

Audrey Helfant Budding
Expert Report
Serbian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century:
Historical Background and Context

Introduction

This report will provide historical background and context relevant to understanding Serbian national mobilization in the 1980s, and the sequence of political events that led to the dissolution of the Yugoslav state and the beginning of the post-Yugoslav wars in 1991.¹ After a very brief review of the preceding century, it will outline the political trajectory of Serbian nationalism from the creation of the first Yugoslavia in 1918 through the dissolution of the second Yugoslavia in 1991 (with more detailed coverage of the period after 1945). Focusing especially on Serbs' attitude toward the Yugoslav state and on the relation between Serbs inside Serbia and those outside, it will identify and seek to explain the elements of a national mindset that by the 1980s was commonly held among Serbs, and then discuss how this mindset (and more generally the process of Serbian national mobilization) contributed to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The report does not attempt to offer a comprehensive overview of Yugoslavia's or Serbia's history in the period covered. Rather, it discusses broader political and economic trends only as they relate to the formation of Serbian national thought.

I. Serbs, Serbia, and the Yugoslav Idea, 1830-1918.

I. A. The Serbian State in the Nineteenth Century

Like many other Slavic peoples, the Serbs entered the modern era with no independent state. The Serbian states of the medieval era had culminated in the realm of Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (r. 1331-1355), who had himself crowned "emperor" at Skopje in 1346. At its greatest extent, the territory he controlled extended from the Danube to the Gulf of Corinth, and from the Adriatic to the Aegean.² Dušan's empire began to disintegrate soon after his death. By the nineteenth century, it was a distant memory: Serbs were divided between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. Early in the nineteenth century, however, a sequence of Serbian revolts and Russian intervention led to the establishment of an autonomous Serbian principality within the Ottoman empire.³ As of the middle of the nineteenth century, fewer than one-third of all Serbs

(950,000 of approximately 3.2 million) lived in the principality. About 1,250,000 lived in other parts of the Ottoman empire (the southern Morava region, Kosovo, the Sandžak of Novi Pazar, and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The remainder - numbering around one million - were Habsburg subjects, many of them military colonists (*Grenzer*) along the long border with the Ottomans.⁴

From the mid-19th century to 1918, various Serbian politicians sought opportunities to expand the Serbian state to include more of these Serbs and, in certain variants, to acquire some of the territories that had been in Dušan's empire. (This statement is not meant to imply that Serbian politicians envisioned recreating Dušan's empire in its entirety, but rather that it was one of the sources they drew on in defining their national ideas.⁵ In this connection, it should be remembered that Dušan's state had included a large stretch of the Adriatic littoral, and that obtaining an outlet to the Adriatic - and so reducing trade dependence on Austria-Hungary - was a central Serbian strategic goal of this period. The outlet to the sea was often envisioned as going through what is now northern Albania.) The borders envisioned for these Serbian state projects varied within parameters set by domestic interests and the shifting foreign policy context. The most important part of the international context, of course, was the progressive decline of the Ottoman Empire, resulting in both political disorder within the Ottoman lands, and the rivalry of Great Powers seeking to expand their influence in the region.⁶ During the eighty-odd years from its modern rebirth up through the creation of the first Yugoslavia, the Serbian state enjoyed considerable success in its project of winning territories inhabited by Serbs away from the Ottomans. Obviously, there was nothing uniquely Serbian about this project of stretching the state's borders over the nation. (In the famous formulation of Ernest Gellner, one of the twentieth century's leading theorists of nationalism, "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."⁷) It is worth noting, however, that the general success the Serbian state enjoyed in relation to the Ottomans reinforced the perception that this project was both desirable and feasible.⁸

