



**What was the role of Tudjman and Milosevic in the creation and advancement of propaganda, and in what way did it lead to the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1991?**

Ana Wassermann

**Bachelor Thesis in History, Spring 2021**

Universitet i Stavanger

**Table of contents**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                                  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2. Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian propaganda</b> | <b>6</b>  |
| 2.1 The SANU Memorandum                                 | 6         |
| 2.2 Development of propaganda in Serbia                 | 9         |
| <b>3. Franjo Tudjman and the Croatian propaganda</b>    | <b>12</b> |
| 3.1 The question of Croatian sovereignty                | 12        |
| 3.2 Tudjman enters the political stage                  | 14        |
| <b>4. The collapse of Yugoslavia</b>                    | <b>18</b> |
| 4.1 Propaganda war                                      | 18        |
| 4.2 The use of clever tactics in propaganda             | 21        |
| <b>5. Concluding remarks</b>                            | <b>24</b> |
| <b>List of cited sources</b>                            | <b>27</b> |

## 1. Introduction

It is quite often a human desire to solve conflicts, but conflicts can not be solved if they are not properly understood and evaluated. Understanding the Yugoslavian conflict comes with its own difficulties. It is very hard to encompass a conflict that has its roots as far as the Croat and Serb existence, and their demand to have their own sovereign countries. If briefly examined, nationalism seems to be the easy answer to the cause of Yugoslavian wars that started in 1991. Nationalist causes are so easily pinned on wars, yet examining this conflict with the help of experts in this area, I came to realize that some other causes are more significant, since the conflict is still far from resolved. Suppressed nationalist feelings have existed since the beginning of Yugoslavia, but the clever ways the elite evoked them is far more crucial than nationalism as an ideology itself.

This thesis focuses on two key players in the Yugoslavian conflict as well their use of propaganda to incite nationalism. The thesis is split in three main sections and the first is about the President of Serbia Slobodan Milosevic. There have been many events in Milosevic's climb to power, but I focus on the two most significant ones. Through my research I noticed the lack of discussion about the importance of the SANU Memorandum for Milosevic's career and a better overview of who he was and what were his goals. The 1980s were a turning point for Serbia, the government stopped censoring the nationalist agenda and in fact allowed the media to promote it. The second crucial event for Milosevic was the ceremony of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, where he officially began his career as a protector and saviour of Serbs from the Kosovar Albanians and with that he became the face of propaganda.

The second section examines president of Croatia Franjo Tudjman. Here it was necessary to highlight the atmosphere in Croatia and the question of Croatian sovereignty during the late 1960s for two reasons. The first being the Croatian spring which was an intense and passionate effort of Croatian academics including Tudjman to not merge all Balkan languages in one Yugoslav language. This was the first larger patriotic attempt of Tudjman and his fellow academics to give Croatia and other countries for that matter more independence within the Yugoslavian Confederation, which then connects to the second reason of Croatian Spring being a coincidental setup for Tudjmans future political career. The section then further explores that Tudjmans efforts in the beginning of his involvement in politics were patriotic rather than nationalistic, and similarly to Milosevic he was branded a

nationalist or even an ultranationalist by both foreign and domestic media. Lastly I explore the development and the use of propaganda in Croatia and how similarly to Milosevic, Tudjman became the poster man of Croatian decade long struggle for independence. The two first sections mainly explore who Milosevic and Tudjman were and how they came to be the most powerful people in their respective countries. It is always problematic to psychoanalyze historical figures, but comparing their political stance and motives prior to and after fame gives one an overview of their character and personality. This becomes crucial when after 1987 they either purposely or unintentionally created personas that helped them be the face of propaganda. This persona was not necessarily who either Milosevic or Tudjman were, but after receiving large scale support for their political objectives, they continued to feed and enjoy the popularity and therefore used propaganda to stay in power.

In the third section I look at how was propaganda used prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia. The use of propaganda was based on multiple factors, but the most significant one was the poor economic situation that Yugoslavia found itself after Josip Broz Tito's death. Another factor was the constant examination of history to prove that each state deserved a stronger independence within the federation or full sovereignty, and the constant manipulation of historical facts in order to portray one nation as victim and the other as oppressor. This constant bittering was highlighted by the media. Representation of Milosevic and Tudjman as politicians worthy of people's respect and admiration worked wonders. Even though the thesis is concerned primarily on the Yugoslav presidents, people's mentality and desires are extremely crucial in this conflict. It is truly fascinating how easily Tito's famous slogan "brotherhood and unity" lost its importance, and people turned against each other in such a small span of time. As propaganda can be and was immensely damaging, neither the presidents or the media called for violence. The presidents and their political advisors sought to find an acceptable resolution for all states within the Federation.

In order to investigate just how large and significant was Milosevic's and Tudjman's role in propaganda and the eventual collapse, it was necessary for me to use both primary and secondary sources. As primary sources I examined extracts of presidents speeches, as well as video archives and evaluated them in their context. The speeches were not the foundation of my research, but rather served to grasp their characters and to see how they portray themselves to the people. The secondary sources on the other hand gave me numerous discussions and viewpoints on this issue. Since this conflict is quite complex and still a part

of active debate in Balkan, I have tried to stay away from personal opinions. However my thesis still concerns itself with different perspectives on this issue, which I tried to include. Since each of the sources tried to solve their own research questions, I have therefore quite equally represented and used all of them. I focus on providing the answer to the thesis question, but to an extent my thesis also serves to challenge the misrepresentation of Milosevic and Tudjman and their political careers. Both the domestic and foreign media were and still are so easily choosing sides in this conflict, and oftenly portraying both presidents in the wrong light, so in order to move forward one must acknowledge the media's constant manipulation of this conflict.

## 2. Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian propaganda

### 2.1 The SANU Memorandum

Slobodan Milosevic was born in Pozarevac in 1941, as a second son to Montenegrin immigrants, regarded as 'untypical' child, he was not interested in sports, avoided school trips and used to come to school dressed in the old-fashioned way white shirt and a tie.<sup>1</sup> While in upper secondary school he fell in love with his schoolmate Mirjana Markovic, and it is widely believed that Mirjana was the driving force behind her future husband's career.<sup>2</sup> After receiving his law degree from the Belgrade University, he went into business administration, ultimately becoming president of a Belgrade bank.<sup>3</sup> Being a longtime communist he joined the Communist Party of Yugoslavia when he was eighteen years old, and then became the leader of the Belgrade Communist Party in 1984.<sup>4</sup> In February 1986, he was recommended by the previous office-holder Ivan Stambolic, and then on December 14, 1987 he was chosen as the president of the Serbian Communist Party.<sup>5</sup> Although he was now an important man in the Yugoslavian politics, Milosevic was either ignored or despised by the public in Serbia.<sup>6</sup> In fact in 1986, surveys showed that 40 percent of Serbs did not wish to become members of the Communist Party, meaning many did not see eye to eye with Milosevic's ideas.<sup>7</sup>

