the fact that the aforementioned form of rule was not accidental.

In the civil-liberal forms of rule private interest is a prime mover of economic society, while the political virtue is the prime mover of the political state. Therefore a man is at the same time a bourgeois (a citizen) as a member of the economic-civil society and citizen (subject) as a member of a certain political state. In the newly-emerged form

of rule things were turned upside down: the private interest became the prime mover of a political state and subjects became the prime movers of economic-civil society. That change was a key element of the new form of rule, and it suited most people from all social strata. Middle class was the least resistant to the impending change, for its members lacked self-awareness, and were too spoilt by socialism which had spawned them in the first place. They could accept anything, but could not live without those who issued them orders. Economic underdevelopment, or better said, non-civil way of economic development, a sad legacy of the patriarchal mind-set, too accelerated and facile vertical social mobility, long experience of easy and comfortable life in socialism, constant currying favour with the workers' class and peasants, led to the following situation: a large number of people preferred to be subordinate subjects in the economic society than to pursue their private interests. This in turn explains why the newly-emerged elite so easily imposed its private interests as the prime mover of the political state. International moment was not important, for Serbia and Russia would have embraced the new form of rule after the collapse of socialism, even if they had been the only states in the world. Obviously that non-imposed form of rule, simply suited those peoples.

There are difficulties in terming that form of rule. Some liken it to despotic, sultanic, dictatorial, fascist, and even Latin American regimes. But all those notions fail to cover the basic feature of that form of rule: the basic principle of that form of rule is private interest as the purpose of the political state, and obedience is the purpose of economic sphere and the world of human privation.

In the territory of former SFRY that form of rule was first established in Serbia (without provinces), where it used inherent nationalism of part of intelligentsia. Thus the polemics with the socialist idea began, not on grounds of property, administrative, economic or civilisationally different stance, but on grounds of the nationalistic stance. And the political campaign against "unjust status of the Serb people" was launched. Under such pretext in a very short period of time a very narrow circle of people usurped all levers of power. The most terrible aspect of those developments was a quick victory of nationalism. Population at large in just a few years were engulfed in the nationalistic folly and began lamenting about alleged "injustice towards Serbs". Only when Serbs were expelled from Croatia true nationalists realised that they had been manipulated by the elite. In fact true nationalists were not cheated by the corrupt elite, but they only fared as they would also fare in the future-badly.

Conservative-nationalistic rhetoric enabled take-over of the political state, but the elite could not get money or establish control over the economic sphere without plunging their own community and a large part of the Balkans into the chaos. Armed conflicts and system of pyramidal savings banks, along with hyperinflation (men were on battlefields while wives and sons made large deposits in the banks in order to get rich in few months) were not the prime movers of that chaos. Everything that had its internal purpose and order had to be destroyed, on the economic plane the ruling economic structure, which was relatively resistant to moves of the new elite, and on the political plane, the very ruling party and the opposition alike.

SPS was devalued and sidelined, because it became an obstacle, and because of its socialist legacy and relatively qualified cadres. Thus one of the most successful parties on the electoral plane in the territory of the former SFRY was sacrificed, for it became an

obstacle to business deals of the elite. That elite founded and consolidated allegedly far-right and far-left parties, which basically shared the same interests. Serbia became a state of private interests while the SPS demonstrated the inertia of the party state. As regards the opposition, it was downgraded in parallel with devaluation of SPS. Each regime either directly or indirectly creates its opposition. Duke Mihailo created Liberals, King Milan created radicals, and Milošević's regime created the majority of opposition parties. King Milan was a creator of Radicals more than Pera Todorović or Nikola Pašić, for he considered them opponents, while Milošević's regime considered the opposition as 'traitors' and rarely as 'opponents'. The kind of rule that Milošević established usually does not have opposition. Difference between the authorities and opposition rests on collision of popular will within the political state, and private interests are only negotiated. In the Yugoslav form of rule we did not have interventions of private interests in the political state, but the former were directly realised. Hence every political option vanished and became futile, for everything was reduced to personal interests. The least successful politicians King Milan and Aleksandar through crackdowns and persecutions compelled the Radical Party to close its ranks and map out a serious program. And along with the German Social-Democratic Party it became the best organised party in Europe. They did it to get the money (Milan was one of the most indebted private persons in Europe), to stay in power, to solve their problems with their wives, and finally to-survive. For the same reasons, barring indebtedness, Milošević's regime did not create any opposition party, and even managed to sideline a ruling party. Nature of the regime, and not virtues of rulers and leaders of opposition creates or does not create the opposition. Pera Todorović was in awe of King Milan, much more than leaders of the opposition were in awe of Milošević, but still there was the Timok Uprising and the 1888 Constitution with exceptional freedoms.