I. B. The Boundaries of Serbdom

The quest for unity was complicated by the fact that the definition of a "Serb" was itself contested. In this period, the national boundary between Serbs and Croats - eventually resolved by the near-total identification of Serbs with Serbian Orthodoxy and Croats with Roman Catholicism - was still in dispute. Thus, "Pan-Serb" and "Pan-Croat" ideologists attempted to

appropriate both nations, while advocates of "Illyrianism" and "Yugoslavism" (drawn primarily from the ranks of Croat intellectuals, but also including some Serb adherents) argued for various forms of South Slav unity - cultural, political, and/or national. Moreover, both Serb and Croat ideologists tended to claim Slavic Muslims as conationals.⁹ Thus, for instance, in an article written in 1836 (though not published until 1849), the Serb linguistic reformer Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864) argued that all speakers of the *štokavian* dialect should be considered Serbs, irrespective of their (Orthodox, Muslim, or Catholic) religion.¹⁰ In the context of his time, and of his own anti-clerical struggles, Karadžić's insistence that nations must be defined by language and not by religion was quite understandable. Nevertheless, his definition of Serbdom proved untenable, because it was rejected by many of those whom it claimed to include.

Varying and sometimes blurred definitions of Serbdom allowed Serbian politicians to pursue the dream of uniting all Serbs in one state without clearly confronting the fact that not all of that state's inhabitants would be Serbs. To put it another way, much of the Serbian political elite made no clear distinction between the expansion of the Serbian state to include all or most Serbs, and the unification of the South Slavs. The later-famous *Načertanije* (Outline) - an internal document setting out Serbia's foreign policy aims prepared in 1844 by Interior Minister Ilija Garašanin (1812-1874) - epitomizes this attitude.¹¹ A contrasting approach was found mainly among the Serbian socialists, notably Svetozar Marković (1846-1875).¹²

In principle, aspirations toward the unity of all Serbs involved conflict with both the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires, but in practice (until the First World War) the decaying Ottoman Empire was a far more feasible target for military expansion. In general, then, Serbian unification projects were directed against the Ottomans rather than the Habsburgs, with the important caveat that Bosnia-Herzegovina remained a focus of Serbian ambitions after it passed from Ottoman to Austro-Hungarian administration in 1878. (After 1878, Serbian Orthodox believers were the largest single confessional group in Bosnia-Herzegovina, though falling short of a majority.¹³) Winning lands from the Ottomans through the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 and the Balkan wars of 1912-1913, Serbia had more than doubled its size and population by the eve of the First World War.

Another important result of Serbia's military successes in the Balkan Wars was a rise in enthusiasm for Serbia as the potential Piedmont of the South Slavs among certain groups - particularly youth groups - both inside Serbia and in the Habsburg domains. Finally, through

its conquests in the Balkan Wars – Kosovo, Vardar Macedonia, and part of the Sandžak - the Serbian state for the first time came to govern large populations whose identities were contested (as with the Slavic inhabitants of Macedonia, claimed as co-nationals by both Bulgarians and Serbs) or explicitly non-Serb (as with the Albanians of Kosovo).

I. C. Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo

The Balkan Wars and the subsequent establishment of an Albanian state which included only about half of the Balkan's Albanians set the contours of the Albanian problem for the twentieth century.¹⁴ In Kosovo, Serbian and Albanian claims came into violent collision during the Balkan Wars, as they would again during each of the twentieth century's upheavals. Kosovo's centrality in Serbian national thought (and its identification as part of "Old Serbia") derived from its position at the heart of the medieval state, the Serbian patriarchate's long-time residence at Peć, and of course the defining Serbian national tradition of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo.¹⁵ Both Serbs and Albanians attempted to claim historical priority in the region. Albanians presented themselves as direct descendants of the earliest known settlers, the Illyrians, while Serbs argued that Albanians became a significant presence in the area only after the Ottoman conquest. Moreover, both sides claimed that assimilation unfairly understated their presence in censuses and other historical records. (Thus, Serb historians maintained that many Muslims counted as Albanians were really *Arnautaši*, or Albanianized Serbs.)¹⁶