Milosevic came to power as a Titoist supporting the existence of Yugoslavia, he was a loyal supporter of Socialism.<sup>8</sup> 1987 was the most significant year to come in Milosevic's life, it set him on a path of power and influence of propaganda. In 1986, a group of twenty-seven intellectuals from the Serbian Academy of Sciences published a Memorandum that claimed that the Serbian population of Kosovo and Croatia was under threat of ethnic genocide.<sup>9</sup> Essentially, the SANU Memorandum recalled the Serbian national agenda from the late 19th and early 20th century, calling for "the liberation and unification of the entire Serb people and the establishment of a Serb national and state community on the whole Serb territory".<sup>10</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup> Judah, Tim. *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. 2nd ed., Yale University Press, 2000. p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, Richard C. *War in the Balkans: an Encyclopedic History from the Fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Breakup of Yugoslavia*. ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2014. p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Harmon, Gail. "War in the Former Yugoslavia", (Boston College, 2007). p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> West, Richard. *Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia*. Faber and Faber Ltd Bloomsbury House, 2012. p. 332.

<sup>7</sup> Geyer, Dona, and Marie-Janine Calic. *A History of Yugoslavia*. Purdue University Press, 2019. p. 258

<sup>8</sup> Biserko, Sonja. *Yugoslavia's Implosion: the Fatal Attraction of Serbian Nationalism*. Norwegian Helsinki Committee U.a., 2012. p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> Hall, 359-360.

<sup>10</sup> Biserko, 82-83.

document was criticized from within the academy itself and provoked much heated debate in political circles in the first half of 1987.<sup>11</sup> The document also fueled negative stereotypes about other Yugoslav peoples, especially Croats, which were, according to the document, perceived as a major threat to the existence of Yugoslavia due to their alleged separatist pursuits.<sup>12</sup> The Memorandum had therefore provided an ideological platform for Milosevic to develop his political program and set the stage for propaganda that was going to become Milosevic's best weapon. His desire to preserve Yugoslavia attracted the support of Yugoslav People's Army(YPA), which was the most powerful federal institution invested in the survival of the federation.<sup>13</sup> Early on, Milosevic abstained from commenting and getting into the debate on nationalist manifestations, while at the same time avoiding to publicly criticize the SANU Memorandum.<sup>14</sup>

The 1980s were years of Albanian national awakening, and the Serbian media was already using propaganda techniques showing only one side of the conflict, and was full of stories describing beating, rape and other types of violence committed by Albanians in Kosovo.<sup>15</sup> Second event that secured Milosevic's position in politics was that in reaction to Albanian secessionism, on 24 April 1987, Stombolic had sent Milosevic to Kosovo for moral support to Kosovo Serbs. While his mission was to pacify the people, Milosevic did exactly the opposite, he watched as thousands of Serbs were beaten back by the (mainly ethnic Albanian) civilian police and said 'Nobody should dare beat you, no one has the right to beat you', and then spent hours listening to their grievances.<sup>16</sup> His first visit to Kosovo made him aware of the potency of nationalism and marked a turning point in the treatment of the Kosovo problem.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it is widely believed that Milosevic cleverly avoided saying anything about the Memorandum, but using its nationalistic ideals in the Kosovo cause goes to show that he was an opportunist telling different audiences different things in order to gain their support.<sup>18</sup> Milosevic's stunt in Kosovo enthroned him as a Tsar and a saviour of Kosovar Serbs, from that point on he used the issue of the Kosovo Serbs for his political rise, he

---

<sup>11</sup> Udovički, Jasminka, and James Ridgeway. *Burn This House: the Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*. Duke University Press, 2000. p. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Biserko, 83.

<sup>13</sup> Udovički, 90.

<sup>14</sup> Biserko, 87.

<sup>15</sup> Bozic, Agneza. "The Rhetoric of Slobodan Milosevic and War on the Territory of Yugoslavia." *Western Michigan University*, ScholarWorks@WMU, 2017. p. 91

<sup>16</sup> Benson, Leslie. *Yugoslavia: A Concise History*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001. p. 149.

<sup>17</sup> Biserko, 89.

<sup>18</sup> Judah, 160.

eventually removed his old friend Stambolic as he began to consolidate all power in Serbia for himself.<sup>19</sup>

It must be noted that from an outside perspective and what the media has shown, Milosevic's political position could be described as that of a dedicated communist, a supporter of the cause for Communism.<sup>20</sup> However, people who worked close to him said that this "true believer" behavior was just a pose, and as all other politicians at the time in Yugoslavia, he used Communism primarily to gain power. So it would not be surprising that Milosevic switched to nationalism and the idea of Greater Serbia for the sole reason of staying in power. While Milosevic used nationalism as a tool to gain power, he still heavily relied on the support of people who formed a crucial spiritual and intellectual base.<sup>21</sup> Since the historical record of his life shows that he had no nationalistic tendencies towards Serbia prior to his visit to Kosovo, it can be assumed that he was not a nationalist even though the international and domestic media has been very vocal that he was, and as a matter of fact still is. Furthermore, to consolidate his power to a greater extent, on the 8th Session of the Party Committee in September 1987, Milosevic criticized any attempt at accusing Party leaders of nationalism and he then renounced it: "Serbian nationalists would do the greatest harm to the Serbian people today by what they offer ... namely isolating the Serbian people."<sup>22</sup> Yet, the people he chose to surround himself with and give the party positions to were closeted nationalists, and orthodox communists, for whom only a one-party socialist Yugoslavia was possible.<sup>23</sup> Being outspokenly against nationalism, but never dismissing the idea of Greater Serbia and the SANU Memorandum, while simultaneously encircling himself with people who were nationalists, show that he was above all an opportunist. Today one can see he simultaneously pursued strong independent Greater Serbia or and a Serb-dominated, centralistic Yugoslavia.<sup>24</sup> However his switch to create a greater Serbia emerged only early in 1991 in response to the threat of Croatia's secession.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 162.

<sup>20</sup> Bozic, 58.

<sup>21</sup> MacDonald, David Bruce. *Balkan Holocausts?: Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia*. Manchester University Press, 2002. p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> Bogoeva, Julija. *From Lies to Crimes: the Milošević Switch from Communism to Nationalism as State Policy*. Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, 2014. p. 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Meier, 72.

<sup>25</sup> Naimark, Norman M., and Holly Case, editors. *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*. Stanford Univ. Press, 2003. p. 199-200.

