

# THE SERBIAN REACTION: KOSOVO AND ETHNIC MOBILIZATION AMONG THE SERBS

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**ABSTRACT.** *The deteriorating relations between the Albanian majority and the Serb minority in the province of Kosovo, and the ability of the authorities to resolve the conflict, has led to an increased awareness of national identity among the Serbs of Yugoslavia. This process of ethnic mobilization, which represents a new phenomenon in post-war Yugoslav history, is visible both on a popular level and in cultural and political life. Occurring in a situation characterized by, on the one hand, a democratization of society, and on the other, by economic crisis and growing social discontent, it constitutes a possible threat to the stability and legitimacy of the political system.*

## Introduction

In his inaugural speech at the Serbian Academy of Sciences in 1978 the well-known writer Dobrica Ćosić said:

What kind of people are we, what kind of men are we, that we so willingly die in wars of liberation, only to lose our freedom by victory itself? How is it possible that someone among ourselves, in our own house, withhold from us that which a far stronger enemy on the battlefield was unable to take from us? How is it possible that people who during the war acted with such dignity, pride and courage, in a time of peace let themselves be humiliated and subjugated?<sup>1</sup>

Is this an expression of nationalism? According to party officials and certain intellectuals close to the party, especially in Bosnia or Croatia, it is. At the

<sup>1</sup> Ćosić. Dobrica: *Stvarno i moguće*. Rijeka: Otokar Keršovani, 1983, p. 171.

same time a person like the Zagreb philosopher Predrag Vranicki holds that it is not.<sup>2</sup>

In any case, Ćosić's words are characteristic of an attitude that in the last few years is becoming more prominent among Serbian intellectuals. The inaugural speech is to be found in the controversial book 'The Real and the Possible'<sup>3</sup> printed in 1983, but largely consisting of articles written – and published – during the sixties and seventies.<sup>4</sup> In focus are the two central themes which have occupied Ćosić in his own fiction, and which since the beginning of the 1980s dominate Serbian cultural life: on the one hand the problem of socialism and democracy, and on the other the fate of the Serbian people in the 20th century.

In its proper context, it is doubtful whether the quotation above is to be considered nationalist. When Ćosić speaks about winning the war and losing the peace, he does so from a broader perspective than the purely national. In fact, Ćosić criticizes the national mythology so common in Yugoslavia, often expressed in a rhetoric of heroism and national glory. Instead he emphasizes the necessity of recognizing the acts of evil committed in the name of one's nation.

A Serb living in the eighth decade of the twentieth century can no longer base his national consciousness on national, ideological or religious folklore, on textbooks or war literature, on coffeehouse lyrics or the dogmas and prescriptions of a bureaucratic ideology. It is truly not reasonable to think about our past, whether it is distant or recent, only in terms of military and political defeats or victories; neither is it correct to understand our wars, whether they took place long ago or more recently, only as 'heroic', 'glorious', 'superhuman'; they are much more than that – they are tragic.<sup>5</sup>

It is a tragedy, says Ćosić, that the sacrifices made seem so futile when confronted with today's society, with its false mass culture and arrogant

<sup>2</sup> See the discussion in the journal *Književnost*: Radulović, Milan: 'Od ideloške kritike stvarnosti do estetske spoznaje stvarnosti', pp. 1091-1106; Muhić, Fuad: 'Mit u funkciji razočaranja', pp. 1107-1114 (both of which appeared in *Književnost*, Godina XXXVIII/Knjiga LXXV/Sv. 6-7 [1983]); Vranicki, Predrag: 'Moguće još nije stvarno', pp. 1400-1421; Vučelić, Milorad: 'U potrazi za identitetom', pp. 1422-1438; Indjić, Trivo: 'Komunac i metežnik na delu, opet', pp. 1439-1457; Kljakić, Ljubomir: 'Jedna kritička vertikalna: moguće čitanje', pp. 1458-1470 (in *Književnost*, Godina XXXVIII/Knjiga LXXV/Sv. 8-9 [1983]); Papić, Žarko: 'Stvarnost i mit kod Dobrice Ćosića', pp. 1050-1083 (*Književnost*, Godina XXXIX/Knjiga LXXXVIII/Sv. 6-7 [1984]); and Kljakić, Ljubomir: 'Ideologija vanrednog stanja i inteligencija', pp. 2272-2293; Papić, Žarko: 'Umesto odgovora Lj. Kljakiću', pp. 2294-2298 (*Književnost*, Godina XXXIX/Knjiga LXXXIX/Sv. 12 [1984]).

<sup>3</sup> Ćosić, 1983, pp. 159-173 (see n. 1).

<sup>4</sup> Ćosić, Dobrica: *Moć i strepnje*. Belgrade: Narodni univerzitet Braća Stamenković, 1971; *idem.*: 'Književnost i istorija danas', Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, *Glas*, Knjiga CCCVIII, Odeljenje jezika i književnosti, knjiga 9, Pristupne akademijske besede, Belgrade, 1978, pp. 27-37; *Savez komunista u borbi za nacionalnu ravnopravnost. 14 sednica CK SK Srbije. Maj 1968*. Belgrade: Komunist, 1968, pp. 100-116, 297-300.

<sup>5</sup> Ćosić, 1983, p. 172 (see n. 1).

ideologies. From a perspective of civilizational critique he pleads for humanism and universal values.

Probably more controversial, however, and quite embarrassing, was another chapter of the book, namely Ćosić's interjection in 1968 at a meeting of the central committee of the Serbian Communist Party dealing with the national question.<sup>6</sup> On this occasion Ćosić strongly criticized a policy which was beginning to take shape at the time, aimed at defining the republics and autonomous areas of Yugoslavia as more or less sovereign states. Instead he suggested a national policy resembling the Austro-Marxist ideal, that is, national affiliation would be the same as belonging to a cultural community, not primarily or necessarily identified with a certain territory.<sup>7</sup> According to Ćosić this would be the only solution to the national question in a country like Yugoslavia where there are relatively few ethnically homogeneous areas.

It is in this context, and in this perspective, that Ćosić criticizes the development in Kosovo, and the expressions of Albanian chauvinism, which, in his opinion, are becoming increasingly frequent towards the end of the 1960s.

There has been no thorough and objective analysis of the political situation in the (autonomous) areas, especially not in Kosovo and Metohija; a situation that to all appearances is characterized by difficult problems and certain negative tendencies. We cannot shut our eyes any more to the fact that there is in Serbia a wide-spread conviction that relations between Shiptars and Serbs have deteriorated, that Serbs and Montenegrins feel threatened, that there is pressure on them to emigrate, that specialists try to leave Kosovo and Metohija; that there is inequality in the courts and lack of respect for law and justice, that there is blackmail in the name of national identity.<sup>8</sup>

Ćosić was expelled from the central committee and his ideas – which were also advocated by another member of the central committee, as well as by Serbian and Turkish communists in Kosovo<sup>9</sup> – were banned as hostile to the party and treated as expressions of Serbian nationalism.

What is embarrassing is of course that Dobrica Ćosić after the events of 1981 could stand out as a prophet.<sup>10</sup> Point by point his worries seemed to have been confirmed and his criticism justified. The words he used in 1968 are now the official policy, and this time it is the party committee of Kosovo which is

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-70. For an account of the meeting see Rusinow, Dennison: *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948-1974*. London: C. Hurst, 1977, p. 246.

<sup>7</sup> See Mommsen, Hans: 'Nationalismus und Nationalitätenfrage im Verständnis des Marxismus', *Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft. Eine Vergleichende Enzyklopädie*. Freiburg: Herder, 1971, Bd. IV, pp. 648-670.

<sup>8</sup> Ćosić, 1983, p. 59 (see n. 1).

<sup>9</sup> See n. 68 below.

<sup>10</sup> That this really is a sensitive issue is illustrated by the article, 'Reality and Myth in Dobrica Ćosić', written by the party ideologue Žarko Papić (see n. 2), in which the author in an ironic manner tries to ridicule Ćosić. The first part of his article is entitled, 'The political anatomy of the "case" of Dobrica Ćosić or did the Great Writer, having suffered innocently, foresee all our misfortunes'.

criticized for nationalist tendencies and lack of vigilance, while the issue of Serbian and Montenegrin migration from Kosovo is looked upon as one of the most serious political problems of Yugoslavia.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps Čosić will be right on yet another point. There have in recent years been clear signs of an ethnic mobilization among the Serbs which is *not* Yugoslav or Great Serbian, but rather exclusively Serbian, and sometimes separatist, in character. This is a new and important element in Yugoslav post-war politics and it would seem justified to speak of a 'Serbian Question'<sup>12</sup> in addition to those national questions traditionally associated with Yugoslavia. In that context the phrase 'winning the wars and losing the peace' might have a more serious connotation.

What are the reasons for this change? The answer is partly given by the title of this paper. The situation in Kosovo has, in more than one respect, changed the political climate in Yugoslavia, and one of the most important consequences are the feelings of concern or frustration, which are becoming increasingly evident among the Serbs. They are visible in various contexts: Within the party and the political institutions, in cultural life and among intellectuals, and, not the least, in the attitudes of ordinary people.

The mobilization is, moreover, multidimensional and concerns political, economic, linguistic, religious, as well as cultural aspects.

Of major importance is the fact that this process is taking place in a very specific social and political situation. The events in Kosovo not only showed that the national problems of Yugoslavia were not solved once and for all. They also illustrated the general weaknesses of socialist society and marked the beginning of a new cultural and political climate. In a sense the Kosovo problem acted both as a catalyst and a paradigmatic case. Once it was allowed to discuss developments in Kosovo and question earlier policies, it was very difficult to prevent a similar examination of other aspects of Yugoslav society. And fairly soon there was a very frank discussion of both the official ideology and the position of the party. Subjects that were earlier taboo, such as the treatment of Stalinists in 1948, the premature collectivization of agriculture, the assumption of power, or the sometimes dubious position of the party in the thirties or during the Second World War, have been treated in a great number of novels, memoirs or historical studies.

