The Search for a Communist Legitimacy: Tito's Yugoslavia

Author: Robert Edward Niebuhr

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ABSTRACT
THE SEARCH FOR A COMMUNIST LEGITIMACY: TITO’S YUGOSLAVIA
ROBERT EDWARD NIEBUHR
Supervised by Larry Wolff

Titoist Yugoslavia—the multiethnic state rising out of the chaos of World War II—is a particularly interesting setting to examine the integrity of the modern nation-state and, more specifically, the viability of a distinctly multi-ethnic nation-building project. Much scholarly literature has been devoted to the brutal civil wars that destroyed Yugoslavia during the 1990s with emphasizes on divisive nationalism and dysfunctional politics. But what held Tito’s state together for the preceding forty-six years? In an attempt to understand better what united the stable, multiethnic, and successful Yugoslavia that existed before 1991, this dissertation illuminates the pervasive problem of legitimacy within this larger history. Cast aside and threatened with removal by Stalin’s henchmen after the war, Tito made his revolution a genuine alternative to Soviet control. Because Tito and the ruling elite feared the loss of political power by either foreign aggression or from domestic groups challenging the Communist Party’s (LCY) claim to govern, they fought hard for the reform of Marxism. Furthermore, Yugoslav elites manipulated popular conceptions of a Yugoslav identity as a means to solidify their regime with a unifying and progressive identity. Citing elite perceptions of the Yugoslav system—including key aspects of central institutions such as the LCY and the military—this dissertation attempts to reconcile how leaders of a country that scholars have dismissed as full of national hatreds had constructed a functioning and popular system for so long.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Larry Wolff. His careful critique and analysis of my work over the years was most helpful and his encouraging attitude made such a large project bearable. James Cronin and Timothy Crawford also served as wonderful advisors since my beginning at Boston College. Work in their seminars led to presentations and publications of journal articles, giving me greater experience and confidence in my scholarship. I should also like to thank the history department at Boston College for its generous funding as well as the Graduate Student Association, for awarding me a Research Expense Grant for my archival work in Hungary and Serbia during the summer of 2007. The many helpful archivists made this undertaking possible—a warm thanks to all of them. Dean Candace Hetzner helped find funding for several trips to former Yugoslavia and for that, I am grateful. The Fulbright program deserves appreciation for funding my original research for my Master’s Thesis at Arizona State University. As a Fulbrighter in Croatia, I not only gained tremendous insight into life in Yugoslavia, but also made lasting friendships. Finally, and in some ways most importantly, I would like to thank Mike Chapman, whose dedication to learning and rigorous commentary on writing style stands in a class of its own. I should like to mention some of the people over the years who have worked with me and mentored this and other projects, including, but surely not limited to: Stephen Batalden, Danko Šipka, Thomas Butler, Bernd Scherak, But Dedaj, and Ligia Gómez Franco. Despite all of the good advice throughout my academic career, no one but me is responsible for the flaws of my work. 

ROBERT NIEBUHR
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>LCY*</td>
<td>League of Communists of Yugoslavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>JNA/YPA</td>
<td>Yugoslav People’s Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDF</td>
<td>Territorial Defense Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDB-a</td>
<td>Uprava državne bezbednosti (Office of State Security)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>COMINFORM</td>
<td>Communist Information Bureau</td>
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<td>COMINTERN</td>
<td>Communist International</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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*In 1952, the official name of Yugoslavia’s Communist Party (then, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, CPY) changed to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). Unless otherwise specified, any mention of communists in Yugoslavia refers to the LCY.*
NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND TERMS

In his recent translation of Dante’s *Inferno*, John Ciardi has noted that language is like a musical instrument, and, as such, each language enjoys its own specific logic. Ciardi stated that to unveil the rich language of Dante for English readers, he rejected the notion of word-for-word translation. Instead, “transposition” has replaced the conception of directly correlating words exactly from the original language.¹ I agree wholeheartedly with this concept of bringing alive the original text as part of a broader understanding in order to capture better the spirit of the speaker’s language.