## 2.2 Development of propaganda in Serbia

The use of propaganda and Milosevic's nationalistic rhetoric started playing a larger role in 1989. He became president of Serbia on 8 May 1989, but the real ceremony was timed to coincide with the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo.<sup>26</sup> The Kosovo battle has become one of the key events in Serbian national mythology and the Serbian Orthodox Church as well as the 20th-century Serb nationalists would portray the battle 'as a moral and spiritual victory for the Serbs'.<sup>27</sup> Milosevic cleverly exploited history, so the spectacle was set up purely for the benefit of the Serbian people in order to cement his growing personal power.<sup>28</sup> At this event Milosevic spoke the words that changed his political career, he managed to transform his image from a faceless bureaucrat to a charismatic Serb leader that people could trust.<sup>29</sup> His speeches and his persona became the face of the propaganda. It can be seen from the speech that he was very much against dividing people into Albanians and Serbs, and went as far as to distinguish progressive people that care about "brotherhood and unity" from the nationalists that seek division and revolution.<sup>30</sup> However the nationalists that Milosevic had a problem with were the Kosovo nationalists. Milosevic wanted to join both Kosovo and Vojvodina to Serbia, and in that way exercise more power, because he believed that the autonomy of these provinces only made Serbia weaker. Milosevic was looking out for Serbs and not Albanians, even though in his speeches he made sure he condemned nationalism, he definitely did not show it with his political decisions.

Milosevic presented himself as someone whom both Serb nationalists and communists alike could pin their hopes on, since he encouraged Serbia's interests, strongly opposed multiparty democracy, while at the same time proposing liberal economic reforms.<sup>31</sup> Milosevic used mass rallies extensively because they served as the major instrument of his more personal communication and connection with the people. His persona soon became a driving force for the Serbian propaganda. The popularity Milosevic enjoyed is very well explained by Ivan Stambolic: "The Serb people worshipped him like a god and believed that by identifying themselves with him they would become celestial."<sup>32</sup> Therefore by 1989,

---

<sup>26</sup> Judah, 163.

<sup>27</sup> Somerville, Keith. *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred: Historical Development and Definitions*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. p. 67.

<sup>28</sup> MacDonald, 71.

<sup>29</sup> Bozic, 60.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>31</sup> Geyer, 261.

<sup>32</sup> Biserko, 93.

Milosevic had acquired an unchallengeable personal position through a mixture of Communist methods and nationalist rhetoric, and out of the eight votes in the federal government, he controlled four: Serbia, Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro.<sup>33</sup> Milosevic or 'Slobo' as crowds used to chant his name, became a cornerstone of Serbian hopes and ambitions, his speeches were popular and persuasive with the masses, and propaganda became an essential part of his strategy.<sup>34</sup> The charismatic style of Milosevic's rhetoric becomes even more apparent in the emotional appeal to the Serbian pride and to the Serbian glorious past.<sup>35</sup>

In his study of mass persuasion techniques, Oliver Thomson described propaganda as 'the manipulation of public opinion' and the 'management of collective attitudes' by use of both 'political' and 'significant symbols' that represent state power and national culture.<sup>36</sup> Once Milosevic gained the support of the military leadership by defending Titoism and the existence of Yugoslavia, he chose the editorial staffs of Yugoslavia's major media outlets, especially the daily Politika, the weekly Nin, and state television.<sup>37</sup> The new staff that Milosevic replaced with friends and allies were skilled propaganda experts and were able to turn all sorts of events and tragedies to his advantage.<sup>38</sup> One of the most effective weapons for building nationalism seems to be the uncovering of (semi-)hidden massacres, so the Serbian paper, Belgrade's Politika was just one of many news outlets that ran the stories of atrocities committed by the Ustasha and the NDH.<sup>39</sup> In fact, media used the term 'genocide' constantly in the late 1980s and early 1990s – to recall the murders of Serbs at the Jasenovac concentration camp during the Second World War II and to portray Serbs as the victims was the most used theme in the media.<sup>40</sup> Serbia was of course not the only country with such high emphasis on propaganda, the Yugoslav countries that used to be united in brotherhood for several decades, at the end of 1980s converted their media (almost all state-owned) into machine guns spewing propagandist history images, symbols and messages.<sup>41</sup> Milosevic truly held a lot of power and influence; he surrounded himself with nationalist intellectuals and he

---

<sup>33</sup> Harmon, 136.

<sup>34</sup> Finlan, Alastair. *The Collapse of Yugoslavia, 1991-99*. Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2004. p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Bozic, 70.

<sup>36</sup> MacDonald, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Biserko, 91.

<sup>38</sup> Judah, 162.

<sup>39</sup> Hayden, Robert M. *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*. Leiden Boston, 2013. p. 40.

<sup>40</sup> Ramet, 308.

<sup>41</sup> Delić, Amela. "Medium Is a Weapon: Bias in Crisis Situations." *In Medias Res*, vol. 9, no. 17, 2020, pp. 2753–2774., doi:10.46640/imr.9.17.10.

let the media portray him as a messiah of the Serbs.<sup>42</sup> However, while no nationalist himself, Milosevic opened the Pandora's box that forever changed the future of Yugoslavian politics, and he was a key player when it came to providing himself as a base for nationalist propaganda.<sup>43</sup> Milosevic's regime therefore provided a climate for the unrestricted expression of nationalist attitudes, and the widespread revision of Serbian history.<sup>44</sup> Since propaganda was an essential part of Milosevic politics and he has typically been viewed as the prime mover in developments during these years, it can be determined that his role was crucial in the downfall of Yugoslavia.

---

<sup>42</sup> Somerville, 74.

<sup>43</sup> MacDonald, 65.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 67.

### 3. Tudjman and the Croatian propaganda

As Serbia, all other countries within the federation had leaders that had the key role in politics during the collapse of Yugoslavia. Yet, western historians have primarily been interested in Milosevic and Tudjman. Franjo Tudjman was born in Veliko, Trgovisce, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (presently Croatia) on May 14, 1922, he graduated from the Military Academy in Belgrade in 1957, and served in the Partisan movement during World War II.<sup>45</sup> Tudjman worked in the Yugoslav Ministry of National Defense during 1945–1961, where he became one of the youngest generals in the Yugoslav army, he then worked as an associate professor of history at Zagreb University(1963–1967), where he earned a doctorate in political science in 1965.<sup>46</sup> Tudjman's career is military, politically and academically plentiful and unlike Milosevic he has been very vocal about his opinions about the treatment of Croatia within the federation. Tudjman was a member of Croatia's parliament during and after participating in the Croatian Spring movement, he was imprisoned for two years beginning in October 1972, and then again during 1981–1984 for his political activities aimed at Croatian independence.<sup>47</sup> Just like with Milosevic there is a widespread misconception that Tudjman was a nationalist in the years before he became a president and an ultranationalist after he became a president. Therefore in order to understand Tudjman's actions and the use of propaganda, his character must be evaluated.