Political and economic rounding of the form of rule in Serbia generated the same processes in the majority of other states which had emerged from the SFRY (barring Slovenia). But the pretext for similar kind of rule in those countries was the minority, instead of majority conservatism and nationalism. In Croatia organisational and representative aspect of that rule was even more successful than in Serbia. Thanks to the war elites were finally in the situation to achieve their objectives, that is to totally destroy or take possession of national wealth of other peoples created in the past decades. Had there been no war, despite all nationalism and conservatism, authoritarian form of rule and its elite could not have consolidated themselves in Serbia, and possibly in Croatia and Vojvodina, for private interests of elite would have been defeated by independent economic structures, and opposition organisations. Therefore the war was necessary. It was accepted by relevant international factors, and even more so by elites of the warring sides.

Long war years, poverty and despair have probably exacerbated potential of spirit and freedom. However one can say that the end of war entailed a principled end of the aforementioned form of rule in the Balkans, notably in countries which had an important civil, pre-socialist experience, that is- Vojvodina. That is why the elite in Serbia did not need to stop the war, for such a development would have entailed major losses for it. In fact it stimulated war and state of war, even when it had not enemies to wage war against.

LETHAL CONSEQUENCES OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIME AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA

Two most important documents of the modern world are *Declaration on independence*, containing tenets of the American Revolution and *Declaration on Rights of Man and Citizen*, containing tenets of the French Bourgeoisie Revolution. Thirty-three year old Jefferson stated in the opening line of the first Declaration: "We deem obvious the truth that all men are born equal..." while in the second thirty-two year old Marquis Lafayette, "Hero of the Two Worlds", stated in the first article: "People are born and remain their whole life free and equal in rights. Social differences can emerge only because of general benefit". Those two young men, as young as the civil world in the making, having read Jean Jacques Rousseau, laid the groundwork of a modern epoch. According to them the basis thereof was equality of men. But people were not equal even during their revolutions, and now they are even less equal. But Jefferson and Lafayette were not wrong, for despite all external inequality of men in modern world, men were formally and abstractly understood as equal, as real persons, as economic subjects, or political personalities. Therefore equality and inequality of men cannot be separated, for people have only equal opportunities, but when they try to translate those opportunities into reality, they do it in different, unequal ways. Consequently their lives become different. People are of different sex, race, age, physical characteristics, and that cannot be changed. But the latter should not be the cause of other inequality among them. Social inequality must be based on social equality, and not on a historical or sensual one. That is why the most important inequality, the economic one, is based on legal inequality, and not on the territorial or ethnic one.

Inequality in the authoritarian form of rule is not based on the aforementioned grounds, for the principle of inequality of people in Yugoslavia was not their freedom and legal equality, but membership of elites and adherence to achievements created by that elite. Basic inequality in our community was and still is the one between the elite and the rest of citizens, and all other inequalities stem from it. That elite was so small that its members knew each other well. Members of elite have not rallied around a religious, political, conspiratorial idea, but rather made up an interest group which used the social power to grow rich and amass private wealth. To belong to an elite one does not need to belong to a specific ethnicity, or to be born in a specific territory or to have specific political leanings. Therefore even leaders of opposition parties were members of elite. It functions in accordance with the principle of privileges accorded, like once in the mercantile era, to certain members. For example a member of the elite is allowed to exploit a certain region, a certain industrial branch, or a certain city. Parts of the state apparatus are used as the means of realisation of the granted privilege. All in all the economy of privileges, typical of feudal times, is established instead of market or state economy. Because of principle of privileges, relations between members of elite are in principle of a senior-vasal character. Every member has his or her protector to whom it has to be very loyal, and his or her proteges, who must show the same kind of loyalty to them. As the system was not fully consolidated there was a lot of jockeying for positions and power and sanctioning thereof. Positions within the pyramid of elite were not similar to those in the state apparatus or even parties. Organisation and manner of functioning of elite are corporate, and falsely state-like, and not of economic character. At the top of the

elite pyramidal structure there was a prime mover or power-holder (in some states which have emerged from the former SFRY he had different titles: "the Boss", "Baba" "Father of Independence or Sovereignty".) He occupied a senior position with respect to members of elite. He depended only on foreign factors, while at home or in the country his political power and will were not limited. Members of elite were of different professional, human and intellectual profiles. There were no artists or scientists among the elite, barring the case of a Russian philosopher who has made it to the top leadership of the Russian elite. Scientists, artists and other men of spirit enjoyed the same status they had had in the pre-civil era: namely they had to ask for money and to provide entertainment.

The main motive of the elite was to maximise its profits. That greed is understandable in view of the fact that members of elite were under constant threat of losing their privileges. Those who had privileges did not have time to invest and wait. Therefore they left a trail of destruction after fulfilling their privileges, notably in agriculture or in the wood industry. Lethal consequences of such actions were felt by all population strata. But members of the elite were pressed by the very system to act so greedily and mercilessly.