This 'cultural revolution' has coincided with a thorough criticism of fundamental aspects of the political system. And on another level the problem of

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion in Magnusson, Kjell: 'Nationalitetsproblem i Jugoslavien. Krisen i Kosovo' [Nationality problems in Yugoslavia. The Crisis in Kosovo], *Bidrag till öststatsforskningen*, vol. 9:2 (1981), pp. 1-207. The official policy is formulated in 'Political Stabilization and Socio-Economic Development in the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo. (Political Platform for Action adopted by the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia)', *Socialist Thought and Practice*, vol. XXI:11-12 (1981), pp. 81-136.

<sup>12</sup> See Stanković, Slobodan: "'The Serbian Question' – One of Yugoslavia's Major Internal Problems', *Radio Free Europe Research*, RAD Background Report/21 (Yugoslavia) (26.1.1982).

legitimacy facing the party is very clearly noticable in sociological investigations of popular attitudes.<sup>13</sup>

The intellectuals have participated in the process in an unparalleled manner and organizations like the writers' union or the association of Yugoslav sociologists have started to play an active, more or less political role.<sup>14</sup> Critical ideas have, moreover, been spread very efficiently by a vigorous press which independently scrutinizes the behaviour of politicians and the political system. It should be added that these tendencies are much stronger in Serbia – and Slovenia – than in other parts of Yugoslavia.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time the general situation of the country is deteriorating and the party is openly manifesting its internal conflicts and impotence in coming to grips with the serious economic and social problems threatening the stability of Yugoslavia.<sup>16</sup> Nowhere is this impotence shown more clearly than in Kosovo.

### The Situation in Kosovo

Five years after the events of 1981 the situation is still very tense.<sup>17</sup> Relations between the Albanian majority and the Serbian-Montenegrin minority are characterized by coldness and distrust. Although there have not been major demonstrations, Albanian resentment and aspirations to independence are manifested in various ways. Slogans are written, leaflets are distributed, and

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of cultural and ideological tendencies in Yugoslavia today, see Magnusson, Kjell: 'Secularization of Ideology – The Yugoslav Case', *Symbols of Power: The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. Ed.: Claes Arvidsson & Lars Erik Blomqvist. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987, pp. 73-84.

<sup>14</sup> See for example the documents from the 1985 meeting of the Yugoslav writers' union: *IX Kongres Saveza Književnika Jugoslavije. 18-20. april 1985. Dokumenti*. Novi Sad: Književna zajednica Novog Sada, 1986; or the discussions at the 1983 conference of the Association of Yugoslav Sociologists: *Integracioni i dezintegracioni procesi u jugoslovenskom društvu. Zbornik referata. (Sociološki susreti, Portorož, 9-12. novembar 1983)*. Ljubljana: Jugoslovensko udruženje za sociologiju i Raziskovalni institut Fakultete za sociologiju, politične vede in novinarstvo Univerze Edvarda Kardelja, Ljubljana, Knjižnica FPSN, 1983.

<sup>15</sup> See the remarks made Čavoški, Kosta: 'Why there is more free speech in Belgrade than in Zagreb', *Index on Censorship*, 1986:8, pp. 22-24.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Reuter, Jens: 'Zur Wirtschaftslage Jugoslawiens', *Südosteuropa*, Jg. 33:2 (1984a), pp. 113-126; Höpken, Wolfgang: 'Bewährung und Reformmöglichkeiten des jugoslawischen Selbstverwaltungssystem', *Reform und Wandel in Südosteuropa*. Hrsg.: Roland Schönfeld. (Untersuchungen zur Gegenwartskunde Südosteuropas, 26). Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1985, pp. 199-229.

<sup>17</sup> On the development of the Kosovo crisis see Magnusson, 1981 (see n. 11); *idem*: *Nationella spänningar i Jugoslavien* [National Tensions in Yugoslavia]. (ÖU-rapporter 2:83). Uppsala: Öststatskunskalet/Öststatsforskning, Uppsala Universitet, 1983; Reuter, Jens: *Die Albaner in Jugoslavien*. (Untersuchungen zur Gegenwartskunde Südosteuropas, 20). Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1982; *idem*: 'Politik und Wirtschaft in Kosovo', *Südosteuropa*, Jg. 34:1 (1985), pp. 10-23; Baskin, Mark: 'Crisis in Kosovo', *Problems of Communism*, vol. XXXII:4 (1983), pp. 61-74; Bender, Rainer Joha: 'Die Krisenprovinz Kosovo: Ein jugoslawischer Periphererraum im Umbruch', *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, Jg. XX:1 (1984), pp. 4-24.

there seems to be an increasing tendency to organized political activity. Of the organizations and groups detected by the authorities and classified as 'counter-revolutionary', more than two thirds have actually been formed after 1981.<sup>18</sup> There also seems to be a heightened activity among Albanians in Western Europe and closer relations between these circles and intellectuals in Kosovo.<sup>19</sup> The rather severe legal measures adopted in order to pacify the situation thus seem to be having no visible effects.<sup>20</sup>

The conflict sometimes displays violent elements: In the Yugoslav press there are reports of sabotage, fires, disturbances of rail communications, explosions, and even direct attacks on representatives of the police and other authorities.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, there is apparently harassment of the non-Albanian population, both in the villages and towns. Besides friction in every-day life, such as incidents in shops, restaurants or buses, there is damage to property, usurpation of land, menaces, and sometimes unprovoked physical violence. In general, the Serbs consider themselves discriminated against on the labour market and in public life, because of the demands for knowledge of Albanian. They also complain that courts, police and other authorities are biased, or passive in taking legal measures against offenders.<sup>22</sup>

The political changes in Kosovo during the 1960s (putting an end to Serbian dominance)<sup>23</sup> and the deterioration of ethnic relations have led to a continuous emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins from the area<sup>24</sup> and to a

<sup>18</sup> *Šta i kako dalje na Kosovu. Dalja društveno-politička aktivnost SSRNJ u realizaciji političke platforme za akciju SKJ u razvoju socijalističkog samoupravljanja, bratstva i jedinstva i zajedništva na Kosovu.* (Savezna konferencija SSRNJ). Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985, p. 153. See also *NIN*, 18.5.1986, pp. 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> See *Šta i kako dalje na Kosovu*, pp. 153-156 (see n. 18); and Kurteši, Ramiz & Milošević, Milan: 'Lična karta irredente', *NIN*, 15.12.1985, pp. 22-24.

<sup>20</sup> Since 1981, 1,200 persons have been to prison, while 3,000 have spent up to three months in custody and another 3,000 have been warned by the police. See *NIN*, 18.5.1986, pp. 15-16.

<sup>21</sup> *Šta i kako dalje na Kosovu*, pp. 147-180 (see n. 18). According to *NIN*, 2.11.1986, p. 23, during the three summer months of 1986 there were 21 criminal cases of intimidation or pressure to emigration, of which six included rape; 137 cases of hostile slogans or distribution of pamphlets; 15 fires and explosions; 12 cases of sabotage, diversion or wreckage; 10 cases of attacks on public communications; 5 cases of desecration of cemeteries; and 19 attacks on, or resistance to the police.

<sup>22</sup> Magnusson, 1981, pp. 112-114 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1983, pp. 8-13 (see n. 17); *Šta i kako dalje na Kosovu*, pp. 209-237 (see n. 18).

<sup>23</sup> During the first decades after the war Kosovo was controlled more or less directly from Belgrade. After the fall of Aleksandar Ranković in 1966 the situation changed dramatically. As a result of the general political climate and constitutional changes in 1971 and 1974 there was a thorough process of 'Albanization' in all areas of political and cultural life. See Reuter, 1982, pp. 43-78 (see n. 17).

<sup>24</sup> According to official sources 20,000 Serbs and Montenegrins (8% of the population) have left Kosovo since 1981 (*Politika*, 17.11.1986, p. 6), while an estimated 100,000 migrated between 1961 and 1981 (*NIN*, 18.12.83, p. 13, & 25.3.1984, p. 13). According to a study based on the results of the 1981 census, in Serbia there are 45,911 Serbs and Montenegrins who migrated from Kosovo between 1971-1981, which is equivalent to almost 20% of the population in 1981; Petrović, Ruža: *Migracije stanovništva Jugoslavije i etnički aspekti*. Belgrade: Institut za sociologiju filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu, 1986, pp. 104-107 (Manuscript).

general feeling of helplessness among those who remain. The demographic structure of Kosovo has in fact changed radically, as a result of migration and high birth-rates among Albanians. Whereas the Serbs and Montenegrins in 1961 constituted 27.5% of the inhabitants, their share of the population is according to the 1981 census only 14.9%.<sup>25</sup>

Developments in Kosovo are being closely followed by the Serbian press, which naturally dwells on the more or less spectacular cases of assault or discrimination, which very often have a great impact on public opinion.<sup>26</sup> This has irritated politicians in Kosovo, who since 1981 have been complaining of what they consider exaggerations based on single events and a tendency to treat all Albanians as suspicious and fanatic nationalists.<sup>27</sup>

While it is true that public opinion in Serbia tends to generalize from single, more or less dramatic cases,<sup>28</sup> and although the press reports may be emotional, it would be wrong to dismiss the Serbian frustration as totally unfounded. This would be to trivialize the conflict and underestimate the gravity of the Kosovo problem. One should not forget that the southern parts of Yugoslavia can hardly be described as modern, rationally functioning societies, which means that there is both bureaucratic arbitrariness and abuse, at the same

<sup>25</sup> Since 1961 many villages in Kosovo have been deserted by the Serbs. The change is, however, also visible in urban centres. In 1961, 38.1% of Priština's inhabitants were Serb/Montenegrins and 49.4% Albanians. 20 years later the Serbs/Montenegrins constitute 19.5% and the Albanians 70.1% of the population. See Kešetović, Muhamed: *Kontrarevolucija na Kosovu – pokušaj i sprečavanje*. Belgrade: Zadruga, 1984, pp. 155-172.

<sup>26</sup> In this context must be mentioned the strange 'Martinović case', which was given extremely wide publicity and caused a lot of public unrest. On May Day 1985 Djordje Martinović, a 56-year old Serb was admitted to the hospital of Gnjilane, Kosovo, with severe interior wounds. It was found that a bottle had been thrust bottom first, into the body via anus. According to one version Martinović had been attacked by two Albanians, but according to another, which became the official view of the Kosovo authorities, Martinović had inflicted the injuries himself. For more than a year the case remained unresolved. There were contradictory medical evaluations whether the patient would have been at all able to hurt himself in this manner, or whether it was reasonable to consider Martinović a psychologically abnormal person. For details about the case see the feuilleton in *Interju*. Nos. 130-137 (23.5.1986-29.8.1986). Finally the federal ministry of justice claimed that it could not be proved that Martinović had been attacked. It is obvious, though, that public opinion in Serbia does not believe in the official statement; see *NIN*, 2.11.1986, p. 17. Last year a book of documents on the case was published: Spasojević, Svetislav: *Slučaj Martinović*. Belgrade: Partizanska knjiga, 1986.