#### 3.1 The question of Croatian sovereignty

The difference between nationalism and patriotism is still extensively discussed in academics, and there is not one universal agreement upon the definitions of these two terms. Patriotism which would be a feeling of attachment and commitment to a country, and nationalism which would be loyalty to one's nation are often taken to be synonymous, yet the origins of patriotism are some 2,000 years before the rise of nationalism in the 19th century.<sup>48</sup> German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder associates patriotism to the love of one's country with the preservation of a common culture and the spiritual unity of a people.<sup>49</sup> It was only in the 19th century that patriotism was shifted into the service of the nation-state and

---

<sup>45</sup> Hall, 314.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Baumeister, Andrea. "Patriotism." Britannica Academic, Encyclopædia Britannica Inc, 7 Feb. 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

became submerged in nationalism.<sup>50</sup> So in the 20th century it became very difficult to separate patriotism from nationalism. Thus, Tadjman is a perfect example to demonstrate the difference between the two ideas. By the mid-1960s in what was known as Croatian Spring, Croats within the League of Communists began to reevaluate Croatia's position and they began to discuss the possibility of asserting Croatia's historic right to statehood within the Yugoslav federation.<sup>51</sup> In the march of 1967 Croatian language scholars published the "Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language", so the language question had now become a political affair.<sup>52</sup> Language became a marker of identity, so the disputes symbolized a deeper need for national recognition, appreciation, and distinction.<sup>53</sup>

Tudjman was one of the key protagonists in the dispute, he and the other scholars believed that the constitution needed to be changed in a way that defined the republic in the future as a "sovereign nation state of the Croat nation."<sup>54</sup> The language issue worked as a catalyst for all other issues that have been buried under the carpet by Tito. Even though "Croatian spring" ended, it had great consequences for the future of Yugoslavia and it made a perfect foundation for the future political career of Tudjman as someone who will as a patriot take a stand in issues for Croatian sovereignty. However he was jailed after the Croatian Spring in 1971 and later in the 1980s, and while in prison he wrote extensively on his experiences and his vision for Croatia, going as far to create a movement 'Tudjmanism' which was based on non-Communist nationalism and a 're-examination of Croatian history'.<sup>55</sup> The Yugoslavian Army's suppression of the "Croatian Spring" in 1971 was a turning point for Croats, they now wanted more of democratic and economic reforms.<sup>56</sup> The Croats complained about a loss of culture and political status, discrimination, and economic exploitation, and other issues that marked the national discourse.<sup>57</sup> Croatian Spring is of great importance to Croats, because it opened the possibility of reexamining the foundation and principles of Yugoslavia. The rigorous system of unity amongst Balkan ethnicities that Tito constantly forced seemed to be weakening by the rise of both patriotism and nationalism.

---

<sup>50</sup> Primoratz, Igor, and Aleksandar Pavković. *Patriotism: Philosophical and Political Perspectives*. Taylor and Francis, 2016. p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Bellamy, Alex J. *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream*. Manchester University Press, 2003. p. 55.

<sup>52</sup> Geyer, 235.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 234.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>55</sup> MacDonald, 100.

<sup>56</sup> Biserko, 134.

<sup>57</sup> Geyer, 236-237.

Tudjman is often seen and described as a power hungry politician and a nationalist it is almost always seen as a negative trait, especially when the bitter outcome of the Yugoslavian collapse ended in a war. Furthermore the causes responsible for the war are not necessarily the causes responsible for the collapse. Prior to 1970's there was really no threat to Croatian existence and pride, it is only after Tito pushed the Serbo-Croatian language to be the official language of the federation, that scholars in particular found this to be a suffocation Croatian identity. Tudjman therefore never pushed any hateful agenda towards the other republics, he simply focused on history to demonstrate the importance of Croatian language. As Igor Primoratz and Aleksandar Pavkovic explain, patriotism is connected with beliefs in and endorsement of one's country's values and achievements, which is why it is typically expressed as pride.<sup>58</sup> Unlike patriotism where entity is one's patria meaning one's country, nationalism is focused on the nation, as the term itself suggests. So for Tudjman and other Croatian academics the most crucial matter was to place focus on Croatian sovereignty, because to them Federation meant a union where Croatia can still uphold its identity and uniqueness which was different from the other Republics. Nonetheless, the British newspaper *The Times* wondered whether Croatian linguists were indeed worried about Serbian language dominance, or whether they simply sought to create new obstacles between Serbs and Croats.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.2 Tudjman enters the political stage

Despite the tensions, interethnic relations in Croatia could be considered relatively stable even towards the end of 1989, and according to surveys, the great majority of Croats (65.8%) and Serbs (72.1%) considered interethnic relations to be good or very good.<sup>60</sup> However matters soon changed, while Serbian nationalism was seen as a reaction to Kosovar Albanian demands for autonomy, Croatian nationalism was reliant on the threat posed by Milosevic's own expansionist strategies.<sup>61</sup> So after 1989, propaganda war officially started, the Republics were bouncing off each other and the two key players were Milosevic and Tudjman. Unlike Milosevic, who was very much an opportunist, Tudjman was a patriot, and since he was a historian he contributed to many of the nationalist myths used before and

---

<sup>58</sup> Primoratz, 4.

<sup>59</sup> Batovic, Ante. *Croatian Spring: Nationalism, Repression and Foreign Policy under Tito*. I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017. p. 81.

<sup>60</sup> Perović, Latinka, et al. *Yugoslavia from a Historical Perspective*. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017. p. 158.

<sup>61</sup> MacDonald, 103.

during the wars.<sup>62</sup> Like Tito, Tadjman was seen by his followers as a prophetic leader who promoted the idea of Croatian sovereignty, and like Milosevic, Tadjman's pictures and posters were to be found in every corner of Croatia, songs were written depicting him as a prince or king.<sup>63</sup> Therefore in Croatia there was two types of propaganda, the one where Tadjman was the centre and his character was used to bring out the nationalistic spirit within the people and the second type of propaganda was the propaganda in response to the Serbian propaganda. This propaganda consisted mostly of historical propaganda, reminding people of the Croatian glory and unbreakable statehood, as well as portraying Croatian people as victims of the Yugoslav system. Therefore, since Tadjman was not just a politician but first and foremost a historian, people felt that they could trust him based on his academic career, and the time he spent in prison was evidence that he was genuine and ready to go to great lengths for Croatia.

As a historian, Tadjman has been involved in the problem of emancipation and self-determination of small peoples in Europe and after the establishment of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), in June 1989, he had the opportunity to apply his ideas and wishes in political practices.<sup>64</sup> The HDZ depended highly on supporters from diaspora especially as Tadjman had been systematically building his party since 1987 with the financial help of exile groups and using the catchword "reconciliation", he encouraged all Croat exiles and guest workers to return to their homeland in the spring of 1990.<sup>65</sup> Tadjman, now as the president with American-designed posters and slogans, made himself and his party appear Western and progressive promising to recreate the Croatian state in all its former glory.<sup>66</sup> Within two months of the 1990 elections, parliament changed the name of Radio-Television Zagreb to Croatian Radio-Television (HRT), giving complete control over to the government.<sup>67</sup> Similarly to Milosevic's efforts, HDZ replaced journalists and editorial staff at the state news agency (HINA), and independent papers, such as the Vjesnik Group, formerly 80 per cent privately owned, were slowly taken over by the government.<sup>68</sup> Therefore just like in Serbia, it was necessary for HDZ to control the media, and they successfully marginalised

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>63</sup> Malesevic, Sinesa. *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia*. Routledge, 2002. pp. 230-231.