All the others, or common people, were not members of the elite. Non -elite members are social strata which in a different form of rule would be separated or even confronted. Even members of former elite were downgraded to commoners, as were former middle class members, workers and intelligentsia. A vast majority of population lived in a ghetto-like environment, while only a few citizens organised themselves as free subjects. But there is inequality even among those ghettoised people: territorially speaking those closer to Belgrade, contrary to those living in the rest of the country, were closer to the elite. Belgrade got a court, balls, court gossip and intrigue, and politics during the era of Duke Mihailo, but it was gentrified or urbanised only half a century later. Serbia was a markedly agricultural county and its only income was generated by rural areas. But that income was immediately seized from peasants through the price policy, monopolies, money-lending operations. And that income has never been centralised. The State of Serbia always had problems with the budgetary deficit and foreign indebtedness, barring during the rule of Duke Miloš. Profit from rural areas always ended elsewhere, was not invested into another industrial branches, but became a personal wealth. In this way a narrow population strata was created; it gradually acquired a civil character, but not on the civil basis, for it was wealthy thanks to privileges, civil services, and state concessions. That was the key shortcoming of the Serbian civil class (bourgeoisie), and it was limited by it. As that class grew, so Belgrade grew. In that city personal wealth was flaunted. Belgrade quickly became a city of monumental buildings and even more monumental egos. When King Milan and Bontu, Director of the General Union, on the eve of announced construction of a railway network, grafted all important public figures in Serbia, and the King mostly, a lot of money flowed into Belgrade. But the reasoning that a good life can be made by selling politics also gained ground in Belgrade. That situation was magnified in the Twentieth century: what is characteristic of Belgrade today is lack of productivity of most of its citizens, privileges and corruption are source of money-amassing and high representative spending. Authoritarian form of rule was based on private interests in political affairs and privileges. Hence a new lack of scruples made a linkage with an age-old mind-set in Belgrade.

Elite rallied round itself the whole apparatus of protection. The most important institutions were those which distributed privileges, and not the police. State-directed economy has one purpose to help realise privileges, while unrealistic exchange rate, price freeze, different export and import quotas, customs, financial, market and other inspections, Agency for Evaluation of Capital, Fund for Development, Agency for Recovery of the Country, and "Serbia Forests" were only mechanisms which served the aforesaid purpose. The elite has one more lever at its disposal-corruption (Adam Smith wrote that corruption and smuggling were forces of common sense in a mindless states). Belgrade is probably the most corrupt city in the world, not because its inhabitants are too corrupt, but because for them corruption is the only hope and mode of survival. The rest of the community sees Belgrade as something alien, for they know that in order to achieve something they must go to arrogant and indecent Belgrade, in which people live better with less work, to beg for favours, to give kickbacks to resolve their problems.

There are two aspects to the problem of Belgrade as the black hole of Serbia: first, its form of rule and its elite and second, the supremacy of the old conservative idea of centralisation. To put it simply even if the form of rule were changed and the state interest prevailed over the personal one, Belgrade would remain the cancer of Serbia because of the principle of centralisation of the society. It is in the interest of Serbia to replace Belgrade with a new, self-sustainable capital, unwilling to impose its will into others. That is not a regional, but rather a civilisational problem, for it is based on the pre-modern idea of management, economy and administration. Serbia must pin its hopes on de-beogradisation of Belgrade rather than on beogradisation of Serbia.

But prospects for such a development are slim, after 150 year of wrong policy. Therefore one can expect that aspirations towards independence, or political-territorial aspirations shall grow, and not only of Vojvodina, but also of other parts of Serbia. Slowness in effecting transitional changes guarantees translating of those aspirations into reality.

LETHAL CONSEQUENCES OF COLLUSION BETWEEN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA

Authoritarian form of rule was lethal to economy because of the system of privileges of private persons in a political state. Moreover only agriculture generated any income. Our economy is in fact physiocratic, for agriculture generates most income. But in exchange it is of a mercantile character, because it rests on privileges. As Vojvodina is the most powerful agricultural region the aforementioned structure of economy has the most negative impact on that region. But economic exploitation of Vojvodina by power-holders is the peak of a long-standing process of outflow of profit from Vojvodina. Thus development of Vojvodina, once most prosperous part of the Kingdom of SCS and of the SFRY, was arrested. Ten years ago Vojvodina was as developed as Croatia, while today its income per capita is equal to the one of Albania. Currently the Croat GDP is five times greater than the one in Vojvodina, while the Slovenian one is ten times greater. It is difficult to find a more salient example of economic stagnation in Europe! Predominant agricultural character of economy has only partly contributed to that stagnation.