The fundamental lack of common ground between Serb and Albanian historians of Kosovo, and the difficulties inherent in arguing such questions with the records of the pre-modern era, suggest that these debates will continue for the foreseeable future.¹⁷ Far more important for understanding intercommunal relations in Kosovo, however, is the fact that in this area larger regional or world conflicts were repeatedly reflected through an ethnic prism. Thus, within Kosovo each episode of broader conflict (the Balkan Wars, the First World War, the Second World War) became one in a "cycle of status-reversal."¹⁸ If Albanians were relatively privileged under the Ottomans until 1912, they were in many respects the targets of discrimination in the first Yugoslavia. Each period left a legacy of increased bitterness and mistrust to the next. Albanians alienated from the first Yugoslavia turned more often to collaboration than to Partisan struggle during the Second World War, and suffered for it after the Partisans took over - and so on through each turn of the political tables. Within Kosovo,

intercommunal relations were repeatedly embittered as periods of instability encouraged violence between ethnic groups (as well as within them), and ethnoreligious markers determined who won or lost with each change of regime. Emphasizing this factor as a determinant of Kosovo's historical trajectory does not mean denying the frequent existence of good Slav-Albanian relations on the micro-level (for instance, between neighbors or neighboring villages.)¹⁹ Such patterns of peaceful coexistence, however, were all too often overwhelmed by larger political events.

Given the crucial role of broader conflict in shaping the region's history, it is unsurprising that intercommunal relations in Kosovo appear to have deteriorated markedly following the Russo-Serbo-Turkish warfare of 1876-78. One of the results of that war (which included fighting in Kosovo itself) was the arrival in Kosovo of Albanian and other Muslim refugees from the Southern Morava region, which passed from Ottoman to Serbian control following the 1878 Congress of Berlin. The next few decades, a time of growing instability, saw sporadic violence against Slavs in Kosovo and the emigration of a significant number.²⁰

Into this situation of growing conflict came the first of Kosovo's twentieth-century episodes of status-reversal: its passage from Ottoman to Serbian rule in the Balkan Wars. Contemporary observers of the Balkan Wars noted numerous atrocities committed by Serbian and Montenegrin soldiers; some saw evidence that the Serbian soldiers were engaged in a systematic attempt to alter the demographic balance of the region in order to justify its incorporation into the Serbian state²¹ The new order of Serbian rule was itself reversed during the First World War, then reestablished after the war with Kosovo's incorporation into the new Yugoslav state against substantial Albanian resistance.²² This sequence of events did not bode well for Albanians' position within the new state (quite apart from their anomalous position as non-Slavs in a professedly South Slav state). In fact, the interwar regime's predominant attitude toward its Albanian minority – perceived by many as an actually or potentially disloyal minority – was one of deep suspicion. The regime sought both to reduce their share in the population of Kosovo (by settling Serb and Montenegrin colonists there and pressuring Albanians to emigrate to Turkey or Albania), and to discourage the growth of an Albanian national consciousness (by limiting Albanian-language education).²³

II. The First Yugoslavia, 1918-1941

II. A. Serbian and Yugoslav State Conceptions

Returning to the question of the competition between Serbian and Yugoslav national ideals, it may be said that on the eve of the First World War Serbian concepts remained politically dominant in Serbia, although more Yugoslav conceptions were gaining currency among certain groups. This balance was hardly surprising. Through most of the nineteenth century the Serbian national idea had been backed by an increasingly powerful state. In contrast, broadly Yugoslav ideas – which implied the demise of Austria-Hungary – appeared utopian until 1914.²⁴ Moreover, Yugoslavism was an ideology held by (some) educated elites. The great majority of Serbs (in common with the other future peoples of Yugoslavia) knew relatively little of other South Slav peoples, and in that sense were unprepared to live in a multinational Yugoslavia.²⁵