<sup>64</sup> Bekić, Janko. "Između Demosa i Etnosa – Koncept Hrvatske Nacije u Govorima Predsjednika Franje Tuđmana." *Časopis Za Suvremenu Povijest*, vol. 48, no. 1, 3 Mar. 2016, pp. 7–32. p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Geyer, 288.

<sup>66</sup> MacDonald, 100.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

all other political forces in Croatia except for the Serb Democratic Party in its Serb-populated Krajina powerbase and the regional party in Istria.<sup>69</sup>

Tudjman's main objective was Croatian sovereignty, he claimed that Croats had been deprived of their national pride because Yugoslavia associated Croatian state and their government with Hitler and the World War II genocides.<sup>70</sup> Zagreb TV repeatedly accused the Yugoslav Communist regime of rubbing Croatia's war guilt in the face of its people, so the media presented Croats as victims of the Communist conspiracy to brand them with a permanent shameful stigma.<sup>71</sup> Just like in Serbia, Croatian nationalism was born of a sense of cultural submergence and political domination within the federation, and a threat to Croatian language, culture, and religion.<sup>72</sup> Even before he was elected president, Tudjman had the features of a charismatic personality, he succeeded to establish a personal relationship with his followers, by making an appeal to a common Croatian ethnic ancestry.<sup>73</sup> However, Tudjman was a communist who fought for Yugoslavia and worshiped Tito, and his communist views did not just vanish. Tudjman never explicitly called for Croatian independence before or during the HDZ campaign, he made it clear that a future Croatia would function on an independent basis within 'a radically reorganised Yugoslavia'.<sup>74</sup>

Tudjman saw himself as the personification of Croatian unity and through him national disagreements would be overcome, and therefore tried to foster that unity through his party.<sup>75</sup> In fact in early spring 1991 Tudjman was prepared to accept a compromise in which Croatia would stay a part of Yugoslavia, on the basis of expanded local autonomy, however as pressure on Croatia increased and armed provocations became more frequent, Tudjman decided to proclaim independence.<sup>76</sup> So, just as with Milosevic there is a general misconception that Tudjman was a separatist, ultranationalist or even a nationalist. Not all propaganda was managed by Tudjman personally, but the propaganda separating people based on their ethnic background was definitely started to be pushed by Tudjman and his party later in 1991. Therefore to an extent it does not matter if Tudjman was a separatist,

---

<sup>69</sup> Pavković, 115.

<sup>70</sup> Udovički, 94.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>72</sup> MacDonald, 99.

<sup>73</sup> Malešević, 232.

<sup>74</sup> Bellamy, 57.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>76</sup> Ramet, 257.

patriot, nationalist or an ultranationalist because his character and his ideology either way had a key role in Croatian propaganda and ultimately the collapse of Yugoslavia.

#### 4. The collapse of Yugoslavia

In 1991, the world watched in amazement as the civil war in Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) began. Formerly peaceful republics, joined in one federation for almost five decades under the slogan of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’, would soon end their coexistence in the most horrific conflict since World War II.<sup>77</sup> The collapse of Yugoslavia happened before the actual war, some historians refer to 1948 as the beginning of the dissolution of Yugoslavia.<sup>78</sup> In the *The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis* for analytical purposes, Vesna Pešić tried to separate the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war, but she had to admit that “the two processes are indisputably linked.”<sup>79</sup> For Christopher Bennett, the story of Yugoslavia’s collapse cannot be understood without reference to human agency, according to him Tito deserves blame for having designed an unworkable self destructive system, while Milosevic played a key role by lighting a match and highlighting this fatal system.<sup>80</sup> In Serbia and Kosovo people refuse to find common ground, and in Croatia what started as patriotism and a mere wish to be recognized within the Federation turned into bitter ethnonationalism. The problems that should have been resolved in the parliament, instead, came out in the form of propaganda, and were promoted in fact by the presidents, specifically by Milosevic and Tudjman.

##### 4.1 Propaganda war

The collapse of Yugoslavia officially started with Milosevic's propaganda campaign, because it ended up being a domino effect, having the most impact on Croatia. There is no ethnonationalism without a collective name, a myth about common ancestors and the ethnonational group’s past golden age, which is why it was crucial to bring back history in the media.<sup>81</sup> The main aim of propaganda was reconnecting with the past and playing a card of victimhood, the Serbian elite specifically awakened memories of World War II, when the Ustasha fascist regime in Independent State of Croatia (NDH) committed genocide against the Serbs and others.<sup>82</sup> Yugoslav authorities had exaggerated the number of victims in World War II to get a larger compensation from Germany, whilst during the Milosevic era it was to prove

---

<sup>77</sup> MacDonald, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Biserko, 43.

<sup>79</sup> Naimark, 151-152.

<sup>80</sup> Ramet, 66.

<sup>81</sup> Kecmanović, Dušan. *Ethnic Times: Exploring Ethnonationalism in the Former Yugoslavia*. Praeger, 2002. p. 69.

<sup>82</sup> Biserko, 18.

that Serbs have been victims of Croat persecution.<sup>83</sup> Political scientist V.P. Gagnon Jr. believes that power-seeking elites will seize an opportunity to shift the focus of political debate toward areas in which the population feels threatened, and this causes people to feel as though they need leaders for protection.<sup>84</sup> Bringing the painful history back was a tactic of manipulation by the leaders. The Serbian Orthodox Church accepted the figure of 700,000 Serb victims killed in Jasenovac alone, and the Church was used by Milosevic and his circles to push that chosen narrative upon people.<sup>85</sup> The Serbian Church carried out a series of commemorations that propagated popular sentiments of pride and self-pity as well as a lust for revenge.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, by creating ethnic divisions and inciting fear through propaganda by reminding people about the past violence, elites constructed a security dilemma in Yugoslavia and the population reacted with predictable fear, distrust, and eventually violence.<sup>87</sup>

The narrative of collective victimhood present in Serbia evoked bitter feelings in Croatia, Croats were being blamed as collective perpetrators and supporters of the fascist NDH regime.<sup>88</sup> To correct this problem Tujdman launched his views to the media and by writing books exposing the “true” history. Tujdman argued that the Serbs exaggerated the scale of the Ustasha genocide, he insisted that the NDH state was a legitimate manifestation of Croatia’s historical statehood, he then changed the names of streets, places, and institutions to remove reminders of Tito and communism, and brought back the NDH symbols.<sup>89</sup> Tujdman believed that he could personally fix the relations between fascists and communists, which meant he had to correct Serbian media and take action.<sup>90</sup> As a patriot, Tujdman wanted to defend Croatia at any cost that he did not see or did not want to see how the drastic changes he implemented aroused fear to Serbs that lived in Croatia, who were at the same time fueled by Serbian propaganda. Checkered flag, connections with Fascist Croats in diaspora, famous NDH leaders and history shown in the media, and the citizenship law were all matters of concern, but Tujdman needed funds and to be seen as a serious leader who showed what he believed with actions. In the *War in the Former Yugoslavia: Ethnic Conflict*

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>84</sup> Harmon, 295.