Vojvodina could not fully develop its economy because its income was 'transferred' to other regions, or channelled into other industrial branches.

In the last decade, since the establishment of authoritarian form of rule, spill-over of profit was not effected in an economic way. Economic exploitation was effected in two ways: by state 'interventions' and system of privileges. Vojvodina has been turned into most heavily taxed region. Mindless centralisation of all budgetary sources prevented local or provincial bodies to handle even the minimum part of the regional income. Direct state coercion is visible, but far more successful is indirect coercion, through system of privileges. Mercantile exchange of system of privileges was strengthened by relentless control of prices, personnel, investments, financial indebtedness via loans, raw materials and semi-fabricates. Such a control enabled monopolists to appropriate a much greater percentage of income than the one usually taken by budgetary means. The fact that a furniture factory in South of Serbia or a private company of a Belgrade politician has monopoly over agricultural produce, is just the tip of the iceberg or of a more powerful and better organised chain of privileges. Territory of Vojvodina was systematically plundered: from the start the top leadership set clear rules: no deals and concessions to Vojvodina, money is at stake.

Such a position of Vojvodina was not only conditioned by the form of rule. Vojvodina has not lost 1974 constitutional autonomy because of authoritarian form of rule, but because of conservative political idea. Subsequently the said form of rule, after defeating the very conservative idea, took over its legacy, including unfair treatment of Vojvodina. Conservative political idea espoused a view that autonomy of Vojvodina was against interests of Serbia (which was partially true) and that the said autonomy was created artificially without any historic and rational justification (which was not true). Since the foundation of the Kingdom of SCS the line was taken (and not only by the conservative mainstream parties and their leaders) that Vojvodina was a territory without political subjectivity, inhabited mostly by Serbs, and whose greatest political reach was their local self-rule. All the aforementioned was based on the conservative image of nation, according to which nation was perceived as something simple, and without ethnic differences, that is, Serbs from Vojvodina were seen only as Serbs, and not as individuals with their own morals, clear economic interests and pertinent political aspirations, just like other people who lived northward or southward. In view of clear social and civilisational differences there was no need to prove political subjectivity by a series of important autochthonous political movements in that territory, which often ran counter to Belgrade in the Ninetieth and Twentieth century, and were moreover spearheaded by men who considered themselves Serbs per excellence.

Nationality does not recognise comparatives: all Serbs are of Serb ethnicity, no-one can be a greater or more upright Serb, but only a cleverer, a wealthier, more courageous or narrow-minded Serb. Historical reasons for autonomy of Vojvodina have a certain power, and in the last twenty years have surpassed earlier argumentation. It can be said that even recent Šumadija settlers in Vojvodina must get political autonomy and subjectivity because of their current situation and also their future. Unprecedented economic exploitation, rejection of all self-managing moments, arrogant treatment of all institutions, Serbisation of social life, many new graves, columns of refugees, destroyed future of several generations, and the worst thing of all- \$ 900 GDP per capita (GDP is much more a spiritual than an economic category), has not happened because of

authoritarian will of only one man, as many try to depict it now. It was basically an authoritarian rule, and it rested on conservative political idea. That idea shall never comprehend Vojvodina and Serbs from Vojvodina, it is more likely to understand national minorities. Future of conservatism in Serbia is ensured through minor resistance which conservatives mounted to the authoritarian regime. But it does not mean that they have become emancipated. After ouster of authoritarian regime from Serbia, conservative idea started immediately searching for compensation. It shall probably get some compensation. Any political option in power in Serbia shall either have to make a compromise with conservatism or persecute it through repression, which in turn shall only strengthen it. The biggest evil of Serbs, conservatism, has some perspective, but this does not mean that Serbs have some perspective.

Contents of autonomy must be clear: a Central European-style autonomy must be established. But it precludes any compromise with conservative political idea. Economic, cultural, legislative, administrative autonomy are only means of realisation of claim to autonomy, and not goals in itself. Due to the strength of conservative idea, it is unlikely to see Belgrade genuinely move towards liberalism. Attempts in that direction, similar to ones made in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have only made conservative idea tactically withdraw for a while.

Long cohabitation with the Serb conservative idea, had awakened both majority and minority conservatism among Vojvodina Serbs. Minority conservatism started hyping up or extolling big Vojvodina estates, local musical instruments, specific dialect, the cult of plains, and other folklore elements. That Vojvodina conservatism can be an obstacle to establishment of a different form of rule, although it mostly opposes the majority conservatism. That paradox has been already seen in all former SFRY republics, barring Slovenia: namely the most bitter opponents of the Serb conservative idea, later embraced conservatism and authoritarian rule. In independence-gaining process the leaders of those countries opted for emulating the old pattern or model, instead of establishing a different form of rule. In fact instead of the majority conservative idea, the minority one was legitimised. The same personnel or cadres solutions were applied (notably in Montenegro). The only difference between a member of the majority conservative moment, and the current member of the minority conservatism, is -rhetoric.