Most important, as Serbia entered the war the dominant current in Serbian political thought still conceived of the unification of the Yugoslav peoples as a goal to be achieved through the continued expansion of the Serbian state, rather than envisioning a Yugoslav state as fundamentally new. This conflation of Great Serbian and Yugoslav ideals – and the concomitant submerging of the question of how a *Yugoslav* state should be organized – continued into the First World War. Thus, in the Niš Declaration of 7 December 1914 (the first time the Serbian government officially proclaimed Yugoslav war aims), Prime Minister Nikola Pašić promised to devote his government to "the great endeavor of the Serbian state and the Serbo-Croatian and Slovene tribes", and called the war "a struggle for the liberalization and unification of all our captive brother Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes."²⁶ Similarly, in an April 1916 message to Serbian soldiers, Serbia's Crown Prince Aleksandar Karadorđević referred to "this great struggle, *so that we can make Serbia Great, so that it will include all Serbs and Yugoslavs, so that we can make it a strong and powerful Yugoslavia.*"²⁷ In 1918, these ideological predispositions combined with Serbia's tremendous sacrifices and ultimate victory in the First World War, its leading role in the creation of the new state, and the continued rule of Serbia's dynasty to encourage some Serbian politicians to believe that the new state was essentially Serbia writ large.²⁸

The creation of the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" solved the "Serbian problem" as it had been defined for most of the preceding century: (almost) all Serbs were united

in a single state. It took Serbs some time to realize that they had traded their old national problem for a new one: the problem of their relation as Serbs to a multinational state in which they were the largest single group – about forty per cent of the population - but not a majority. (A subsidiary problem, also unrecognized at the time, stemmed from the cultural and political diversity of the historically distinct Serb communities that were now for the first time brought into one state.)

Yugoslavia's multinational character, of course, was not conceived of in the same terms between the wars as it would be in socialist Yugoslavia. The regime counted Macedonians and Montenegrins as Serbs. Muslims' national identity was still disputed, with both Croats and Serbs seeking their adherence. It was primarily the Croat question that forced Serbs to confront the reality of the multinational state and, ultimately, the existence of a Serbian question within Yugoslavia.

From the beginning, Croats (just under 24% of the population) and Serbs clashed over the new state's organization, with Croats overwhelmingly supporting some form of decentralized state, and most Serbs a centralized one. While proponents of centralism "won" the initial battle with the passage of the Vidovdan Constitution in 1921, they did so at the price of (further) estranging Croats from the new state.²⁹ In June of 1928, Serb-Croat relations reached a new low when a Montenegrin deputy assassinated the leading Croat politician, Croatian Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić, in Parliament. In the ensuing political crisis, King Aleksandar dissolved parliament, banned political parties, and inaugurated a royal dictatorship.

Determined to solve the country's national problem, the king made "integral Yugoslavism" - the doctrine that Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes belonged to one already-existing Yugoslav nation to the exclusion of other national identities - the state's official policy. Until this time, integral Yugoslavism had been merely one among several competing conceptions of Yugoslavism. These conceptions differed on important points such as whether a Yugoslav nation existed or was still to be created, and whether Yugoslav national feeling would replace or coexist with existing national identities. As part of the imposition of integral Yugoslavism, organizations founded on an ethnic basis were forbidden, the country (now renamed "Yugoslavia") was divided into nine deliberately unhistorical administrative districts, and the educational system was remodeled to foster the development of (exclusively) Yugoslav national feeling.³⁰

II. B. *The Serbian Question Again*

The attempt to impose Yugoslavism by fiat was notably unsuccessful, and also short. After Aleksandar was assassinated in 1934 (by a Macedonian terrorist acting in concert with the Croatian extremist Ustasha organization), government policy on the national question changed again. The search for an accommodation with the Croats was resumed, becoming more urgent as the Second World War approached. Finally, negotiations between Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković and Croatian Peasant Party leader Vladko Maček resulted in an agreement (the *Sporazum*), which was promulgated on August 26, 1939, days before the war began. The *Sporazum* created an internally-autonomous Croatian unit (the *Banovina Hrvatske*) covering about one-third of Yugoslavia's territory. While most of the new unit's 4.4 million inhabitants were Croats, it also included 168,000 Muslims and 866,000 Serbs.³¹