<sup>27</sup> Magnusson, 1981, pp. 135-139 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1983, p. 10 (see n. 17).

<sup>28</sup> This is especially true of instances where sexual abuse is involved. Rapes or attempted rapes, where the culprit is Albanian and the victim a Serbian female are interpreted as particularly perfidious expressions of Albanian nationalism and are perceived as the ultimate proof of the state's inability to guarantee the safety of the Serbian-Montenegrin minority. Official statistics show that in comparison with other parts of Yugoslavia, rapes are not more common in Kosovo, and in most cases both culprit and victim are Albanians. Against this is said that in a patriarchal environment like Kosovo many cases are not reported. See *Interju*, 29.8.1986, pp. 4-9; and *Danas*, 4.11.1986, pp. 61-63.

time as government institutions in reality may have very little influence on social life.<sup>29</sup>

Neither should one forget that this really *is* a very serious *ethnic* conflict, where two groups are, after all, claiming the right to the same area and where both sides have old grievances.

Incidentally, this aspect has, until recently, seldom been explicitly discussed in Yugoslavia. The official account of the 1981 riots rests on the assumption that they were caused by deliberate enemy activity according to a well-planned strategy. Parts of the Albanian population in Kosovo had, as it were, through systematic and skilful propaganda assimilated ideas they would otherwise not adhere to.<sup>30</sup> Much energy has, therefore, been used in trying to locate the 'centre', or the 'general staff' of the 'counter-revolution', efforts that so far have been fruitless.<sup>31</sup>

The preoccupation with the enemy is ultimately related to the legitimization of the political order.<sup>32</sup> The problem is, however, that it both mystifies and underestimates the strength of Albanian feelings in Kosovo. When referring to the situation Yugoslav politicians and journalists very often use the term *irredenta*. However, *irredenta* means not only organized anti-Yugoslav activities for the purpose of uniting Kosovo with Albania, but almost any kind of Albanian national feelings or popular resentment. This is logical, though, if incidents in every-day life are understood as caused by an organized enemy. On the other hand, the notion of the *irredenta* as a mysterious and anonymous force tends to obscure the fact that strong national sentiments *are* fairly common in the political and cultural life of the province. After all, leading Albanian politicians did advocate the establishment of a Kosovo republic around 1970.<sup>33</sup>

Recently a Serbian journalist, Aleksandar Tijanić,<sup>34</sup> discussed the issue in a different manner. He points out that most of the organizations were formed

<sup>29</sup> This is particularly true of Kosovo, where patriarchal norms and kinship loyalties are still very strong. It is illustrated by the fact that blood feud is still practised in the province. As late as the mid-seventies there were around 1,200 families, or almost 14,000 persons who lived barricaded in their homes in order to protect themselves. See Karanović, Milenko: *Krvna osveta*. Belgrade: Partizanska knjiga, 1985, pp. 96-97.

<sup>30</sup> See Magnusson, 1981 (see n. 11).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90; and *idem*, 1983, p. 7 (see n. 17). A recent example of this attitude is a statement by Dragiša Pavlović, the president of the Belgrade party organization. Pavlović last year published the book, 'Through question to answers', in which he discussed various political issues in a new, more relaxed way, not declaring his adversaries as 'enemies'. About the origin of the 1981 riots he says, however: 'There has never been a revolution or counter-revolution without leadership. Behind the counter-revolution there surely were, and are, people who directed it and continue to do so: the separatist-nationalist centre of the counter-revolution, its ideological, political and military staff. Until this centre (or "centre") is neutralized nobody will be able to say that the counter-revolution has been conclusively defeated' (Pavlović, Dragiša: *Pitanjem na odgovore*. Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1986, cited from *Danas*, 14.10.1986, p. 21).

<sup>32</sup> See Magnusson, 1987, (see n. 13), for a discussion of this point.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 68 below.

<sup>34</sup> See Tijanić, Aleksandar: 'Koliko je oraha u kesi?', *Duga*, 18-31.10.1986, pp. 28-31.

after the riots, and that it is impossible that 'militant chauvinists and separatists have branches in every little village, enterprise, school, or sports association where inter-ethnic incidents are occurring'. Tijanić also says that it has been grossly underestimated to what extent the idea of a Kosovo republic seems natural to most Albanians. And he suggests that one should listen to the Slovene sociologist Veljko Rus, who has compared what is happening in Kosovo today to the process of national awakening among the Southern Slavs in the 19th century. An idea which seems reasonable in view of theoretical discussions on ethnicity and nationalism.<sup>35</sup>

### Political Consequences

On a political level the conflict in Kosovo has brought to the fore the sensitive issue of the character of the Yugoslav federation, in particular the problems concerning the constitutional status of the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo and their position within the republic of Serbia.

It is evident that both the federal centre and especially the Serbian state- and party leadership have limited means of controlling developments in Kosovo. This is shown, not least, by the fact that there has not been on any large scale what in Yugoslav political parlance is called differentiation.<sup>36</sup> Relatively few have been expelled from the party, and fewer still among the political leaders have incurred more serious sanctions.<sup>37</sup> Compared to what happened in Croatia in 1972 it is particularly remarkable that there have not been any substantial changes at the university or in cultural life, something which has been sharply criticized by Serbian politicians.

There are several reasons for this state of affairs. One has to do with the structural features of the Kosovo party, which to a very high degree seems to

<sup>35</sup> See Magnusson, 1981, pp. 178-183 (see n. 11); and *idem*: 'Religion och nation i Jugoslavien' [Religion and Nation in Yugoslavia], *Bidrag till öststatsforskningen*, vol. 10:1 (1982), pp. 1-85 (see pp. 6-12, 44-46, and the remarks in note 2, pp. 72-74, where attention is drawn to some articles by Ernest Gellner. Since then Gellner has formulated his comprehensive and fruitful theory of nationalism: Gellner, Ernest: *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

<sup>36</sup> On the problem of purging the Kosovo party see Magnusson, 1981, pp. 91-130 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1983, pp. 9-12 & 17-19 (see n. 17).

<sup>37</sup> According to *NIN*, 18.5.1986, pp. 15-16, 1,200 persons have been sent to prison, whereas another 3,000 have been sentenced by disciplinary courts to up to three months. 1,500 members of the party have been purged. Apparently those subject to sanctions are people on lower levels. According to official figures, 176 teachers and 511 pupils in secondary and high school were suspended between 1981 and 1984. At the same time 113 students were expelled from the university and 13 professors had to leave their jobs. 72 students were expelled from the party organization of the university of Priština, which numbers 1,600 members among the professors and 2,400 among the students. See *Šta i kako dalje na Kosovu*, pp. 209-210 & 216 (see n. 18).

be an adaptation of a traditional kinship system to a modern situation,<sup>38</sup> and in such circumstances it is of course very difficult for outsiders to have access to information or to exercise political control. Especially as language constitutes an efficient barrier.

Another reason is that the Serbian leadership forms a minority on the federal level. Regardless of their views on the situation in Kosovo, other Yugoslav republics are against any precedential actions by Serbia that would upset the existing balance of power.<sup>39</sup>

Above all, however, the existing constitution does not permit Serbia to intervene directly in the province, and the events of 1981 have therefore once again started a discussion of the principles behind the constitutional changes of the 1970s. The 1974 constitution meant not only that the federal republics increased their power vis-à-vis the centre, but also that the autonomous areas in practice gained the status of republics. They are thus 'integral parts' of the Serbian republic, but at the same time 'constituent elements' of the federation.<sup>40</sup> In the federal parliament as well as in the party organization they have the same position as the six republics.<sup>41</sup>

The Yugoslav constitution is simply contradictory on this point, and it was probably expected that the party would solve any conflicts that might arise, which however has not been the case. Instead the party itself has become federalized.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The leading communists in Kosovo have since the war been recruited among persons from Djakovica. Their relatives and inlaws are to be found in leading positions within the party and state apparatus. See Vuković, Ilija: *Autonomaštvo i separatizam na Kosovu*. Belgrade: Nova knjiga, 1985, p. 10; and 'Primeri nepotizma...', *Student*, 25.12.1985, quoted in *Naša reč*, vol. 39, no. 375 (1986), p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> On differences of opinion among the republics regarding Kosovo see Magnusson, 1983, pp. 23 (see n. 17). This is openly criticized by the well-known Montenegrin member of the federal parliament Batrić Jovanović: 'In Yugoslavia there are very different views on the origin and consequences of the activities of the separatist movement in Kosovo, that is, there are different views on the violent change to the ethnic map of a part of Yugoslavia ... there are influential forces in Yugoslavia who in 1971 prevented the settling of accounts with the bearers of the existing anti-Yugoslav policy in Kosovo and Metohija ... and the same forces in 1981 again prevented those who are most guilty ... [of the situation] being made politically and legally responsible.... These forces have acted and are acting so that federal organs are mainly looking at and registering the violations of the constitutions of SFRY and Kosovo' (*NIN*, 18.5.1986, p. 24).

<sup>40</sup> See *Ustav SFRJ*, articles 1-4; *Ustav SR Srbije*, articles 1-4; *Ustav SAP Kosova*, articles 1-4, in *Ustav SFRJ. Ustavi socijalističkih republika i pokrajina*. Belgrade: Prosveta, 1974, pp. 12, 589 & 685-686. For a recent discussion containing all the relevant sources, see Nikolić, Pavle: 'Princip federalizma i konstituisanje organa federacije', *Marksistička misao*, 1986:6, pp. 125-143. See also Shoup, Paul: 'The Government and Constitutional Status of Kosova: Some Brief Remarks', *Studies on Kosova*. Eds.: Arshi Pipa & Sami Repishti. (East European Monographs, CLV). New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, pp. 233-238.

<sup>41</sup> The main difference between the provinces and the republics is that the former are not constituted on the basis of their 'right to self-determination including secession'.