To date Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Croatia have tried to abandon that form of rule in different ways. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it was attempted to directly impose the other form of rule with a clear military pressure and occupation-like elements, all of which was perhaps in the interest of population. Results of that attempt were modest, and occasionally even contrary to intent. Future outcome of such solution is very uncertain, for the civil liberty is being imposed (and it is not an external element to be imposed). Napoleon experienced a crushing defeat in Spain when he tried to impose on underdeveloped Spaniards substantive liberties. It is written down in history that Solon wisely noted that he gave to denizens of Athens the most free laws they could tolerate! Serbs and Croats resorted to negotiated imposition and internal development of other form of rule. The latter had won at the elections, but it remains to be seen whether the mind-set of population at large can tolerate that new form of rule. Vojvodina stand best chances of embracing the new form of rule, but only if it gets highest-degree autonomy. If it gets autonomy along the lines of a separate (minority) conservative idea, than its prospects are bleak. Exaggerations about specific features of Vojvodina shall abound and

mindless claims to full use of mother tongue and religious rights, common denominators of the minority conservatism, shall be voiced. Vojvodina must base its autonomy not on the past rights, but on the future rights: the right of men to live in a wise system.

Vojvodina is currently in a situation of total non-subjectivity, in economic, political, cultural, legal, sports and demographic one (demographic trends in Vojvodina have resulted from war and political actions, and not free will of people.) Even its name is repressed and substituted with the term Northern Serbia, which means that it is reduced to a geographic notion. Vojvodina does not have subjectivity, because the state of Serbia has laid claim to unlimited external and internal sovereignty. That idea was the first modern political idea of the Serb people, and was floated in the first half of the Nineteenth century as the conservative political idea. Its most important and most intellectual representative was Ilija Garašanin. He understood internal sovereignty as an unlimited right of the state to rule over its subjects: "Tell everyone that they shall manage their economic affairs, while they need not worry about state affairs. As the state shall not interfere into private affairs of its subjects, so the subjects need not interfere into the matters of state".

The Police Code laid down full non-subjectivity of citizens with respect to administration, and accorded to the police officials discretionary right to mete out physical punishment. Subject of state of Serbia was beaten under law, but without any justification. Administration was there to rule, and subjects were there to obey. Garašanin determined external sovereignty of Serbia in 1844 when he passed several key amendments to Zah's Plan: that amended document is known as "Načertanije". That text, in accordance with the aristocratic idea which had spawned it, had a permanent character. In 1883 Austria got hold of copy of "Nečartanije", while the entire text was officially made public only in 1906, in the Radical Party review "Delo". The Radical leader Nikola Pašić a month later became Prime Minister and embarked upon a campaign of unification of South Slav peoples living in the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empire. After its publication the document became the program of action of the Serbian policy, with and without Pašić. Guidelines of "Načertanije" are the following: "The basis of the Serbian policy is that it is not limited to current borders, but tends to incorporate all neighbouring peoples". Zah and Garašanin thus explain the principle of territorial expansion: "For this goal we need loyal and sharp-minded men to assess status of those peoples and countries, notably Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Northern Albania, and to submit to us relevant reports in writing. They also have to assess situation in Slavonia, Croatia and Dalmatia, and status of peoples of Srem, Baranja and Bačka". What stems from the aforementioned is that the state bodies of Serbia as subjects, treated neighbouring Slav people as masses without subjectivity to be moulded at will. Even the Roman-Catholic denomination of some citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina was not seen as an obstacle to their incorporation into the Serb national being. The reason for such optimistic stand was both Garašanin's and Zah's reductionist understanding of the being of people, for both saw the state link as the only key basis of nation.

Garašanin's "Načertanije" was an attempt to replace a pre-civil, even pre-feudal, mythological, ethnic link, what the Serb people were, with a modern, political link. The fact that Christianity has not imbued the Serb being, that they developed only a small number of forms of mind-set of modern world, and a small number of modern institutions, made Garašanin decide to expand Serbia to incorporate them, to vanquish

them, and compel them to accept rudimentary modern forms of customs which have been developed in Serbia. The character of that idea, the Greater Serbia or Yugoslav one, is unrelated to Garašinin and population, but is in fact linked to political inclinations of later-day historians. The problem did not lie in Garašanin's program, but in attempts to implement basic tenets thereof, even when descendants of Garašanin developed many important institutes, and when the groundwork for moral awareness, economy and political virtue was laid.