The passage of the *Sporazum* opened the "Serbian question" in a new form. This was not simply because the *Banovina Hrvatske* included a large Serb population. Also at stake was the relation of Serbs *outside* the *Banovina* to the Yugoslav state.³² A number of prominent Serb intellectuals argued that if Croats were to enjoy internal self-government within a nationally-defined unit, so should Serbs. (Serbs, of course, were considered to include Macedonians and Montenegrins.) In making their argument for a Serbian unit, they rejected the premise that the Yugoslav state was essentially Serbian (and its corollary, that Serbs needed no special representation within Yugoslavia). The most important proponents of this view came from the ranks of the *Srpski kulturni klub* (Serbian Cultural Club) founded in Belgrade in late 1936.³³ The Club's proclaimed mission was to nourish "Serbian culture in the framework of Yugoslavism." Rejecting the arguments of integral Yugoslavism, the Club's rules proclaimed:

It would be a mistake to think that only someone who has stopped being a Serb or Croat or Slovene can be a good Yugoslav. On the contrary, only someone who has been and remained a good Serb, a good Croat, [or] a good Slovene can be a good Yugoslav as well.³⁴

Even while rejecting the Yugoslav national idea, some Club members sought a new basis for the Yugoslav state idea. Thus, in a speech delivered at the Club in December of 1939, founding member Slobodan Jovanović (the eminent lawyer and historian who served as Prime

Minister of the Yugoslav government-in-exile during part of the Second World War) argued that although the Yugoslav national idea had proved untenable, this did not necessarily entail the failure of the Yugoslav state. Serbs and Croats needed each other, not because they were one people, but because only together could they withstand their powerful external enemies. The true Yugoslav state idea was not any romantic concept of South Slav unity, but rather "consciousness of the need for political cooperation between Serbs and Croats."³⁵

After the *Sporazum*, some members of the Club turned their energies from cultural to explicitly political goals - above all, the fight for a Serbian territorial unit.³⁶ In defining this unit's prospective borders, their guiding principle was "Wherever there are Serbs - that is Serbia." This was the title of an article published in the Club's organ in December of 1939. The article's language is strikingly similar to some heard in 1990-91 (especially in its use of both ethnic and historic claims, and its assertion that "administrative" borders are illegitimate). It proclaimed:

"the Serbian Homeland is wherever there are Serbs, from Subotica to Dalmatian Kosovo near Šibenik, and from Sušak to Devdlija. All lands where Serbs live, regardless of tribal-administrative divisions already executed or which will be executed, are Serbian lands just as much as brave Šumadija and as much as proud Lovćen.

Kordun and Lika and parts of Dalmatia and parts of Slavonia, which are today part of the Banovina of Croatia are also Serbian lands. They are Serbian because the ancestors of today's Serbs succeeded with heroic arms in defending them from a foreign conqueror over centuries and soaked them with their noble blood and sweat."³⁷

By the time this article was written, the Second World War had begun. Debates over Yugoslavia's organization were cut short as the country passed through the terrible ordeal of interlocked foreign and civil warfare.

III. The Second World War in Yugoslavia

III. A. New Regimes in the Independent State of Croatia and in Kosovo

Hitler's April 1941 attack on Yugoslavia was followed by the state's quick collapse.³⁸ In its subsequent dismemberment, various territories were awarded to the Reich, Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy. Most important for the future of the Yugoslav peoples, the Axis powers created a so-called "Independent State of Croatia" on the territory of the future republics

of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. After Croatian Peasant Party leader Vladko Maček refused to cooperate with them, the Germans appointed Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić to head the state - a decision with tragic consequences for future relations among Croats, Serbs, and Muslims. The extremist Ustasha had been a relatively marginal group in Croatian politics, their main "success" the 1934 assassination of King Aleksandar. Elevated to authority by the Axis conquest, the Ustasha launched a campaign of genocide against the Serbs who made up one-third of their new state's population, as well as against Jews and Gypsies.³⁹ While the number of their Serb victims continues to be the subject of controversy, it is certainly to be measured in the hundreds of thousands. Over the entire territory of Yugoslavia, approximately one million people lost their lives. (Mortality was the highest in the Independent State of Croatia.) Slightly over one-half of the victims were Serbs, and Serbs and Muslims suffered the highest proportional losses, in both cases close to seven per cent of their populations. (For Serbs, this number is the aggregate of very high losses – about fifteen per cent - in the Independent State of Croatia, and relatively low losses within Serbia.)⁴⁰