<sup>42</sup> For a detailed discussion of the political process that resulted in the 1974 constitution and the new relations within the League of Yugoslav Communists, see Haberl, Othmar Nikola: *Parteiorganisation und Nationale Frage in Jugoslavien*. (Osteuropa-Institut and der Freien Universität Berlin, Philosophische und soziologische Veröffentlichungen, 13). Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1976.

This means, from a Serbian point of view, that contrary to other republics, Serbia does not fully control its own territory, as Kosovo and Vojvodina govern themselves and are able to use their veto in any important political decision on a republican level, from economic policies to educational programs. In practice what is usually referred to as 'interior' Serbia (that is, Serbia except Kosovo and Vojvodina) has tended to become synonymous with the notion of the Serbian republic, even though the area does not exist in a constitutional sense. Serbian politicians have therefore tried very hard to find a solution which more clearly states that the autonomous provinces are parts of Serbia, and *as such* exercise their federal rights. In the same way they stress that the League of Communists of Serbia should be understood as *one* unified political organization.<sup>43</sup>

When these matters were brought up for discussion in the autumn of 1981 it was clear that not only Kosovo, but especially Vojvodina, was against all endeavours to recentralize Serbian politics. Since then the Serb-dominated leadership in Novi Sad has shown on several occasions that it is obviously not willing to give up its independence.<sup>44</sup> Now and then there is an escalation of the conflict, usually ending with some kind of compromise. The text of these agreements, is however, so watered down that almost immediately there arises a problem of interpretation. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether the constitutional changes announced in 1986 will eventually be implemented.<sup>45</sup>

Relations within Serbia are only one aspect of the more general problem of how the Yugoslav federation should be organized, an issue which in turn

<sup>43</sup> Magnusson, 1981, pp. 51-56 & 176 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1983, pp. 22-23 (see n. 17); Bilandžić, Dušan: *Jugoslavija poslije Tita (1980-1985)*. Zagreb: Globus, 1986, pp. 79-84. The official Serbian view is stated in a resolution from a meeting with the central committee of the Serbian party in January 1982: 'Zaključci centralnog komiteta SK Srbije "O zadacima saveza komunista Srbije u ostvarivanju ustava i daljoj izgradnji i jačanju jedinstva i zajedništva u socijalističkoj republici Srbiji" od 13. januara 1982', printed in Rajović, Radošić: *Autonomija Kosova. Istorijsko-pravna studija*. Belgrade: Ekonomika, 1985, pp. 510-518.

<sup>44</sup> Magnusson, 1981, p. 176 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1983, pp. 22-23 (see n. 17); Bilandžić, 1986, pp. 79-84 (see n. 43). See also the interview with Boško Krunić, the party leader in Vojvodina: *NIN*, 28.4.1985, pp. 15-18. For recent accounts of the conflict between Serbia and Vojvodina see *NIN*, 19.1.1986, pp. 10-11; and 2.11.1986, pp. 12-13, 18-19.

<sup>45</sup> As late as December 1986 leading politicians had quite different views on the matter. Ivan Stambolić, president of Serbia, said: 'these changes are not, and are not meant to be any restriction of the rights of citizens in the provinces, nor to change the basic role and position of the provinces. It follows from what I have said that the provinces are primarily integral parts of the SR Serbia, and only then constituent elements of the federation. In practice, however, we have met tendencies to absolutize the autonomy beyond constitutional limits, the limits set by the principles of the constitution'. The party leader of Vojvodina, Djordje Radosavljević, however stated: 'In Vojvodina we do not have any exclusive, different interest, certainly not of a localist or separate character'. He goes on to say that politicians in Vojvodina are subject to pressure. 'We have not accepted the supplementary suggestion made by the presidium of SR Serbia, because when discussing changes in the normative part of the constitution it is in fact referring to real changes in the principal part of the constitution, although we had agreed not to do that.... We do not agree to withdraw from Yugoslavia, which is what has been suggested, but intend to remain parts of both the SR of Serbia and of the SFRY directly.' (Quoted from *Danas*, 23.12.1986, p. 6.)

forms part of complicated and diverse disagreements about the political system. Since the beginning of the social crisis all attempts at economic and political reforms have failed, as a majority of the republics fear that this would circumscribe their independence. Although, for example, politicians in Slovenia on important points share Serbian views on the need for market economy and political pluralism, they do not support changes of the constitution that might lead to increased federal control from Belgrade.<sup>46</sup>

### Mobilization in Kosovo

During the last five years there has been going on among the Serbs in Kosovo a far-reaching process of political mobilization which increasingly takes place outside formal political institutions. In the autumn of 1985, about 2,000 people signed a petition<sup>47</sup> where attention is drawn to their predicament and where the authorities are asked to protect the Slav citizens of Kosovo. The petition also demands constitutional changes, among others the proclamation of Serb-Croatian as the official language of Kosovo.<sup>48</sup> The petitioners moreover claim that they could not be held responsible for the consequences of any further deterioration of ethnic relations in the area.

It is to be noted that the document was sent to the federal and republican leadership in Belgrade, not, however, to the authorities in Kosovo. The initiative was condemned by the Kosovo party committee as an expression of Serb nationalism, and was also rejected in Belgrade, although in milder words.

On the 26th of February 1986, 160 Serbs and Montenegrins, representing 42 villages in Kosovo, travelled to the federal parliament in Belgrade, to complain and ask for help. The authorities tried to keep the discussion secret, but summaries of the meeting were eventually published by the press. What was said on this occasion provides individual variations on the same theme: harassment and abuse of power, in some cases severe violence. It was also clear that Ilijaz Kurteshi, the speaker of the parliament, incidentally an Albanian

<sup>46</sup> Bilandžić, 1986, pp. 150-177 (see n. 43); Reuter, Jens: 'Braucht Jugoslawien politische Reformen? Kontroverse Diskussion über ein zentrales Thema'. *Südosteuropa*, Jg. 33:11/12 (1984b), pp. 632-640; *idem*: 'Zur Reform des politischen Systems in Jugoslawien', *Südosteuropa*, Jg. 35:6 (1986), pp. 393-407.

<sup>47</sup> The content of the petition is discussed by *NIN*, 19.1.1986, pp. 20-22. For the text of the document (published one year later), see *NIN*, 9.11.1986, pp. 14-15.

<sup>48</sup> There is no official language in Yugoslavia, but the languages spoken by the largest ethnic groups in the federal units in practice have official status, as they are used by public institutions on a republican/provincial, and in some cases local, level. In Kosovo the dominating language is Albanian followed by Serbo-Croat and Turkish. See Byron, Janet: 'An overview of language planning achievements among the Albanians of Yugoslavia', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, vol. 52 (1985), pp. 59-92.

from Kosovo, was very irritated and had been quarrelling with the complaining peasants.<sup>49</sup>

In the beginning of April there was another peasants' march on Belgrade. The reason this time was the arrest of the engineer Kosta Bulatović, one of the informal leaders appearing among the Serbs in Kosovo. Bulatović was charged with hostile agitation and a great number of people gathered outside his home in *Kosovo polje* until he was released a day later. Although the party president of Serbia, Ivan Stambolić, hurried to the village in order to calm the angry masses, around 500 people took the train to Belgrade. They were received at the 'Sava' conference centre where among others Lazar Mojsov, then Yugoslavia's vice-president, promised to consider some of their demands.<sup>50</sup>

The next incident occurred on the 20th of June when a large group of Serbs from the village of *Batuse* simply left their homes, starting what was described as a collective escape to Serbia. They were stopped with rather harsh measures by police and security forces.<sup>51</sup>

A third march on the capital took place in the beginning of November.<sup>52</sup> The direct cause was the attempted rape of an eleven-year-old girl, which outraged the population in the village of *Plemetina*. A serious aspect of this event was that the peasants and workers from Kosovo in very strong words urged the parliament to do something about their difficulties, or at least to permit people to defend themselves:

We cannot stand this any more. People who rape our children will get one month in prison or a few years conditionally. We have had enough of political persuasions. You must really help us, or allow us to fight ourselves.

But we cannot and will not stand this any more. Either they will kill us as well, or we them.<sup>53</sup>

Tell us that you cannot give us any guarantees... If you cannot help us, then you are also responsible for our sufferings, and do not be surprised if you hear that we are killing each other.<sup>54</sup>

There could hardly be a more open hint of the possibility of civil war.

A remarkable outcome of the discussions was that Vaselein Djuranović, member of the state presidium, promised that the famous petition, by now signed by more than 100,000 people, would be handled by the parliament in the usual manner.

<sup>49</sup> *Interju*, 14.3.1986, pp. 12-15, and 28.3.1986, pp. 8-13; *NIN*, 2.3.1986, pp. 28-29, 30.3.1986, p. 13; 6.4.1986, pp. 55-58, and 13.4.1986, pp. 54-57.

<sup>50</sup> *Interju*, 11.4.1986, pp. 35-37; *NIN*, 13.4.1986, pp. 12-18; *Duga*, 19.4-2.5.1986, pp. 7-9.

<sup>51</sup> *NIN*, 29.6.1986, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> *Politika*, 4.11.1986, pp. 1, 5-6; *NIN*, 9.11.1986, pp. 12-16; *Danas*, 11.11.1986, pp. 12-14.

<sup>53</sup> *Politika*, 4.11.1986, p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> *NIN*, 9.11.1986, p. 13.

There is one very important aspect of the Serbian-Montenegrin protest movement which deserves mentioning: those protesting are members of the lower classes feeling not only neglected by Albanian functionaries in Kosovo, but also betrayed by the Serbian middle classes and politicians, both in Kosovo and Belgrade. There is thus an obvious connection between the unresolved national question and the more general social problems threatening the legitimacy of the political system and the position of the elite.

The worsened relations between Serbs and Albanians are visible also outside Kosovo. Albanian craftsmen and shopkeepers in Serbia have been boycotted and their shops attacked.<sup>55</sup> Generally speaking ethnic conflicts at street level have in recent years increased throughout Yugoslavia. In Slovenia there have been clashes between guest-workers from the southern republics and the Slovene majority, and in Croatia enraged youngsters have attacked Serb supporters after football games.<sup>56</sup> The last event of this kind occurred in Belgrade in August last year, when some hundred supporters of the 'Red Star' football club freely vandalized Albanian shops and maltreated their owners for about an hour.