That program was not feasible even when it was adopted, because of its character and not the then prevailing set of circumstances. In 150 years the Serb people evolved into a modern people who were civilisationally, economically, spiritually and politically constituted differently than in Garašanin's epoch. Attempt to implement the key Garašanin's stand on full external and internal sovereignty of the country, in the late Eighties of the Twentieth century, ended unexpectedly in an authoritarian form of rule. And Serbs faced total internal and external non-sovereignty. On the external plane Serbia was latently occupied, while on the internal plane it was usurped by private interests and privileges. Consequences of original intents were indeed incredible !

All social strata and ethnic entities which once enjoyed subjectivity or independence were destroyed or suspended. But those subjectivities had to be re-established. Social independence and subjectivity had to be re-established together with ethnic and territorial ones. If we want recovery of social structure along the lines of modern societies, that is, rehabilitation of rich and middle strata, and even of the poorest ones, differences have to be established along political-territorial lines. Autonomy of Vojvodina is necessary for Serbia must be politically and territorially unequal, in order to be socially unequal. If we want to rehabilitate the sphere of subjective rights of men, then we must rehabilitate Vojvodina too, for the highest subjective right of man is to decide on his legal status. If we aspire to re-establish moral awareness of men, we must know that the political conviction is based on the basic principle of morals: a man has the right to decide in line with his subjective conviction. The latter means that we cannot prevent the right of Vojvodina population to autonomy even on moral grounds. If we want to establish a more developed economic society, we must recognise the right of people to dispose of profit which they generate. But citizens of Vojvodina cannot do that, if they are deprived of autonomy. And finally if we want a sensible and just political community, we must recognise the right of separate regions to independence. Vojvodina must get independence, not because of narrow-minded attitude of others, but because of basic principles of modern social order.

Obstacles to that process are created in Belgrade, in which the largest number of conservatives and their followers live, but also in Vojvodina. Vojvodina has three ethnic entities, not quite differentiated, mostly because of mixed marriages and short historical memory: domicile Serbs (earlier settlers), Serb settlers (recent settlers) and other peoples (who have settled in the region in different epochs and times). Basic obstacle for establishing a proper form of rule among domicile population is the minority conservative political idea, which relies on inherent Vojvodina conservatism. That conservatism is mirrored in the cult of land, which generates zero population growth (as the land cannot be divided, most parents tend to keep their children at home, to work the land, instead of sending them to high schools and universities). Domicile or indigenous Serbs are less upward mobile due to their inherent conservatism and limited education,

and not because of competition in the shape of new settlers. They strongly dislike any changes, even those for the better. They live a closed life within their families, harbour their national myths and are intolerant. Thus they are unlikely to welcome the impending economic, spiritual and civilisational changes. Although they favour autonomy of Vojvodina, they are the stratum least likely to accept social changes brought by that autonomy. That ethnic stratum shall be successful in the future only if it relinquishes its rural and conservative stands. Serb settlers are more socially successful than domicile ones, but they also represent a bigger obstacle to autonomy of Vojvodina. Although they were economically, culturally and politically promoted in their new 'homeland,' the majority of those Serbs embraced the conservative idea, as manifested by their very disciplined voting for the right-wing parties. Unlike Serbs in Serbia proper, new settlers in Vojvodina have embraced a strong conservative-nationalistic mythomania, false heroes and images, and false patriarchal customs. The status of "still unadjusted ethnic community" accounts for the aforementioned. Majority of new settlers only rooted for the conservative idea, despite their rapid impoverishment, while some of them managed to attain mid- and high-level positions within the elite. Although they by and large oppose autonomy, they are likely to be the prime mover of the new form of rule generated by that autonomy because of their upward mobility and demographic power. And then new Serb settlers shall adjust and even become better advocates of Vojvodina than the domicile Serbs. Consequently they will forget their original customs and dialects.

Members of other peoples in Vojvodina are currently in the worst predicament. They have lost the most, for they lost their ethnic autonomy. Their political organisations within our social and political system are of little importance. Policies and actions of their political parties more frequently than not played into the hands of the regime, and not because members of those ethnic communities paid regularly utilities, and telephone bills, kept silent, tolerated everything, and responded to call-ups. All that in turn produced the minority conservatism and ghettoisation. Many of them have emigrated. While younger Serbs emigrated to Canada and New Zealand, young people from Vojvodina went overseas and to their domicile countries. Non-Serb population of Vojvodina is in such a predicament that either autonomy of Vojvodina or new form of rule are unlikely to enhance its spiritual, economic and demographic status. The time is perhaps running out for any such improvement. But they will have a good future only if they are guaranteed the same rights which they had had under the 1974 Constitution. As we know that a national minority is not equal to the majority people, if it is not privileged, then, because of the degree of deprivation with which non-Serb ethnic communities in Vojvodina are faced, the future form of rule must ensure them a high *jus privilegium*.