In Kosovo, the Second World War marked yet another of the twentieth century's episodes of status reversal, with predictably destructive results.⁴¹ The incorporation of (most of) Kosovo into Italian-controlled Albania was experienced as a liberation by many of the region's Albanian inhabitants. Some took advantage of the new situation to attack Slavic inhabitants (particularly but not exclusively the much-resented colonists). Tens of thousands of Slavic inhabitants fled the area or were expelled from it; a smaller but still significant number were killed.⁴² The Partisans (initially a minuscule and almost exclusively Slavic presence in Kosovo) gained little support among the Kosovar Albanian population, with the result that at the war's end Kosovo was (once again) incorporated into a Yugoslav state against substantial Albanian resistance. In 1944-45, the Partisans put down major Albanian risings, with particularly intense fighting in the Drenica region. The scale of the fighting is indicated by the fact that the Partisans deployed 39,000 soldiers. More sporadic military resistance continued for several years after the war.⁴³ There are thus striking parallels between 1918 and 1945 – but also important differences. Unlike their predecessors, the Partisans from the beginning made serious efforts to win over the Kosovar Albanian population, both by creating the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija within the new Republic of Serbia, and by taking steps to prevent many interwar colonists from returning to Kosovo.⁴⁴

With regard to Kosovo's wartime and immediate postwar history, two questions have aroused particular political controversy: the number of Slavs who left the province during the war, and the number of Albanians who immigrated from Albania during and shortly after the war.⁴⁵ Given the lack of direct records, evaluations of varying claims have compared pre-war and post-war demographic data to determine the possible parameters of population movements. Although, the demographic questions involved are complex and the information available incomplete, it is possible to draw certain conclusions.⁴⁶ Kosovo saw its total population increase between a census performed in 1939 (645,017 inhabitants) and the first post-war census in 1948 (727,820 inhabitants). The total increase in Kosovo's population actually reflected two separate trends: an absolute decrease in the Orthodox population, and an absolute increase in the number of Albanians. The dimensions of each trend are subject to some interpretation, because the two censuses are not strictly comparable.⁴⁷ Allowing for varying assumptions about the rate of natural population growth in this period, French social geographer Michel Roux believes that the approximate upper limit for the number of Serb and Montenegrin expellees is 36,000. (This figure is relatively close to the April 1944 calculation of a senior German official in Belgrade that 40,000 Serbs and Montenegrins had been expelled since 1941.⁴⁸) Roux calculates that, even on the assumption of zero natural population growth among the Kosovo Albanian population in this period, the demographically possible upper limit of Albanian immigration would be around 104,000. Claims that 200,000 or more Albanians immigrated, Roux argues, are incompatible not only with the Yugoslav population figures, but also with Albania's own demographic development.⁴⁹

B. Partisans and Chetniks

As the preceding discussion has indicated, during the Second World War Serbs were not only exposed to the general rigors of occupation, but were also the specific targets of large-scale violence in both the Independent State of Croatia and Kosovo. Against this horrific background, two principal movements competed for their loyalty: the Communist-led Partisans and the monarchist Chetniks. These two movements differed fundamentally in most respects, including their vision of the postwar Yugoslav state. Under the banner of "brotherhood and unity," the Partisans put forward a three-pronged national policy. Denouncing centralism and the inter-war state, they emphasized the national rights of Yugoslavia's peoples. At the same time, however,

they pledged themselves to recreate the Yugoslav state. To reconcile these two concepts - national rights and the Yugoslav state idea - they promised a new, federal organization. (This promise of a federal state was crucial to the Partisans' eventual success in winning support among non-Serbs, especially Croats).⁵⁰ Finally, by calling for national tolerance and a common struggle against the occupiers, the Partisans made themselves the only refuge of those who did not want to take part in intercommunal violence.