The situation in Kosovo, and the continuous migration, which in a foreseeable future would make the area almost exclusively Albanian, are causing great alarm in Serbian public opinion, and both politicians and intellectuals criticize the state for not being able to protect the rights of its citizens. The Belgrade group for the defence of human rights has seriously questioned a legal system that is treating demonstrating Albanian youth extremely harshly, at the same time as those who are responsible for acts of violence are frequently not being punished.<sup>58</sup> Last year more than 200 leading Serbian intellectuals signed an appeal demonstrating their solidarity with the petitioners of Kosovo.<sup>59</sup>

The gravity of the situation is further illustrated by recent reactions from the authorities. In June 1986, at a joint meeting of the party and state presidium, the federal leadership announced several rather unusual measures: It would temporarily be forbidden to sell Serbian property to Albanians, and Albanians would not be allowed to settle in the few remaining rural areas where the Serbs still constitute a majority.<sup>60</sup> There was also a new law prescribing particularly severe punishment for assaults or sexual abuse out of ethnic antagonism.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Magnusson, 1981, p. 131 (see n. 11); *Duga*, 18-31.10.1986.

<sup>56</sup> *Interju*, 8.11.1985, pp. 14-17; *NIN*, 27.10.1985, p. 26, and 3.11.1985, pp. 14-18.

<sup>57</sup> *NIN*, 31.8.1986, pp. 13-14; *Interju*, 12.9.1986, pp. 4-9.

<sup>58</sup> See for example the letter sent to the state presidia in Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Kosovo on June 20, 1986, reprinted in *Naša reč*, no. 378 (1986), pp. 4-5.

<sup>59</sup> See *Nova Revija*, vol. 5:48/49, pp. 801-807.

<sup>60</sup> *NIN*, 22.6.1986, p. 17, and 29.6.1986, pp. 14-15.

<sup>61</sup> *Danas*, 4.11.1986, pp. 61-63.

## Tendencies in Cultural Life

Developments in the area of culture are both directly and indirectly related to the situation in Kosovo, as well as to the nationality issue in general. On one hand, during the last couple of years several books have been published discussing Kosovo in a historical or contemporary perspective.<sup>62</sup>

Besides books and articles in cultural or political journals, developments in Kosovo are given a prominent place in current press reports and weekly magazines. The issue is thus more or less constantly salient and has led to a number of controversies in the field of culture and cultural politics. The union of Serbian authors have, for example, criticized their colleagues in Kosovo for nationalism and anti-Serbian attitudes. Other conflicts have concerned the content of textbooks and educational programs, or the character of historical scholarship (the issue of Albanian ethnogenesis, the ethnic composition of Kosovo in various historical periods, the character of the 1878 'League of Prizren', the participation of the Kosovo Albanians in the Second World War, the attitude of Serbian socialists and the Yugoslav communist movement towards Kosovo, and so on). Some polemics have more directly concerned political problems, such as the language issue, the use of the Albanian flag in Kosovo,<sup>63</sup> or the problem of representation in social and political life according to ethnic affiliation.

<sup>62</sup> Bogdanović, Dimitrije: *Knjiga o Kosovu*. Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka, 1985; Djaković, Spasoje: *Sukobi na Kosovu*. Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1984; Hasani, Sinan: *Kosovo. Istine i zablude*. Zagreb: Centar za informacije i publicitet, 1986; Hodža, Hajredin: *Afirmacija albanske nacionalnosti i Jugoslaviji i staljinistički nacionalizam i iredentizam u Albaniji*. Priština: Rilindja, 1984; Kešetović, Muhamed: *Kontrarevolucija na Kosovu*. Belgrade: Zadruga, 1984; Rajović, 1985 (see n. 43); Vuković, Ilija: *Stranputice Hajredina Hodže*. Belgrade: Nova knjiga, 1985a; *idem: Autonomništvo i separatizam na Kosovu*. Belgrade: Nova knjiga, 1985b. Some of the books are primarily polemical, but there are others of a more scholarly character presenting new sources or dealing with less known events. Of special interest in this context are perhaps the 'Book on Kosovo' written by the late academician Dimitrije Bogdanović, and 'Kosovo: Truths and Delusions' by Sinan Hasani, a well-known Albanian novelist who at the moment is Yugoslavia's president. The purpose of Bogdanović's book is to show that the thesis of the original population of Kosovo being Albanian is wrong, and that there has been a continuous forced exodus of Serbs since the end of the 17th century. Hasani's book concentrates on recent times, especially the development during the last three decades. He balances between criticism of the 'irredenta' and assertion of Albanian rights to autonomy. The books are valuable as clear statements of two dominant views of the situation in Kosovo and the affiliation of the authors is primarily noticed by what they accentuate. However, neither author provides any solution to the basic problem: The heightened ethnic consciousness of the Kosovo-Albanians, living in compact settlements on the border of Albania, forming the overwhelming majority in these areas, and amounting to about 70% of the size of the population of Albania.

<sup>63</sup> Since the sixties the Albanians of Kosovo have been using the flag of the Albanian republic as their national symbol. This has caused unrest in the non-Albanian population, and recently it was suggested by a federal commission that the flag should be changed. The difference would be that in future the star would look like the Yugoslav star. It would be placed, as before, above the eagles or, as an alternative, in the upper left corner. It should be noted that in the republic of Montenegro the Albanian flag has been forbidden since 1981; *NIN*, 2.11.1986, pp. 20-21.

One of the important aspects of this discussion is the demystification of the official history of the Kosovo problem. Before the events of 1981 not only the contemporary situation, but also the past, tended to be described in an idealized manner.

The Yugoslav idea of 'brotherhood and unity' demanded that all ethnic groups had contributed equally to the war of liberation. It is no secret, however, that the partisan movement in Kosovo was faced with grave difficulties and that a majority of the Albanian population positively greeted the unification of Kosovo and western Macedonia with Italian-dominated Albania. There was also the uprising in 1944, when tens of thousands of Albanians were fighting the partisans, and whole regiments in Kosovo deserted.<sup>64</sup> Against this background the assurances that Serbs and Albanians were fighting together for a federal Yugoslavia do not seem credible to the general public in Serbia, and recently there was a scandal when a literary magazine was able to point out that an official Kosovo edition of partisan biographies contained many people who obviously had not participated in the war of liberation.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, many of the Albanian partisans in Kosovo apparently believed in a unification, and one of the sensitive issues discussed has therefore been the conference at Bunjaj in 1944, where local party leaders made a declaration to this effect.<sup>66</sup> Of special importance in view of the earlier mentioned 'irredentia-syndrome' is that one of those present at the conference, Fadil Hoxha, throughout the post-war period has played a leading role in Kosovo.<sup>67</sup>

Another, and even more sensitive issue, is the period 1968-1971, when on the one hand Albanian politicians in Kosovo propagated for the creation of a republic, and on the other leading Serbian and Turkish communists were

<sup>64</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the situation in Kosovo during the war, see Rajović, 1985, pp. 135-190 & 379-457 (documents) (see n. 43). See also the collections of documents in Nešović, Slobodan & Petranović, Branko: *AVNOJ i revolucija. Tematska zbirka dokumenata 1941-1945*. Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1983; and Petranović, Branko & Zečević, Momčilo: *Jugoslavija 1918-1984. Zbirka dokumenata*. Belgrade: Rad, 1985.

<sup>65</sup> Stojanović, Radovan: 'Štimovanje istorije', *Književna reč*, 10.XI.1986 (288), pp. 5-6. See also *NIN*, 28.12.1986, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> 'Kosovo and Metohija is an area predominantly inhabited by the Shiptar [Albanian] nation, which today, as always, desires unification with Shipnia [Albania]. Therefore, we see as our duty to point out to the Shiptar people the right way to proceed in order to achieve its goal. The only way for the Shiptars of Kosovo and Metohija to be united with Shipnia, is to fight together with the other peoples of Yugoslavia against the occupier and his tools. This is the only way to bring about freedom, when all nations, including the Shiptars, will be able to decide about their fate, on the basis of the right to self-determination including secession'. See 'Rezolucija prve konferencije narodnooslobodilačkog odbora za Kosovo i Metohiju, održane od 31. decembra 1943. do 2. januara 1944' reprinted in Rajović, 1985, pp. 433-437, quotation p. 435 (see n. 43). For a discussion of the Bunjaj conference in a political-historical perspective, see *ibid.*, pp. 191-225. The conference also plays a central role in Ilija Vuković's polemics with the Kosovo historian Hajredin Hoxha; see Hodža, 1984; Vuković, 1985a, pp. 35-71; and *idem*, 1985b, pp. 106-129 (see n. 62).

<sup>67</sup> For criticism on Hoxha's role, see for example, Mišović, Miloš: 'Koga su borci prozvali', *NIN*, 9.2.1986, pp. 20-22; or Tijanić, Aleksandar: 'Fadilj Hodža: optužbe i odbrana', *NIN*, 25.1.1987, pp. 32-34.

relieved of their functions after having criticized nationalist tendencies in the province.<sup>68</sup> At present there are very strong demands for the rehabilitation of these people, especially of Jovo Šotra, a former member of the Kosovo leadership.<sup>69</sup> The issue of rehabilitation is, however, extremely delicate, as it concerns the behaviour not only of politicians in Kosovo, but of those in Serbia and on a federal level as well. What is most problematic is perhaps the fact that Šotra in a detailed report notified the highest party leaders of his views on the situation.<sup>70</sup> The implication is that they were either misled, or actually accepted what is now defined as nationalist policies caused by the 'irredenta'.

These and similar cases, discussed in the press and literature, have upset public opinion in Serbia and are potentially another threat to the legitimacy of the party. The official criticism of those who ruled Kosovo in 1981 is thus in the present cultural climate recoiling on the party itself.