I have been fortunate to learn Serbo–Croatian—or, today, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Montenegrin—from native speakers in the United States and in former Yugoslavia; but, in addition, I have been able to share my skills with other language learners. In 2005, I signed onto a project to coauthor with Aida Vidan two beginner-level books on Croatian and Serbian for English speakers. Thanks to insightful commentary by linguists including Wayles Browne at Cornell University and Danko Šipka at Arizona State University, these books represent thorough and user-friendly guides to developing reliable competency in either Croatian or Serbian. Moreover, I am thankful to Patricia Chaput—language director of the Slavic Department at Harvard—for having invited me to teach Bosnian–Croatian–Serbian (BCS) for a semester at the introductory and intermediate levels. My students gave great feedback on the language books (then in draft form) and helped me to develop further my own language and teaching skills. To all of them, I am grateful.

A language as complex as BCS defies easy translation into English if, for no other reason, than the absolute density of Slavic sentence structure. What I have done throughout this dissertation was to focus on transposing as Ciardi has with Dante, rather than having created blocky and awkward English from otherwise sophisticated BCS. The only archival materials not presented in the original language appeared in certain boxes at the Open Society Archives in Budapest; there, some materials were in original form, while professionals at Radio Free Europe or the U.S. State Department directly recorded or translated other resources into English. In such cases, I have kept the spellings as presented, without an addition of diacritical marks to names of people or places. Otherwise, throughout the text, the English equivalency—from BCS, German, or Slovenian—is solely my responsibility. Lastly, I have provided the original language in the footnote if I deemed that a fuller examination might prove useful for the reader; as an extension of that, because BCS appears in both Latin and Cyrillic scripts, there are a few points where I maintained Cyrillic script as in the original.

I have tried at every point in the dissertation to be as precise and deliberate as possible; to that end, I have attempted to follow stylistic conventions as much as possible, but, as sources sometimes paint only a partial picture, an occasional actor lacks a complete name or an appropriate political title. I have chosen not to use quotation marks for cynicism nor have I used emphasis except when appropriate formatting helps point the reader more directly to my argument. For references, I have tried to follow what the respective archivists have suggested, but I have elected to describe fully the documents in the notes so that they can be readily found; as a result, despite a standardized system of
abbreviation and citation, some references are a tad lengthy.

Finally, debate exits over whether to use the terms “Non-aligned Movement,” “Non-Aligned Movement,” or simply “N[n]onalignment.” I will employ “Non-aligned Movement” when I am referring to the proper noun and its policies, and I will use “nonalignment” when I am discussing the broader concept of Cold War neutrality or when I use the term as a collective. Despite the suggestion in the most recent *Chicago Manual of Style*, I also capitalize the Cold War. This is deliberate, since I think that the capitalization differentiates this American–Soviet standoff from other cold wars. For names, I have tried to remain true to the original language, when possible. As a result, I have chosen Đilas instead of Djilas, Nasir over Nasser, and Josif Dzhugashvili Stalin rather than Joseph Stalin. If these and other names appeared differently in quoted material, I left the spellings as they were. It was my intention throughout this dissertation to deliver the most accurate material without leaving the reader confused as to conventions or style.
INTRODUCTION

In the first place, we fear Churchill; Churchill, the old wolf. And we fear Eisenhower because he still understands. Yes, we are afraid.¹

—Nikita Khrushchev to Josip Broz Tito, 1955

In 1990, when the Yugoslav Communist Party (LCY) dissolved its monopoly of political power in Yugoslavia, the New York Times journalist Marlise Simmons quoted an unnamed delegate from the constituent Slovenian LCY who prophetically proclaimed that, “birth and death are two crucial moments in a life and both are taking place here at this congress.”² The subsequent dismemberment of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s shocked the world with brutality unseen in Europe since World War II. The secession of Yugoslavia’s republics along ethnic lines reopened the prior questions about the integrity of the modern nation-state and, more specifically, the lasting consequences of multiethnic polities.

Because this multi-ethnic creation failed the test of longevity and violently broke apart during the 1990s—merely a decade after longtime dictator Josip Broz Tito’s anticipated death—scholarship since has portrayed conflict, and specifically ethnic conflict, as the primarily negative explanation of why multi-ethnic Yugoslavia failed. From another angle, though, it becomes clear that while conflict served a key role in the creation, existence, and destruction of Tito’s state, the dismemberment of the state was in


no way inevitable. Rather than seeing ethnic hatred at the core of troubles in Yugoslavia, I will clarify the relatively successful existence of Yugoslavia as a series of crises of expectation; conflict, or the threat of conflict, simply aided the communist leaders towards realizing their promise to the people of a better life.