It is certain that both domicile Serbs and Serb settlers, each in their own way, shall be obstacles to attainment of Vojvodina's autonomy. Therefore, in that process the foreign factor shall play an important role. Both domicile and settler Serbs have been spiritually, economically and demographically benumbed because of a long-running influence of conservatism and authoritarian form of rule. One can say that autonomy of Vojvodina would not be attainable if it depended only on Serbs from Vojvodina, or if they were to achieve it single-handedly. This is perhaps a favourable circumstance, for it removes all illusions about a full sovereignty of Vojvodina. But there is another aspect which has a bearing on future of Vojvodina: alike other neighbouring and Central European countries, Vojvodina needs a brand new sovereignty.

AND THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL IDEA?

Twice in the Twentieth century Serbian conservatism destroyed the state of the Serb people, by instigating conservatism of other peoples and invoking evil. Deftly manipulated by some international factors the contemporary Serbian conservatism spawned the evil authoritarian form of rule, which had defeated it. Then conservatism then put the blame for failure of its own program squarely on the shoulders of the regime. In the meantime the very authoritarian regime imploded, and its main exponent ended in the Hague Tribunal jail. But we are currently concerned with the following possibility: that conservatism shall survive and is likely to produce new monsters of social life.

Notes:

1. We do not know if any thinker has more seriously linked the two planes. Even Slobodan Jovanović in his renowned book on the Constitution-Defenders did not link Garašanin's foreign policy ideas to basics ideas of his internal policy. The same applied to Vasa Čubrilović, who in his book "History of Political Thought in Serbia of the Ninetieth Century" gave a wide berth to Garašanin's internal political ideas. Historians were more interested in using "Načertanije" to legalise their own political positions. National historiography, usually impassioned, seems to be even more so when it comes to its comments of texts on "Načertanije". It is understandable, for according to theoretical stances of historiography, history is something unchangeable, hence contemporary political ideas are projected into the past, in order to gain legitimacy. That historical method is a throwback to the Pharisee interpretation of Thorah, for they had either to interpret differently or doctor Thorah, in order to codify a new phenomenon. True is only what has been, and what has been must, find a basis in the past. Historiography, not only the national one, is in fact a Pharisee science.

2. Zah does not mention neighbouring Slavic peoples, but emphasises that Serbia must pursue a pro-South Slav policy.

3. Expansion is obviously to be effected in two stages: first Slavs in Turkey (Northern Albania was then considered a much larger territory than the one covered by

the current Albania), and then South Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be liberated.

4. If the aforementioned patriarchal basis of the being of the Serb people outside Serbia, alike the one of the akin population, is taken into account, then discussions on the character (is it Greater Serbian, or Yugoslav program) of Garašanin's "Načertanije" become mindless. That program is an attempt to replace a pre-civil, even pseudo-feudal, mythological, ethnic link with the modern, political one. Due to the fact that Christianity has not imbued the being of those people, and the lack of any institution or institute of the new epoch, makes Garašanin think that the state of Serbia should be expanded to include them too, to impose on them rudimentary forms of customs laws which have been developing in Serbia. The character of that idea -either a Greater Serbian one or Yugoslav one- is not related to that population, but rather to political orientations of later historians. The problem does not lie in Garašanin's program, but rather in attempts to realise basic principle of that program, when the offspring of the local population has already started enjoying many important institutes of modern world, and had a developed moral mind-set, economic customs and political virtues (all of which happened in the Twentieth Century).

5. page 3

6. "What benefits could non-Hungarians draw from the 1848 liberal laws in Hungary? They were tailored to Hungarian needs and liberal only for them" (page 17)

7. page 19

8. page 23

9. page 38

10. He writes about subjectivity of free will: "Recognition of personality in every man is a result of a long historical process. It is quite natural that a man, who is at the same time a subject and object, in his personal striving had to encounter again his personal life, which moreover became an impediment, because it too had a personal aspiration. Removal of this obstacle is only a natural consequence of the natural human instinct to subjugate to his will all that limits his striving".

11. page 18 (It bears stressing that all this was written in 1862 which indicates that Polit-Desančić was a great expert in customs processes of civil Europe.

12. Those systems in which a state is evenly arranged are called real systems. Real systems are usually characterised by a high degree of centralisation. In centralised states central authorities fully control lower authorities, and even manipulate them. (pages 32 and 33)

13. It is quite understandable that a real system alongside centralisation is not good for multi-nation states. Such systems presuppose repression against nationalities, which in turn grow disgruntled and separatism-minded.