The media interest as such is also a source of conflict and the 'Belgrade press' has frequently been criticized for exaggerating the situation, or concentrating only on its negative aspects.<sup>71</sup> It is true that media in other parts of Yugoslavia do not devote that much space to these problems and there are also differences of opinion, which, together with disagreements on a political level, has contributed to feelings of abandonment and isolation among the Serbs. Others do not, as it were, care about their predicament. On some occasions there have been bitter disputes on these matters, notably between Slovenia and Serbia. In 1984, for example, the book 'Albanians'<sup>72</sup> published by a well known publishing house in Ljubljana caused great irritation in Serbia. The authors were almost exclusively Albanians from Kosovo, some of whom were at the time being criticized for nationalism. Or, when the first 'march on Belgrade' occurred, a leading Slovene newspaper wrote about 'trains of nationalism' which was sharply criticized by the Serbian central committee.<sup>73</sup>

Last summer these frictions reached a high point in what might be called the 'Rupel-affair'. Dimitrij Rupel, a well-known Slovene sociologist and novelist gave an interview to the Belgrade bimonthly, *Duga*, and was asked about his opinion on matters concerning Kosovo, Serbia, Slovenia and Yugoslavia.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Djaković, 1984, pp. 287-292 (see n. 62); Rajović, 1985, pp. 287-292 & 318-322 (see n. 43); Vuković, 1985b, pp. 7-39, 72-105 (see n. 62). See also the articles in *NIN*, 15.1.1984, pp. 54-56; & 28.9.1986, pp. 52-53; and *Duga*, 4-17.10. 1986, pp. 23-26; as well as note 69 below.

<sup>69</sup> See *NIN*, 22.6.1986, pp. 53-55, & 14.7.1986, pp. 20-23; *Ilustrovana politika*, 28.10.1986, pp. 26-27, & 4.11.1986, pp. 30-31; *Danas*, 2.11.1986, pp. 27-28.

<sup>70</sup> See 'Informacija Jove Šotre "O nekim aktuelnim pitanjima političkog stanja na Kosovu u svetlu sprovođenja zaključaka 21. sednice predsedništva SKJ" od 28. decembra 1971' reprinted in Rajović, 1985, pp. 480-492 (see n. 43).

<sup>71</sup> Magnusson, 1981, pp. 135-139 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1983, pp. 17-18 (see n. 17).

<sup>72</sup> *Albanci*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1984.

<sup>73</sup> *NIN*, 20.4.1986, p. 21.

<sup>74</sup> See Ačin, Zdenka: 'Ko svadja Slovence i Srbe', *Duga*, 28.6.-11.7. 1986, pp. 36-40.

Among other things Rupel stated that there are differences of opinion as to whether the Serbs are really persecuted in Kosovo. He also advised the Serbs to realize that Kosovo is no longer exclusively theirs, arguing that the Slovenes today do not claim Trieste or Klagenfurt on historical grounds. Further, he pointed out that, as a Slovene, he probably looked at matters differently, saying that excessive criticism of 'etatist tendencies' (implying limitations of Kosovo's autonomy) constitute a potential threat to Slovenian independence. Rupel finally declared that Yugoslavia as a state is nothing self-evident, but the result of a contract. The Slovenes, for example, had joined the Yugoslav federation on the condition that they would be able to preserve their national identity. Therefore, the present, and in Serbia much criticized, confederate character of the Yugoslav state is the only solution to the national question. In general Rupel was of the opinion that the Slovenes should be more aware of, and more openly manifest their national consciousness.

For several issues of *Duga* there was a very heated debate between Rupel and, mostly, Serbian readers, the main adversary being Ljuba Tadić, sociologist and Praxis-philosopher (one of the 'Belgrade eight') whom Rupel had criticized for nationalist tendencies.<sup>75</sup>

This debate, like other controversies in cultural life, showed that the Kosovo issue is closely related to the general problem of the preservation of Serbian culture and identity in Yugoslavia. It also illustrated that there are very different views on the character of the Yugoslav federation, and that Serbian arguments on behalf of Yugoslavism are easily perceived as 'Great Serbian' aspirations.

The general political and cultural climate, however, is of equal importance for the reactualization of Serbian identity. In all areas of society there is a questioning of basic aspects of the Yugoslav system. Economists, political scientists and sociologists are criticizing the institutional solutions that according to their view are responsible for the present very difficult situation: an inflation around 100 per cent, more than one million unemployed, nearly as many Yugoslavs living abroad, increasing social cleavages, discontent and apathy among the population, as well as national tensions.

The critical discussion thus increasingly blames the self-management system, or at least its operation in practice, for the problems affecting Yugoslav society. Common to the growing literature on the crisis, whether it deals with the 'economy of negotiation' or negative aspects of the federal system, or, again, discusses political pluralism, is a conviction that any solution to the grave economic problems must involve political reforms. This would mean an end to political interference in the economy and other spheres of society, and

<sup>75</sup> *Duga*, 26.7.1986, pp. 36-40; 9.8.1986, pp. 36-40; 23.8-5.9.1986, pp. 36-40; & 6.9.-19.9.1986, pp. 35-39.

would ultimately change the position of the political elite.<sup>76</sup>

Of special importance in this context is perhaps the fact that a new political discourse has been created, which treats social and political problems in an unprejudiced manner, and also demands that politicians should be made responsible for their actions.<sup>77</sup>

Another aspect of cultural life is the scrutiny of important stages in the history of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav communist party which is taking place in fiction, memoirs/biographies or historical research.

The breakthrough came with the so called 'Literature on Goli Otok',<sup>78</sup> that is, books dealing with the harsh treatment of real or would-be stalinists after 1948, one of the most important being 'Moment II' by Antonije Isaković,<sup>79</sup> vice-president of the Serbian Academy of Sciences. It was followed by several others, and since then many books of fiction have treated similar problematic topics.<sup>80</sup> One could mention Mladen Markov's description of the excesses in the countryside at the time of forced purchase or during the process of collectivization,<sup>81</sup> or Igor Torkar's autobiographical novel 'Death on Installments'<sup>82</sup> dealing with the 'Dachau Processes' at which in 1948 former inmates of the concentration camp were sentenced to death or long imprisonment at fake trials in Ljubljana. Another, and highly controversial example, is Dobrica Ćosić's trilogy about the role of the communist party in interwar and wartime Yugoslavia, of which up to now two volumes have been published: 'The Sinner'<sup>83</sup> and 'The Apostate',<sup>84</sup> showing the party's subordination to the interests of Comintern and its intolerance towards members or sympathizers who could not accept the Moscow trials of the 1930s or the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact.

Although literature in a sense has acted as a substitute for history, similar themes are increasingly being studied by historians. Among recent works one should especially mention Kosta Čavoški's and Vojislav Koštunica's 'Party

<sup>76</sup> Among the many books devoted to these problems one should mention Josip Županov's discussion of negative aspects of the economic system (Županov, Josip: *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi*. Zagreb: Globus, 1983), and Jovan Mirić's criticism of the confederate principles of the 1974 constitution (Mirić, Jovan: *Sistem i kriza. Prilog kritičkoj analizi ustavnog i političkog sistema Jugoslavije*. Zagreb: Centar za kulturnu djelatnost, 1984). Of special interest is perhaps Mijalko Todorović's 'The Political Nature of The Social Crisis', in which the former very highly placed politician pleads for a multi-party system (Todorović, Mijalko: *Društveno biće političke krize*. Zagreb: Scientia Yugoslavica, 1985).

<sup>77</sup> Magnusson, 1987 (see n. 13).

<sup>78</sup> *Goli otok* [The Naked Island] is an island in the Adriatic that served as a prison for stalinists and others after 1948. For a discussion of this literature, see Scheffler, Leonore: 'Goli otok. Das Jahr 1948 in den jugoslawischen Gegenwartslitteraturen', *Südosteuropa*, Jg. 33:6 (1984), pp. 352-377.

<sup>79</sup> Isaković, Antonije: *Tren II*. Belgrade: Prosveta, 1982.

<sup>80</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of critical novels of this kind, including those on 1948, see Marković, Milivoje: *Preispitivanja*. Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985.

<sup>81</sup> Markov, Mladen: *Isterivanje boga 1-2*. Belgrade: Prosveta, 1984.

<sup>82</sup> Torkar, Igor: *Umiranje na rate. Dachauski procesi*. Zagreb: Globus, 1984.

<sup>83</sup> Ćosić, Dobrica: *Grešnik*. Belgrade; Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1985.

<sup>84</sup> *Idem*: *Otpadnik*. Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1986.

Pluralism or Monism',<sup>85</sup> discussing the communist assumption of power after the war, or Veselin Djuretić's study of the Second World War, 'The Allied and the Yugoslav War Drama',<sup>86</sup> giving a partly new interpretation of both the *četnik* movement and the partisan resistance. In neither book is the image of the party very flattering. By defining the *četnik*s as antifascist and pointing out the manipulative character of some of the party's policies, Djuretić is blurring the distinction between the two movements. Čavoški and Koštunica, on their part, draw the attention to the tactical manouevres used by the party in order to gain control of Yugoslav society.

Both books, therefore, challenge the foundation myth of socialist Yugoslavia and in the end the legitimacy of the party. As in the political novels, the actions of the party are seen from a moral point of view, and the implicit question in all this literature is whether it was really necessary to sacrifice political pluralism and individual freedom in order to build or defend socialism. This issue was recently discussed in terms of principle by the literary historian and philosopher Nikola Milošević in his book 'Marxism and Jesuitism'.<sup>87</sup>

On issue after issue, then, both the party's ability to solve the ongoing crisis and the very moral basis of its power are being questioned.

Such a discussion will sooner or later deal with alternatives to the existing socio-political order. The reevaluation of Yugoslav history has therefore led to a reinterpretation of the liberal tradition in interwar Serbia, a society which in important respects is felt to have been more tolerant than the present one. The literary historian Djordjije Vuković says in a discussion:

After the war the material conditions for cultural life were certainly more favourable. Artistic freedom, however, was not greater. There are no reports that anybody in pre-war Yugoslavia was sentenced to prison because of a book of poetry or a work of art. Neither are there reports that eminent politicians would have forbidden any artistic current or condemned those who used a certain artistic technique.<sup>88</sup>

Vuković also says:

Here is another example that might be embarrassing to many. The notorious 'bourgeois press' clearly saw what happened in the Moscow trials, whereas the

<sup>85</sup> Koštunica, Vojislav & Čavoški, Kosta: *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam: Društveni pokreti i politički sistem u Jugoslaviji 1944-1949*. Belgrade: Centar za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, Institut društvenih nauka, 1983. (*Party Pluralism or Monism: Social Movements and Political System in Yugoslavia 1944-1949*. [East European Monographs, 189]. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.)