<sup>85</sup> Perica, Vjekoslav. *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*. Oxford University Press, 2002. p. 151.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>87</sup> Harmon, 301.

<sup>88</sup> Odak, Stipe, and Andriana Benčić. “Jasenovac—A Past That Does Not Pass.” *East European Politics and Societies: and Cultures*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2016, p. 811.

<sup>89</sup> Bellamy, 70.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 67.

*or Power Politics?* Gail Harmon argues that Tadjman was in a sense forced to embrace the Ustasha regime since it was Croatia's first experience of independent nationhood, making it difficult to disavow and furthermore the traditional Croatian symbols have existed before NDH.<sup>91</sup> Misha Glenny argues that Tadjmans actions did not mean that the Croatian state of the 1990s was actually the Ustasha regime coming again, but he argues that Tadjman should have been more sensitive to Serb fears.<sup>92</sup> Additionally Tadjman's motives may have come from a desire to please his émigré funders.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, in this domain, Michael Sells writes that 'Tadjman refused to acknowledge the full extent of Ustasha persecution of Serbs, adding that 'nationalists associated with Tadjman' consciously induced hatred in order to ignite a war.<sup>94</sup> Therefore Tadjman's lack of effort and acknowledgment of Serb past experiences and increasing fear greatly contributed to the collapse of Yugoslavia and later the war itself.

Even though Tadjman and Milosevic had strong influence and control over propaganda it is wrong to believe they were dictators or sole villains of the collapse. Milosevic and Tadjman may have demonized eachothers nations, while praising their own, however the propaganda was never the sort to incite violence, no propaganda campaign can force individuals to rape, abuse, humiliate, and murder other human beings.<sup>95</sup> In that case the collapse of Yugoslavia is much easier to explain than the actual war. In the 1980s after the death of Marshall Tito, Yugoslavia entered a period of economic hardship, rising unemployment and inflation reached hyper levels by 1989, and what began as an economic crisis gradually became a political one.<sup>96</sup> The elites attacked socialism whilst all other issues that Tito was covering up were then used for competing political agendas, and the Balkan officially entered the phase of ethnonationalism. So, when it comes to Milosevic, it can be observed that he played the ethnonationalist card before the outbreak of war to get Serbs to approve and join his programme of building a Greater Serbia on the ruins of Yugoslavia.<sup>97</sup> However it must be noted that nationalistic rethoric existed well before Milosevic and Tadjman came to power. It was therefore easier for them to build their agenda and

---

<sup>91</sup> Harmon, 149.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Hayden, 15.

<sup>94</sup> Ramet, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>96</sup> Hayden, 28.

<sup>97</sup> Štiks, Igor. *Nations and Citizens in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav States: One Hundred Years of Citizenship*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. p. 128.

propaganda upon ethnonationalist feelings that have already been circulating since the existence of Yugoslavia.

#### 4.2 The clever tactics of propaganda

The political agenda, specifically of Serbia and Croatia, was that each republic claimed that their own growth was being slowed by the necessity of providing support for the other less developed republics, and each felt 'exploited' by the system.<sup>98</sup> Milosevic's and Tudjman's propaganda was appealing to a common person, everyone was aware of the disappointing living standards and the weak political leadership. In these situations people seek strong charismatic leaders such as Milosevic and Tudjman. In the spring of 1988, Milosevic offered a program of economic recovery, which helped soften his image as a political hard-liner.<sup>99</sup> Whereas Tudjman maintained that most of Croatia's tourist earnings were being siphoned off by Belgrade, so a vote for the HDZ was a vote for the end of Communist mismanagement and economic plundering.<sup>100</sup> The crumbling economy was one of the crucial factors that helped Milosevic come to power. Susan Woodward in her prize-winning *Socialist Unemployment* writes if unemployment is the heart of the problem, then nationalism is 'only a negative manifestation' or a byproduct of discontent.<sup>101</sup>

Unlike Tudjman and the support he received from the diaspora, Milosevic found support in the Yugoslav People's Army(YPA) and the Ortodox Church. The YPA was on paper an organisation designed to protect the federation and maintain the balance of power between the different republics, however, increasingly, senior officers and generals started openly endorsing Milosevic.<sup>102</sup> Either planned tactics or unplanned Ortodox Church and YPA worked hand in hand, the Church was pushing propaganda that was uplifting peoples warrior spirit by glorifying the wartime history of the Serbs, whilst the YPA was the cornerstone of the federation. The YPA saw in Milosevic a man who was openly for Yugoslavia, who wanted to strengthen the federal state, YPA was therefore fiercely critical of multiparty elections in Slovenia and Croatia, and saw it as a threat to the whole system.<sup>103</sup> Once the YPA was involved in politics the issue of borders came into concern, and the fear that the Serbs in Croatia would be cut off from Serbia. In 1990 the YPA's leaders became inextricably linked

---

<sup>98</sup> Ramet, 56.

<sup>99</sup> Udovički, 91.

<sup>100</sup> MacDonald, 101.

<sup>101</sup> Ramet, 57.

<sup>102</sup> Finlan, 17.

<sup>103</sup> Biserko, 150.

with Serbia, and their image as the “guardian” of Yugoslavia was over, in the eyes of other Republics they stopped having a role of protector of all the nations of Yugoslavia.<sup>104</sup> On May 16, 1990 Tudjman appeared on TV Zagreb where he argued that Yugoslavia could survive solely if it is restructured to the Confederation, and neither the federal government or the YPA can be involved in the internal issues of the republics.<sup>105</sup> Additionally in 1991 Tudjman stated that the international community would not accept Croatia as a fully independent state, which is why he insisted to make Yugoslavia a confederation of "sovereign republics" and it is not until the actual first armed conflict between the Croatian police and YPA that he turned his back on Yugoslavia.<sup>106</sup>

Media has been the number one means of tactic and influence for Tudjman and Milosevic, they would often visit different places, give regular monthly press conferences and all their speeches were broadcasted on the main TV channels.<sup>107</sup> The music and sport were also a means of influence, songs sung on football games honouring contemporary politicians alongside those resurrecting controversial historical figures.<sup>108</sup> An article written by Slobodan Antić from the Belgrade Institute for Political Studies shows that in mid-October 1990, the TV Belgrade evening news was watched by almost seventy percent of the adult population in Serbia.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, to say that Milosevic and Tudjman held a complete control over media or that they were tyrants would be wrong, since in Serbia there were many independent media outlets trying to work objectively and professionally, including the magazine *Vreme*, radio stations Radio B92, Radio Indeks, Radio Studio B and others.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore Tadeusz Mazowiecki writes in his Reports that there were more than fifty local radio-stations which aired views and opinions critical of Tudjman's presidency.<sup>111</sup> Additionally Mark Thompson in his extensive study of the media's role in the break-up of Yugoslavia finds that the media ‘were more abundant, varied and unconstrained than in any other Communist state’.<sup>112</sup> Still, the Official television programs were essential in constructing Milosevic and Tudjman's image and promoting their aspirations, so their speeches that would run daily are a key to

---

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>105</sup> Sadkovich, James J. “Franjo Tuđman i Problem Stvaranja Hrvatske Države.” *Časopis Za Suvremenu Povijest*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2008, p. 180.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 181.