One of the challenges in writing history lies in the ability to present material without assigning contemporary values or ideology to historical actors. The Cold War ended and since then Marxism has largely eroded as a viable worldview across the globe, especially as Maoist China embarked on serious economic reforms that deemphasized central planning. We cannot assume, though, that Marxists during the period under consideration were cynics or that their policies would not have persisted for many more years to come. As a result, this dissertation focuses on the actors of the time and puts into perspective their strategies as seen at the time, primarily using their own words. I have employed their voice liberally to illuminate their perspectives and have tried to make my own interpretation separate and clear. Finally, because political elites in Yugoslav had no idea that their state would collapse in 1991, I think that we do them a disservice by examining everything through the lens of destruction and ethnic hatreds.

In an attempt then to understand better what forces combined to produce a relatively stable, multiethnic, and successful Yugoslavia before dismemberment in 1991, this dissertation aims to elucidate the pervasive and enduring problem of legitimacy in the history of Titoist Yugoslavia. This acute dilemma preoccupied the leadership of the country and resulted in a wide array of measures to maintain stability and strength. In addition to the government’s manipulation of fear as a basic part of the struggle for
political mastery, widespread uncertainty also preoccupied the ruling elites as part of a genuine attempt to come to terms with the fragile external political environment marked by the Cold War. The implications of analyzing the problem of legitimacy as a tool in this context include understanding how members of Tito’s Communist Party relied primarily upon, and brokered the reform of Marxism, to endure serious challenges to their rule. I hypothesize that the never-ending search for legitimacy—real or imagined—served as the primary factor in shaping the nature of progress in Titoist Yugoslavia.

While the history of modern Yugoslavia falls under the subset of state building in the modern era, the prospect of destruction has defined the Yugoslav state-building project. After 1948, when Soviet Premier Josif Dzhugashvili Stalin set Tito as an outcast and placed him tenuously between the superpower blocs in the middle of Europe, the ultimate dread that plagued the Yugoslav leadership was its own ruin. Just a few years before that, when Tito created a state based on the ideological principles of Marxism, he recognized not only the latent danger of ideologically-driven politics, but also the underlying power of nationalism as a deciding factor in the survival of a Yugoslav state. Yugoslav communists could easily point to the death of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941 as one fraught by competing nationalisms and zero-sum struggles. While Marxism claimed to have the solution for nationalism, many people still questioned its place as a legitimate force and as a viable, long-lasting system of governance. Nonetheless, Tito and his loyal political elite predicated the stability and integrity of their new creation on the success of Karl Marx’s ideology, and they constantly sought the realization of a communist paradise; all the while, they recognized that in such a “complicated situation,”
it was no longer clear “who the enemy” was.³ Divisive agents operated both in and outside of Yugoslavia and the LCY fought hard to thwart its own destruction.

In subsequent chapters, I will employ three basic assumptions about state-building specific to the Cold War to clarify my argument: the significant role that external pressures played in eliciting notions of unity and cohesion; the multifaceted employment of ideology and propaganda in the quest for popularity and stability; and, the dynamic nature of what it meant for elites to establish and secure a strong state. In the end, despite constant adaptations to their policies after the employment of a reformed socio-economic model based on worker self-management, Yugoslav ruling elites failed to secure a lasting legitimacy for the state. The destruction of the Titoist model that ensued continues to challenge some of the traditional notions of state building, civil-military relations, and legitimate governance.

The notion of legitimacy—as a recognized conformity with law or standards—is quite compelling, especially combined with the highly ideological nature of politics in the twentieth century. Each chapter attempts to focus the regime’s movements—either in the domestic or international spheres—as having this notion in mind. An early Yugoslav scholar, Dennison Rusinow, wrote that for Tito’s experiment to work, elites needed to secure four sources of legitimacy: power; international recognition and legal continuity; Partisan wartime legacy of brotherhood and unity; and last, what Rusinow termed as “relevant only for Marxists”—namely, the legitimacy of their ideology reinforced by the reach for popularity in the “promise of rapid economic development,” and the high

standard of living that accompanies it. These four markers will appear to some extent later as part of this work’s effort to attain why Tito and the LCY made the decisions that they did.