<sup>86</sup> Djuretić, Veselin: *Saveznici i jugoslovenska ratna drama I-II*. (Balkanološki institut SANU). Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985. The book, which caused a lot of political trouble, was finally banned by a Belgrade district court in late 1986 (*Politika*, 30.1.1986). This decision was however altered by the supreme court in Serbia, declaring that the book did not alarm public opinion (*NIN*, 15.2.1987, p. 12).

<sup>87</sup> Milošević, Nikola: *Marksizam i Jezuitizam*. Belgrade: Prolaz 1 (Izdavači: Nikola Milošević, Zdenka Aćin & Slobodan Mašić), 1985.

<sup>88</sup> See *Intervju*, 9.5.1986, p. 15.

*Proleter* assured its readers that 'fascist murderers', 'a criminal band of Trotskyists', 'bandits and killers' were sentenced according to all judicial rules and with full respect of due process of law. The most important and comprehensive article about these trials is by the *Proleter* (vol. XII, nr 7) given the title 'The Trotskyist-Zinovievist fascist bandits before the people's court in Moscow'. Today we tend to think of the Moscow trials largely as they were described by the 'bourgeois press' and not by the *Proleter* which through its attacks on the convicted was competing with Moscow papers.<sup>89</sup>

Besides the issue of democracy, however, both literature and scholarship directly or indirectly touch upon the other main theme: the fate of the Serbian people. In the discussion of the Second World War and other historical periods the dependence of the Yugoslav communist party on Comintern is particularly emphasized. Now, one of the most important consequences of this relationship was the attitude towards the national question. Officially there is a continuity in the party's policy, that is, Yugoslav communists were always advocating the idea of a federal state. However, for about ten years, up to 1936, following the general line of Comintern, the party in fact propagated the break-up of Yugoslavia and the creation of independent Croatian and Macedonian states, as well as the unification of Kosovo with Albania. Yugoslavia as such was considered an artificial state, a 'prison of nations', and the Serbian people characterized as oppressive.<sup>90</sup>

It is increasingly evident that Serbian intellectuals and public opinion are not willing to accept this traditional point of view. On one hand, it is argued, the idea of Serbian exploitation is simply contrary to historical evidence,<sup>91</sup> on the other, in its logical consequences it would mean a justification of those nationalist ideas that are otherwise condemned.

In a Serbian perspective, then, the current discussions in literature, historical scholarship and the social sciences have several implications. It could be argued that the negative effects of the *general* policies pursued by the party have been detrimental to the interests of the Serbs. Economic mistakes and the neglect of agriculture have, for example, also destroyed those aspects of Serbian village culture that were positive, while the authoritarian political system has ignored the achievements of the interwar liberal tradition. Above all, though, the party has failed in the area supposed to be the most important basis for its legitimacy: National relations have deteriorated, and they have done so in a way that is threatening Serbian culture and identity.

<sup>89</sup> *Intervju*, 9.5.1986, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> Shoup, Paul: *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968. For recent discussions of the issue, see Pešić, Desanka: *Jugoslovenski komunisti i nacionalno pitanje 1919-1935*. Belgrade: Rad, 1983; and Vlajčić, Gordana: *Jugoslovenska revolucija i nacionalno pitanje (1919-1927)*. Zagreb: Globus, 1984.

<sup>91</sup> See for example the discussion 'Revolution and Historiography' in *Marksistička misao*, 1986:4, pp. 189-264.

The nationality problem is thus to a large segment of the Serbian intelligentsia related to the issues of democracy and culture. The situation in Kosovo seems to be the ultimate proof of all that has gone wrong: an irrational economy, bureaucratic abuse and corruption, political intolerance and lack of respect for democracy and justice. And many intellectuals who earlier did not care very much about their ethnic affiliation are now acutely aware of their Serbian identity. Their views on the basic problems of contemporary Yugoslav society differ from those of dogmatic socialists, or from the pragmatic attitude typical of the present leadership. As far as the situation in Kosovo is concerned, however, there is a wide-spread conviction, regardless of political opinion, that the Serbs are subject to persecution, if not genocide.<sup>92</sup>

A general theme underlying much of Serbian experience of present day Yugoslavia is thus that the Serbs are threatened: In Kosovo by Albanian nationalism, in Bosnia by a combination of Islamic fundamentalism and neostalinism, in Croatia by linguistic assimilation, in Slovenia by the ethnocentric attitudes of the majority population towards Serbian immigrants from Bosnia.

In this climate there are certain tendencies to see a solution to the problems in some kind of Serbian separatism. If others reject Yugoslavia, then, this is somewhat simplified the ideal-typical view, the Serbs should draw the correct conclusions and demand their own national rights. One example of this way of thinking is the well-known (unpublished) article by the Sarajevo political scientist Vojislav Šešelj, where the author pleads for a partition of Bosnia.

The Serbian concern is partly to be explained by purely structural features of the multiethnic Yugoslav society. Although the Serbs constitute the largest ethnic group, they do not form a majority (36.4%), and they are, furthermore, scattered throughout the country. There are substantial Serbian minorities in Kosovo (13.2%), Croatia (11.6%) and Bosnia (32.1%), whereas in Vojvodina there is a slight majority (54.6%). This means that the Serbs would have to be in favour either of Yugoslavism or a 'Great Serbian' option (which never was realistic, for these very reasons).<sup>93</sup> A break-up of Yugoslavia, as well as a strict confederate solution would mean 40% of the Serbs living outside 'interior Serbia', potentially subject to cultural assimilation.

In order to comprehend the Serbian self-understanding and preoccupation with threat and disaster, one has also to bear in mind the trauma represented by the First World War, in which Serbia lost almost 1,300,000

<sup>92</sup> The term genocide is frequently used when referring to the situation of the Serbs in Kosovo. However, the Serbian writer Milovan Danajlić has pointed out that the term is not appropriate and should be reserved to cases like the extermination of the Jews, or the persecution of Serbs by the Ustaša-regime; see *Književna reč*, 10.10.1986, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> During the period of nation-building in the 19th century both alternatives played important roles in cultural and political life. See Behschnitt, Wolf Dietrich: *Nationalismus bei Serben und Kroaten 1830-1914. Analyse und Typologie der nationalen Ideologie*. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung des Doktorsgrades des Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität zur Köln, 1976.

people, or a third of its population, only to be hit by new afflictions twenty years later.

These feelings are deeply rooted, and they are manifested in popular songs, as well as in literature and historical studies.<sup>94</sup> Dobrica Ćosić's great four-volume novel 'Time of Death'<sup>95</sup> is devoted to this very problem and recently a documentary book on the First World War edited by the well-known writer Vidosav Stevanović was published under the expressive title 'The Golgatha and Resurrection of Serbia'.<sup>96</sup>

In this context one should mention the 'Book about Milutin'<sup>97</sup> a novel which has gone through twenty editions, an extraordinary phenomenon in Yugoslavia. Milutin is a peasant from Šumadija, the Serbian heart-land south of Belgrade. He is in prison in connection with the forced purchase of grain and cattle after the war and tells a fellow prisoner the story of his life. Like many of his compatriots Milutin was a soldier in the first war and his only son died in the bitter fighting at Srem towards the end of the second.

What has provoked the interest of readers is the fact that Milutin seems to embody a popular image of the archetype Serb. He has a fundamental respect for life and nature, a simple wisdom in sharp contrast to the arrogance of today. He is suspicious of the phrases of ideologies, whether they are leftist or rightist, and he distrusts the representatives of the educated classes wishing to lead and instruct him. And at the same time as he expresses an intuitive and deep pacifism, he knows that one has to go to war.

The 'Book about Milutin' might not be a first-rate work of art,<sup>98</sup> but it summarizes some of the important tendencies in Serbian public opinion and the author skilfully employs themes and techniques used by others. The most controversial aspect of the book is that the author lets Milutin and others make statements with important implications in the present political situation.

One theme of the novel is that of suffering, another is 'our brothers the Southern Slavs' who neither asked to be liberated by the Serbs, nor showed any gratitude afterwards.

Why did we have to kiss the earth of *Kajmačalan* and irritate the Macedonians, who, as I understand, say that we occupied them in 1918. Why didn't we let them liberate themselves on their own, if the Bulgarians would have allowed them?<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> The centrality of this problem is illustrated by the fact that the Serbian Academy of Sciences is conducting a large research project on genocide in the Balkans; see *Godišnjak XCII za 1985*. Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1986, p. 226.

<sup>95</sup> Ćosić, Dobrica: *Vreme smrti I-IV*. Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1984.

<sup>96</sup> *Golgata i vaskrs Srbije I-II*. Eds.: Silvija Djurić & Vidosav Stevanović. Belgrade: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1984.

<sup>97</sup> Popović, Danko: *Knjiga o Milutinu*. Belgrade: NIRO Književne novine, 1986.

<sup>98</sup> See Teodor Andjelić's discussion of the reviews of the book in *NIN*, 10.8.1986, pp. 28-29.

<sup>99</sup> Popović, 1986, p. 41 (see n. 97).

Then there is the theme of humiliation:

Will the Arnauts (Albanians) always believe that they can do unto the Serbs whatever they like asks Pavle. Will they always think that we will be as weak as they are now seeing us?<sup>100</sup>

Yet another theme deals with the fact that the South Slav 'brothers' were fighting on the enemy side, and sometimes turned out to be more cruel than the Austrians.

The Second World War is referred to in a similar manner. Both the misdirected patriotism of the royalists, and the uncompromising attitude of the communists are criticized. A *Četnik* says on one occasion to a group of peasants:

And now, those who shot at You in 1914, that's it, these very people, are in command of the uprising, are You surprised? You don't ask why the uprising did not start in Zagorje, so the Germans could kill 15,000 pupils in Varaždin, as they did in Kragujevac or Kraljevo, You elders of the fatherland. Why didn't they start the witches' dance there? No, the comrades from Zagorje had to come here, to Šumadija, to play with the lives of Your children and grandchildren.<sup>101</sup>

Who participated as a non-commissioned officer in the Imperial Army, who was from Zagorje, if not a certain Josip Broz?

### The Church and Kosovo

The conflict in Kosovo has also led to a religious mobilization among the Serbs. Although Albanian aspirations to independence are not primarily expressed in religious terms, it is nevertheless a conflict between Muslims and Christians.