<sup>107</sup> Malasevic, 232.

<sup>108</sup> Mills, Richard. *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*. I.B. Tauris, 2018. p. 223.

<sup>109</sup> Delić, 2762.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 2771.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 2760.

<sup>112</sup> Somerville, 71.

understanding what their role in the collapse of Yugoslavia was.<sup>113</sup> Milosevic addressed masses like Tito, instead of appealing to the working class and working people, he would address his followers as 'the people' or 'the Serbian people'.<sup>114</sup> Thus, for example, Vesna Pesic and Dubravka Stojanovic pin the blame for the outbreak of war in 1991 squarely on Milosevic.<sup>115</sup> However they fail to argue that Milosevic could not have grown into the national leader if the people weren't dissatisfied and eager for change in the first place.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, any nationalistic issues that have arisen during Tito's dictatorship, were not solved, so it is not a surprise that they appeared again during the 1980's.

Similar to Milosevic it is the matter of circumstances that gave the platform and eventually success and influence to Tudjman. Tudjman's speeches and agenda changed due to military aggression on Croatia, the Yugoslavian politics were pushing him in a direction of nationalism. Tudjman's main goal was to create a sovereign and democratic Croatian state by modeling Western European countries within Yugoslavia, however Milosevic did not want to leave Serbs in the government that took their right of citizenship. There was definitely individual cases of discrimination and intimidation of Serbs, but this was not the official policy of Croatian authorities.<sup>117</sup> Unlike Milosevic, Tudjman insisted in cooperation with Croatian Serbs, but did not want to give Serbian rebels a quarter of the Croatian territory in the form of autonomy. Milosevic who eliminated the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, then urged the making of Serb autonomies in Croatia. The common idea shared by these leaders was the preservation of Yugoslavia, however they had different ideas how this new Yugoslavia should look like and be managed. Milosevic and Tudjman might have been able to solve the issues, but the damage had already been done, the propaganda war changed the way people think. The people now insisted that the leaders go through with what they promised, therefore the role of Tudjman and Milosevic in propaganda is one of if not the prime factor of the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

---

<sup>113</sup> Udovički, 88.

<sup>114</sup> Malasevic, 181.

<sup>115</sup> Ramet, 138.

<sup>116</sup> Biserko, 92.

<sup>117</sup> Sadkovich, 186.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The collapse of Yugoslavia is truly one of the greatest yet poorly understood tragedies in the history of modern Europe. The dissolution of the communist Yugoslavia did not occur overnight, it was a gradual process of old, buried issues that after Tito's death came to haunt the Yugoslavian states, and their people. The key to understanding the collapse of Yugoslavia is to evaluate Milosevic's and Tudjman's role in politics and propaganda. Their role was significant in creation and sustainment of propaganda either by being the center of it or by contributing and endorsing what the media, elite and the Church were making. After Tito's death, Yugoslavia was left without a designated leader and a very bad financial situation. There was a surge of unemployment and with such massive discontent among the population, it is not then surprising that in the 1980s there was a steady rise of nationalist attitude. Besides the economic factors, old issues that Tito either did not manage well, or he simply tried to postpone resolving them, eventually came back for his successors to resolve. Tito died without officially choosing a successor, and he left Yugoslavia in a complete state of disorder and confusion. The famous phrase "History always repeats itself" could not be further from the truth in the Yugoslavian conflict. One must wonder how did the people saw violence as answer and so easily forgot the devastation and impact of the Nazi regime from the second world war in Balkan countries. Instead of learning from history, and making sure it does not happen again, politicians abused their power to stay in power, not realizing how much division they had created.

After Tito died, many mourned and did not want to accept that their beloved leader was gone, but there was also a sense of relief within the academic, political and journalist circles. This drastic change in the Federation created a stage for Milosevic who saw the weakness of the government and disorder in Kosovo, as an opportunity to have a more significant role in the Serbian politics. To consolidate his power, Milosevic took upon himself the role of a savior, he showed great ambition and passion to save Serbs in Kosovo from the Albanian harassment. Because his speeches were all about peace, unity, order and opposing nationalism, his political actions on the other hand very much favoured Serbs. He surrounded himself with closeted nationalists, refused to disprove of SANU Memorandum, and with the Kosovo issue, he never equally presented both sides, in fact he only spoke of Serbs as victims. Since in the beginning he was catering multiple sides, it is not surprising that foreign media represented him as a nationalist. Yet, Milosevic was a bureaucrat and above all an

opportunist, who's only goal was to be in power. To this day it is very difficult to understand what exactly was his stance earlier in his career, but there is no doubt that he was open to different possibilities of arranging new Yugoslavia, as long as he stayed in a position of influence and power.

Unlike his counterpart Tadjman's career was different, but one major similarity was that just like Milosevic, Tadjman was a Titoist, communist and a strong supporter of Yugoslavia. Still, early in Tadjman's career he was very outspoken about the language issue, which many see as Tadjman's early lean towards nationalism. However this is where a distinction between nationalism and patriotism plays an important role. Neither terms have actual official definitions, but patriotism would relate to the love and pride of one's country. Tadjman saw Croatia as a state and he recognized its historical achievements, and he wanted to reevaluate the failures. So, it was not until the 90s that Tadjman started to talk about Croatian people as a nation and placed them above others in Yugoslavia. He then simultaneously made policies and laws that discriminate against other ethnicities. That bears a question if Tadjman's change of mind came because of genuine fear of the potential disappearance of Croatia under Serb dominated federation, or he simply saw that people were catching onto his views and wishes, so he continued to persist and push harder in order to stay in power. However it must be noted that fear definitely played a significant role, since it was the political career of Milosevic and Serbian propaganda that brought back a much more aggressive nationalism in Croatia. This is also why it has become a commonplace to identify Milosevic as the reason for the conflict in the first place, not acknowledging that the root of the problem was not the present politicians but rather historical issues that have yet to be solved. Nevertheless, instead of genuine effort on the part of Milosevic and Tadjman to finally resolve the ethnical differences and issues, they rather embraced propaganda, creating an even more confusing and hostile environment.