The Chetniks, led by Colonel (later General) Draža Mihailović, originated as a pro-Allied movement made up of officers of the Yugoslav army who refused to surrender after the German conquest of April 1941. While Partisans, Allies, and others conceived of the Chetniks as a unified force, it should be noted that speaking of a Chetnik "movement" involves a significant degree of oversimplification. During the Second World War the name Chetnik - originally associated with irregular forces fighting the Ottomans in the early twentieth century - was used not only by forces more or less under Mihailović's control, but also by groups of Serbs operating wholly independently of him in their own districts.⁵¹ Hailed as the first guerrilla resistance in occupied Europe, the Chetniks gained the backing of the Yugoslav government-in-exile and initially also that of the Western Allies. Over the course of the war, however, the Chetniks came to function less as a resistance movement than as the Serbian and monarchist force in the overlapping Yugoslav civil wars - intercommunal and political - that accompanied the occupation.⁵²

The Chetniks' failure to sustain active resistance against the occupying forces was due in part to their unwillingness to expose the civilian population to reprisals in the face of overwhelming Axis military superiority. Indeed, the available evidence indicates that from the beginning Mihailović planned not to lead a general uprising, but to organize an army that would join in an eventual Allied attack on the occupying forces, carrying out limited acts of resistance and sabotage in the meantime.⁵³ It was their commitment to a Serbian and monarchist program, however, as well as the bloody dynamic set in motion by the Ustasha, that led the Chetniks into varying degrees of collaboration (mainly with the Italians), and into some notorious massacres of Croat and Muslim civilians.⁵⁴

The Chetniks' national program, in its dominant versions, called for a restructured Yugoslavia within which Serbs would enjoy unchallenged predominance.⁵⁵ In the view of Chetnik ideologues, Serbs had made a fateful mistake in 1918 when they merged Serbian identity and statehood into Yugoslavism, and entered the Yugoslav state without defining Serbian borders within it. The post-war Yugoslavia the Chetniks envisioned was a federal state composed of three national units: Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian (the last with borders redrawn to include not only all lands populated by Serbs, but also lands claimed as Serbian on historical grounds). As this summary indicates, the Chetniks' national program appropriated crucial elements of the Serbian Cultural Club's platform. Indeed, some members of the Club - most importantly Belgrade lawyer Dragiša Vasić and Banja Luka lawyer Stevan Moljević - played leading roles in developing the Chetniks' political program.⁵⁶ In some of its variants, Chetnik ideology said that the Serbian unit should include *only* Serbs. This was the argument of a document (generally known as *Homogena Srbija*, "Homogeneous Serbia"), which Moljević prepared in June of 1941. Moljević maintained that only an all-Serb state, to be achieved through expansion and population exchanges, could protect Serbs from "the terrible sufferings that their neighbors inflict on [them] as soon as they get the chance."⁵⁷

The Partisans' ultimate victory over the Chetniks in the Yugoslav civil war was at least as much a victory of Yugoslav-oriented Serbs over those of exclusively Serbian orientation as it was a victory of socialist revolutionaries over defenders of the old social order. It was also, to a degree the Partisans never acknowledged, a victory of Serbs from outside Serbia - that is, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia - over Serbs from Serbia, many of whom supported the Chetniks.⁵⁸ Tito's 1944-1945 speeches in Serbia reveal a concerted attempt to gloss over this fact. In his first post-war speech in the Serbian (and Chetnik) heartland of Šumadija, Tito felt it necessary to deny rumors that the inhabitants of Serbia opposed the new regime; and on several occasions he hailed the victorious "return" of Serbian Partisans to Serbia.⁵⁹ (Of course, the Partisans driven out of Serbia in 1941 did return in 1944 - but Serbs from outside Serbia were more important in the Partisan movement as a whole.)

When the course of the war brought victory to the Partisans and catastrophe to the Chetniks, then, Serbs were prominent on both the winning and the losing sides, but traditional Serbian nationalism was wholly defeated. Its defeat was the more complete because it was