If Kosovo is a highly emotional symbol to Serbs in general, it is of course even more so to the Church. The patriarchate in Peć and the famous medieval monasteries of Kosovo, with their frescoes and icons, mark the long Serbian presence in the area and the Church traditionally views itself as a defender and preserver of Serbian culture. The Kosovo myth furthermore occupies a very special position in the teaching and self image of the Church. Prince Lazar, one of the Serbian saints, who was killed in the battle of Kosovo in 1389, chose according to tradition, like Christ himself, the 'Kingdom of Heaven' instead of earthly glory, and the theme of noble suffering and martyrdom thus has a deep religious-national meaning.

Such ideas and emotions are moreover nourished by the present conflict.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

The press from time to time reports harassment of priests and nuns, destruction of church property and desecration of graves.<sup>102</sup>

The leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church has kept a fairly low profile, but has at the same time for many years tried to draw the attention of the authorities to these problems.<sup>103</sup> Evidently there are those within the church who would like a more outspoken stand<sup>104</sup> and in later years it is noticeable how the journal *Pravoslavlje*, partly as a consequence of the general process of liberalization in Serbia, is more openly discussing the position of the church and especially the Kosovo issue. In a specific way the events of today are related to those of yesterday. Almost every issue of *Pravoslavlje* will have an article on the suffering in 'Old Serbia', and the important point is that what is told in consular reports or letters from priests written in the 19th century to a very high degree reminds the reader of the present situation: usurpation of land, damage of property, assaults and molesting of women.

It is interesting to note that the crisis in Kosovo coincides with a marked improvement of the relations between Church and state.<sup>105</sup> The Church has finally been permitted to resume the construction of St. Sava's cathedral near the national library in Belgrade and the state contributed to the celebrations on the 800th anniversary of the famous Studenica monastery. In general the party is more relaxed in its attitude towards Church and religion. In Serbia, one should add. In Vojvodina or in Bosnia the religious policy is still rather strict and several orthodox priests (like their catholic or muslim counterparts) have been sentenced to prison for offending the laws on religion, or for nationalism. This, in turn, has led to critical comments in papers like *Politika* or *NIN*, and has been understood as another proof of the repressive and anti-Serbian conditions in Bosnia.<sup>106</sup>

There was, however, towards the end of the summer 1986, in what seemed to be a minor ideological campaign, criticism of the Church in Serbia as well. The party especially commented upon differences between a militant faction in the Church and the more moderate policy adopted by the patriarch German. In particular were criticized certain tendencies to religious mobilization inspired by the late bishop Nikolaj Velimirović.<sup>107</sup> In the interwar period bishop Nikolaj was the leader of the 'prayer movement' (*Bogomoljački pokret*), cultivating a popular mysticism with origins in Byzantine monasticism which now seems to undergo a certain renaissance in Serbia and Bosnia.

Nikolaj is semi-officially regarded as a collaborator, something which is indignantly denied by the Church which points out that both he and the

<sup>102</sup> Magnusson, 1981, p. 13 (see n. 11); *idem*, 1982, p. 42 (see n. 35); *idem*, 1983, p. 14 (see n. 17).

<sup>103</sup> Magnusson, 1983, pp. 14-16 (see n. 17).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. See also Bogdanović, Dimitrije: 'The Serbian Church in Troubled Kosovo', *Relations*, 1986:3, pp. 11-22.

<sup>105</sup> Magnusson, 1983, p. 15 (see n. 17).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30; and *idem*, 1982, pp. 40-42 (see n. 35).

<sup>107</sup> See *Vjesnik*, 13.7.1986; *Novosti*, 31.7.1986; *Dnevnik*, 17.8.1986, *Danas*, 8.7.1986; and *Politika*, 17.8.1986.

patriarch Gavriilo were interned in the Dachau concentration camp because of their refusal to cooperate with the Germans.<sup>108</sup> Recently the well-known theologian Atanasije Jevtić wrote on this matter:

The Serbian Church and the Serbian believing nation can only feel pride that their patriarch Gavriilo and their most eminent bishop, Nikolaj, spent the war as prisoners and martyrs, in the same way as it is proud that several of its bishops, hundreds of priests, and hundreds of thousands believers died as martyrs.<sup>109</sup>

Jevtić also says:

The same journalist does not ask himself who were the real friends and allies of Hitler both in 1939 when partitioning Poland and later when Hitler was congratulated on the occupation of Paris, and so on until the 22 of June 1941.<sup>110</sup>

This is of course another allusion to the Yugoslav communist party and its leadership.

The Church is involved in the Kosovo conflict in yet another way. Some of the leaders who have appeared among the Serbs in Kosovo are active laymen and in a situation where people feel they are deserted by the state many apparently seek comfort in the Church. Religious holidays and memorial days usually draw large crowds of people, and among the 100,000 faithful celebrating the 800th anniversary of Studencia there was also a delegation of a few thousand Kosovars.<sup>111</sup>

Another interesting development is the rapprochement and cooperation between orthodox theologians and famous cultural personalities in Serbia. Several priests are members of the authors' union in Belgrade and sociologists, historians, and others participate in public discussions arranged by the Church.

This tendency was especially evident on two occasions in the spring of 1986. One was the already mentioned celebration of Studenica, the other the funeral of Dimitrije Bogdanović, medievalist and academician, close to the Church, whose death was considered a national tragedy.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>108</sup> See for example the articles by Atanasije Jevtić in *Pravoslavlje*, 1.9.1986, pp. 11-13; 1.10.1986, pp. 10-11; and 15.10.1986, pp. 10-11.

<sup>109</sup> *Pravoslavlje*, 15.10.1986, p. 10.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.10.1986, p. 11.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.1986, p. 11.

<sup>112</sup> See *ibid.*, 1.7.1986; *Književne novine*, 1.7.1986; *Politika*, 21.6.1986; and *Književna reč*, 1.7.1986. There was also an article on Bogdanović in *Relations* 1986:3, pp. 7-10, the literary quarterly published in English by the association of Serbian writers.

## Conclusion

Last autumn the tendencies referred to in this paper became one of the central themes on the Yugoslav political agenda. A preliminary sketch of a 'memorandum' concerning the general situation in Serbia and Yugoslavia, produced within the Serbian Academy of Sciences, found its way to the press and resulted in vehement criticism of the Academy, in particular of its vice-president, the writer Antonije Isaković.

The document has not been published *in extenso*, but obviously it is a thorough criticism of both the political system and the ideology, at the same time as it discusses the grievances of Serbia from the perspective described above.<sup>113</sup>

It is not clear, though, to what extent the 'memorandum' is to be classified as a nationalist or separatist pamphlet. According to press reports the document speaks about a 'Slovene-Croat coalition', pursuing an anti-Serb policy, and it is also claimed that the Academicians are in favour of (or fear?) the break-up of Yugoslavia. They are, moreover, critical of both Edvard Kardelj and the late president Tito.

After pressure the Academy decided to stop further work on the memorandum, but at the same time stated its intentions to discuss these problems in one form or the other. The celebration of the Academy's 100th anniversary was furthermore postponed until May 1987.<sup>114</sup>

For a time there were signs of a traditional political campaign, especially outside Serbia.<sup>115</sup> It was even hinted by a party functionary in Vojvodina that the Serbian party at least passively had tolerated counter-revolutionary ideas.<sup>116</sup>

On the 18th of December the Academy held its extraordinary assembly. It turned out that a vast majority of the Academicians still had confidence in their presidium and that they were not prepared to yield to pressures.<sup>117</sup>

What is perhaps most interesting in all this is the fact that the Serbian party leaders, while criticizing individual members of the Academy, nevertheless objected to the view that nationalism is spreading in Serbia, and that the situation would be similar to that of Croatia around 1970. They have, more-

<sup>113</sup> For a discussion in English of the 'Memorandum crisis' see Stanković, Slobodan: 'The Serbian Academy's Memorandum', *Radio Free Europe Research*, Yugoslavia/11, Situation Report (20.11.1986), pp. 7-11; and 'Serbian Academy Defies the Party', *Radio Free Europe Research*, Yugoslavia/1, Situation Report (22.1.1987), pp. 3-4.

<sup>114</sup> *NIN*, 26.10.1986, pp. 14-15.

<sup>115</sup> *Danas*, 7.10.1986, pp. 9-12; 14.10.1986, pp. 25-28; 21.10.1986, pp. 20-23; and 4.11.1986, pp. 9-13.

<sup>116</sup> His arguments were however undermined by the fact that he threatened that in Vojvodina one could not and would not 'guarantee the safety' of persons thinking along these lines. Which led to very sharp reactions in Serbia and to a reprimand from the provincial leadership; see *NIN*, 2.11.1986, pp. 12-13.

<sup>117</sup> *Politika*, 19.12.1986, pp. 7-8; *NIN*, 28.12.1986, pp. 26-29.

over, continued to argue for a revision of the 'republican' status of Kosovo and Vojvodina.

Besides the demographic factors referred to earlier, the ethnic mobilization among the Serbs must be seen in the context of more general social processes and specific institutional characteristics. Regardless of the intentions behind any particular policy, these aspects will contribute to inter-ethnic frictions.

At first, during the post war years there has been a process of nation-building going on in Macedonia, Kosovo, and among the Bosnian Muslims. This policy, which has been actively supported by the party, would in itself make ethnic dimensions salient and could at least implicitly be contrary to the principle of Yugoslavism. On the other hand, it is difficult to see how one could control basic sociocultural processes of this kind.

Secondly, the political system as such tends to heighten ethnic tensions, because the combination of a federative constitution and one-party system ultimately means that the only legitimate social conflicts are those along republican-ethnic lines.<sup>118</sup>

It is these circumstances Dobrica Ćosić has in mind when he says in 'The Real and the Possible':

If in Yugoslavia a traditional, that is nationalist-etatistic policy will dominate and be victorious, if the democratic tendencies in socialism will not finally be more important than bureaucratic and petty bourgeois currents, then among the Serbs as well an older historical goal and national ideal will come to the fore – the idea of the unification of the Serbian people in a separate state. No sophisticated political imagination is needed to foresee the consequences of such a process.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> This is an increasingly common view in Yugoslavia, perhaps most eloquently argued in Jovan Mirić's book *The System and the Crisis* (see n. 76).

<sup>119</sup> Ćosić, 1983, p. 70 (see n. 1).