Bach tried to introduce in Austria a real system with excessive centralisation. He thought it would guarantee national unity. But that system was not natural for Austria, and consequently produced many negative consequences. Whoever thinks that a real system with constitutional forms can be implemented in Austria, is wrong. Even the most liberal constitution could not defend non-German nationalities from German influence and Germans. Non-German nationalities shall always feel the impact of a superior German culture, and will have to take a lower position. (pages 33/34)

National state is a legal state as long as it has liberal institutions, for freedom and rights are correlative notions. Hence no national state should be allowed to morph into a dictatorship. (pages 16 and 17)

14. page 15

15. History of Serb people, namely the one between the world wars and the late-Twentieth century history, indicate how true and accurate that Polit-Desančić's insight was. One can say that the majority conservative idea twice destroyed a multi-national state in which Serb people lived. Were it not for substantial and purer reasons, we would have to agree with Polit-Desančić's assertion that multi-national state established on this conservative idea is impossible, just because of that historic experience.

16. As at the end of his long life he saw the creation of a state uniting all Serb people, but in community with other peoples, in case of re-print of the said essay he would have probably added the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, to the list of the states who unless federalised, would disintegrate.

17. page 150

18. page 161 and 162

19. page 164

20. page 165

21. In the Balkans peninsula there were different state creations, since the Great migrations and Osmanlic conquest. But they all had a common feature: none of them became a powerful, unified state. Four peoples, Romanians, Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs, lost successively their independence when one of them became too powerful and expansive. Bulgarians conquered Serbs, and later Serbs conquered Bulgaria. On the other hand Byzantine empire which had incorporated both Serbia and Bulgaria, at one stage was threatened by the Great Serbian Empire". Polit-Desančić's analysis of history of Balkans showed that all historical rights of some Balkans peoples are based on mythical elements and distortion of history. Polit-Desančić as a true liberal rejects any historical right, and dispenses with incorporation of a mythological basis into a historical expose.

22. pages 151 and 152

23. page. 170

24. pages 166 and 167

25. Structure of confederation is such that its basis is made of the Serb-Bulgarian federation, and parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire should join it. Polit-Desančić thought that division of Bosnia and Herzegovina along the Vebas line was feasible, and that only Albanians, of all the Balkan states, should not have a confederal unit, because they were not ready for it. He thought that there should be no reprisals against and expulsion of Muslims, but they should be instead given certain autonomous areas, and guaranteed everywhere a religious autonomy.

26. The Serb army in 1906 had 11 divisions, that is 365 soldiers, while the Bulgarian one had 18 divisions with many more soldiers. Serbia had only 85,000 rifles, while Bulgaria had 248,000 rifles.

27. Vujić Mihailo, "The latest shift in the trade policy", page 183, Belgrade, 1903

28. Kosta Stojanović: "Collapse and resurrection of Serbia", the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences Archives, page 145

29. People on the ground felt lethal consequences of policy towards Macedonian Slavs. Head of Bitolj police sent the following report to Belgrade: "It is sad that people

from these areas have such poor ideas about fulfilment of their basic civic duties. In fact we should immediately stop taking their military conscripts, for they are not ready for any sacrifice. In the Turkish empire they did not serve the army and did not care for their Turkish homeland. We have liberated them from the Turkish slavery, but have immediately imposed on them heavy taxes. And recently there was that bloody war too in which they had to take part. No wonder that they started openly talking about their better life under Turks".

30. "In my life there were moments when I was close to death, but this is doubtless the most difficult moment of my life, for it is still uncertain whether our people with three names shall unite, or after many victims and glorious successes shall remain separated. Difficulties and dangers posed by our enemies have been removed. But now we are facing unexpected difficulties originating from views and motives of our brothers, who have long been under foreign influence and thus unconsciously imbibed some viewpoints of our enemies. Instead of striving to effect a speedy unification, to ensure to our people an independent and state, and become masters of the Yugoslav state, and to arrange it as our majority wants, we are now concerned about the post-unification developments. The fear, planted by a foreign hand in our intelligentsia, that their own brothers may gain the upper hand in the future state, is very palpable and prevents natural course of developments. All this made me unwillingly agree to a joint work, instead of discord, regarding the resolution of the following issue: shall we have one or more states? That decision was also prompted by the fact that many Serbs joined Trumbić and company...they inexplicably decided to join "Yugoslavia" instead of "Serbia". In acting so they demonstrated their intention to weaken and isolate Serbia, although Serbia sacrificed itself to forge Slav unity. In that most difficult moment of my life, when the question of unification was resolved, I bravely faced humiliation of Serbia and my personal humiliation...I sacrificed everything for the national unity, because I was firmly convinced that our people shall undo the injustice and provide recognition to Kingdom of Serbia".

31. A series of historians interpreted the text as direct instructions about unification of Vojvodina with Serbia. But the text only vaguely implies such a conclusion.