Longtime Yugoslav specialist Sabrina P. Ramet recently has returned to this issue of legitimacy and recognized it as paramount in understanding any of the modern Yugoslav states—indeed, for Ramet, a “permanent crisis” plagued elites who failed “to resolve the dual challenges of state-building and legitimation.” Much of her insight has proven inspiring for this work, although in order to clarify just how pervasive the issue of legitimacy was, my argument will center on the critical events and utterances of key political actors from the time. Prefaced in her look at legitimacy, Ramet has rooted herself in the values of the liberal Enlightenment and taken note of the mood of leaders who perpetuated hostility to this liberal project that “ultimately,” created an atmosphere “conducive to instability and decay.” In contrast to Ramet, I embrace a more relative outlook that takes into account differences between cultures and peoples that may correctly contrast this liberalism; but, in the case of Yugoslavia—placed squarely in Europe—the argument that the Enlightenment has defined the political environment remains dominant and helps to explain the apparent drift of Tito’s regime into a Rechtstaat by 1974. Two final aspects from Ramet’s study have great importance for this study. First, I want to emphasize her point on how system legitimacy works in politics to


incorporate “political, economic, and moral factors,” that when infected with illegitimacy in any one of those spheres, ultimately erodes any authority in the others.\(^7\) We will see how Tito succeeded at times in one area only to face challenges in another. At each of these junctions, the negative features outweighed the positive in the long term and weakened the power of the regime to govern under such varied circumstances.

Regarding the ever-important concept of change in politics, Ramet has concluded, “crisis is associated with vulnerability to and openness to wholesale change.” Elaborated further, Ramet recognized that this effectively meant that a change equaled a legitimacy crisis for Tito.\(^8\) This last point seems a bit presumptuous and discounts the preponderance of evidence that the idea of change, while admittedly wrapped up in securing legitimacy, was wedded to Tito’s Marxist system after the 1948 split with the Soviet Union. Reform of any one-party state is dangerous and has its own unique problems, but elites peddled change in Tito’s Yugoslavia as part of a pledge to improve the lives of everyday people alongside the evolution of politics. Tito’s politics centered on reform and he used it not necessarily to respond to crises of legitimacy so much as to prevent and build a positive one for the future.

In order to understand how legitimacy fits within the broader notions of Yugoslav political history a brief look at competing viewpoints is in order. Former Yugoslavia and its successor states have made news ever since Stalin ejected Tito from the international Communist organization, the Cominform, and severed relations with Yugoslavia.


\(^8\) Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias*, p. 32. Ramet also quoted Lipset, “A crisis of legitimacy is a crisis of change.”
Throughout the ensuing Cold War, policymakers and scholars in the West regarded Tito’s survival as a relative success, praising his independence from Moscow’s guiding hand alongside innovative policies, such as socialist self-management and Tito’s successful stewardship of the promising Non-aligned Movement. While certain elites in the West saw Tito as no different as his communist neighbors, others saw a glimpse of reform as moving increasingly towards democratic norms. This complex, and often conflicted, view of Tito, alienated him from true inclusion into international organizations and thus hampered his quest for a lasting and secure system.

The problem that this dissertation addresses intersects with why Titoist Yugoslavia—a relatively successful and functional state—collapsed in 1991, unleashing the worst barbarism in Europe since World War II. Arguments about why Yugoslavia collapsed often proceed on the assumption that a Yugoslav project had been either impossible to make into reality or that Titoist elites simply failed to establish a proper political condition. The media coverage of the brutal civil wars propagated the idea that old national hatreds brought about the dismemberment of Yugoslavia due to the intense ethnic rivalries of groups that merely tolerated each other during Tito’s relatively benign yet repressive dictatorship.9 These primordialist theories of nationalism, by assigning to

9. Certain language emerged—both before and after the wars of secession—that Yugoslavia was a country rooted in ethnic tensions and violence. This discourse mainly arose among journalists; but, these conceptions did not only remain isolated to newspapers. For examples of these representations see Anatole Shub, “After Tito—Who Can Keep Together the Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Bosnian Moslems, Albanians, Hungarians, and Montenegrins?” *New York Times*, 6 January 1972, p. SM38. “The empire [Hapsburg, to which both Croatia and parts of Serbia fell under] was undermined by the conflicts among the various ‘nations’ … Even more bitter nationalist conflict – especially between the Croats and Serbs – swept away the interwar Yugoslav monarchy, too, in the fratricidal chaos of World War II”; also Richard Burt, “Tito is Taken Seriously, and His Succession Even More So,” *New York Times*, 16 October
age-old hatreds the causal force for Yugoslav dissolution, have, though, come under intense scrutiny. Eric Hobsbawm, a contemporary historian of nationalism, has declared that “nationalism was the beneficiary of these developments [dissolution] but not, in any serious sense, an important factor in bringing them about.”