Today, unfortunately most people find history irrelevant or just boring. Yet, this conflict shows the importance of history and its use in propaganda, which exerted influence and had such a powerful but unfortunate impact. Milosevic was the first to embrace the use of history as propaganda, and its portrayal of issues from only one perspective. The typical parallels between current events and those historic ones, whilst repeating the myths and the same messages was the approach of both Serbian and Croatian propaganda. In Serbia, Milosevic gained support of the Orthodox Church, that was responsible for the awakening of

the historical Serbian battles against the Ottoman Empire, and the memories of Ustasha genocide in the second world war. Anyone over the age of 55 had gruesome experiences and personal stories that were not being silenced anymore, in fact the Church was responsible for organizing commemorations, walks, memorials and all kinds of public events to emphasize despair and struggle of the Serbian nation. This was then constantly reported by the media, so people were being fed by propaganda on a daily basis. Once the victim mentality kicked in, there had to be someone to blame, so propaganda turned even more aggressive and hateful against Kosovar Albanians and Croats. Feeling personally attacked, Tudjman used his authority as a historian to push forward historical claims that went into contrast with those in Serbia. Since Tudjman tried to undermine Serbian feelings and experiences from the war, he was seen as a threat by Serbs in Croatia. Whilst Serbian propaganda was then again pouring more gas on what was already a blazing fire. So, with the already bad economic situation and introduction of victim-blaming propaganda, Yugoslavia became a breeding place for antagonism.

This conflict clearly shows just how miserably leaders failed their job of protecting people and reassuring peace, and they in fact did the opposite. The constant search of history to resolve the conflict in fact just led to more issues. So, when these old issues of certain countries' dominance over others reemerged there was no proper strategy to resolve it. However it must be acknowledged that in the backstage of the Yugoslav political scene both Milosevic and Tudjman worked and tried to find a solution and make the Federation still somehow work. Nevertheless in 1991, people had enough of sneaky political games, and they asked for what had been promised to them. Serbs in Croatia wanted autonomy, Croats demanded sovereignty, and Serbs in Serbia wanted Kosovo and the territories of Serb population in Croatia and Bosnia. The collapse of Yugoslavia became official when Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence on 25 June 1991, but it was the result of five years of political turmoil created firstly by Milosevic and then Tudjman and their censorship of media together with the forging of propaganda. The false personas that were created by propaganda were the front page Milosevic's and Tudjman's political programs and were the significant and major cause for the breakup of Yugoslavia.

**List of cited sources**

Batovic, Ante. *Croatian Spring: Nationalism, Repression and Foreign Policy under Tito*. I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017.

Baumeister, Andrea. "Patriotism." *Britannica Academic*, Encyclopædia Britannica Inc, 7 Feb. 2020, [bilibsys-almaprmo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primerefer/fulldisplay?docid=TN\\_cdi\\_britannica\\_eb\\_608902&context=PC&vid=UBIS&lang=no\\_NO&search\\_scope=default\\_scope&adaptor=primerefer\\_central\\_multiple\\_fe&tab=default\\_tab&query=any,contains,patriotism&offset=0](https://www.britannica.com/primerefer/patriotism).

Bekić, Janko. "Između Demosa i Etnosa – Koncept Hrvatske Nacije u Govorima Predsjednika Franje Tuđmana ." *Časopis Za Suvremenu Povijest*, vol. 48, no. 1, 3 Mar. 2016, pp. 7–32., doi:<https://hrcak.srce.hr/160570>.

Bellamy, Alex J. *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream*. Manchester University Press, 2003.

Benson, Leslie. *Yugoslavia: A Concise History*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

Biserko, Sonja. *Yugoslavia's Implosion: the Fatal Attraction of Serbian Nationalism*. Norwegian Helsinki Committee U.a., 2012.

Bogoeva, Julija. *From Lies to Crimes: the Milošević Switch from Communism to Nationalism as State Policy*. Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, 2014.

Bozic, Agneza. "The Rhetoric of Slobodan Milosevic and War on the Territory of Yugoslavia." *Western Michigan University*, ScholarWorks@WMU, 2017.

Delić, Amela. "Medium Is a Weapon: Bias in Crisis Situations." *In Medias Res*, vol. 9, no. 17, 2020, pp. 2753–2774., doi:10.46640/imr.9.17.10.

Finlan, Alastair. *The Collapse of Yugoslavia, 1991-99*. Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2004.

Geyer, Dona, and Marie-Janine Calic. *A History of Yugoslavia*. Purdue University Press, 2019.

Hall, Richard C. *War in the Balkans: an Encyclopedic History from the Fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Breakup of Yugoslavia*. ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2014.

Harmon, Gail. "War in the Former Yugoslavia", (Boston College, 2007). <http://hdl.handle.net/2345/587>.

Hayden, Robert M. *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*. Leiden Boston , 2013.

Judah, Tim. *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*. 2nd ed., Yale University Press, 2000.

Kecmanović, Dušan. *Ethnic Times: Exploring Ethnonationalism in the Former Yugoslavia*. Praeger, 2002.

- MacDonald, David Bruce. *Balkan Holocausts?: Serbian and Croatian Victim-Centred Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia*. Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Malešević, Sinesa. *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia*. Routledge, 2002.
- Meier, Viktor. *Yugoslavia: a History of Its Demise*. Translated by Sabrina P. Ramet, Routledge, 1999.
- Mills, Richard. *The Politics of Football in Yugoslavia: Sport, Nationalism and the State*. I.B. Tauris, 2018.
- Milošević, Slobodan. *Godine Raspleta*. Beogradski Izdavačko-Grafički Zavod, 1989.
- Naimark, Norman M., and Holly Case, editors. *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*. Stanford Univ. Press, 2003.
- Odak, Stipe, and Andriana Benčić. "Jasenovac—A Past That Does Not Pass." *East European Politics and Societies: and Cultures*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2016, pp. 805–829., doi:10.1177/0888325416653657.
- Pavković, Aleksandar. *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism and War in the Balkans*. ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, LLC, 2000.
- Perica, Vjekoslav. *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Perović, Latinka, et al. *Yugoslavia from a Historical Perspective*. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017.
- Primoratz, Igor, and Aleksandar Pavković. *Patriotism: Philosophical and Political Perspectives*. Taylor and Francis, 2016.
- Ramet, Sabrina P. *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Sadkovich, James J. "Franjo Tuđman i Problem Stvaranja Hrvatske Države ." *Časopis Za Suvremenu Povijest*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2008, pp. 177–194., doi:https://hrcak.srce.hr/27114.
- Somerville, Keith. *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred: Historical Development and Definitions*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Stambolić, Ivan, and Latinka Perović. *Koren Zla*. Helsinški Odbor Za Ljudska Prava u Srbiji, 2002.
- Udovički, Jasminka, and James Ridgeway. *Burn This House: the Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*. Duke University Press, 2000.
- West, Richard. *Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia*. Faber and Faber Ltd Bloomsbury House, 2012.
- Štiks, Igor. *Nations and Citizens in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav States: One Hundred*

*Years of Citizenship*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.