To him, “nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round.” Barry Posen, a political scientist of the realist school, also has argued that nationalism remains largely misunderstood. According to Posen, despite ample evidence to the contrary, people instead find it convenient to “invoke folk theories about ancient hatreds, or sorcerer leaders who have miraculously called them forth.”

Hence, contentious figures such as Serbian president Slobodan Milošević have taken center stage in accounts that try to place blame for the brutality of the 1990s. Instead, this dissertation focuses the

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11. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism, p. 10. This statement by Hobsbawm drew upon Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 48–49. “But nationalism is not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state….Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is a reality, for better or worse, and in general an inescapable one.” See also the compelling constructionist thesis by Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, (New York: Verso, 1991).

evaluation of why Yugoslavia remained together for so long on Tito’s perpetual state-building program, while offering support to those constructionalists who see national identity, much like the state itself, as responsive to constant refashioning. This study of the political history of Yugoslavia will therefore close with a reevaluation of nationalism during the final days of the state’s existence.

Recognizing that excessive nationalism opens up problematic issues about human nature and the status of contemporary identity, some scholars have blamed Yugoslavia’s dismemberment on dysfunctional politics. Political scientist Samuel P. Huntington observed that Tito fulfilled the role of a strongman in his government and that his force alone kept divergent peoples together against their will. Furthermore, Huntington emphasized the legacy of the Yugoslav revolution during World War II, which had “institutionalized the centralization and the expansion of power in a one-party system.” Historian James Gow concurred when he noted that Tito’s “diffuse system left nobody

13. See also Robert Hayden, Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 27. Hayden wrote, “It is tempting to see the breakdown of federal Yugoslavia as the inevitable result of those national tensions, once the overarching structure of the one-party state, which had served to bind them together, was removed. Yet to stress only those nationalisms is to distort the reality of political, social, and economic life in Yugoslavia in the critical years of 1989–91.”

14. See Richard Betts and Samuel P. Huntington, “Dead Dictators and Rioting Mobs: Does the Demise of Authoritarian Rulers Lead to Political Instability?” International Security, 10:3 (Winter 1985–86), p. 112. “There is a widespread presumption that countries ruled for extended periods of time by authoritarian leaders degenerate into chaos when those rulers die and their special personal status no longer holds the lid on their countries’ tensions;” furthermore Huntington noted that “In Yugoslavia, for example, the results have been mixed. The country did not “fall apart” when Tito died in 1980, but it did suffer severe unrest in the province of Kosovo.”

with enough power or authority to act decisively” after his death, leaving the state vulnerable during times of “crisis” and “chaos.”\(^\text{16}\) Still other authors have focused on the role of the multi-ethnic military as the flawed arbiter of power in Yugoslavia. Political scientist Robert W. Dean has said that, “in no other European Communist state” did the “military play as integral a part in political affairs” as in Yugoslavia, leading to such devastating consequences in 1991.\(^\text{17}\) What I intend to do is situate the literature on what was seemingly wrong with Titoist politics in the context of the earnest quest by the ruling elites to construct and maintain a real legitimacy that they felt they had earned following their successful liberation of Yugoslavia during World War II.

YUGOSLAVIA AS HISTORY

Because Tito wrestled power in Yugoslavia using armed force and created his state on the laurels of military victory, post-World War II elites largely consisted of his so-called Partisan fighters, and, as a result, Yugoslav institutions supported veterans alongside their claim of ownership of the revolution. During the war, Tito had premised his victory on the defeat of the foreign invaders and their domestic collaborators and, coupled with an inclusive message of “brotherhood and unity,” directed towards the constituent ethnic groups of the country, he had brought relative stability to post-war Yugoslavia.\(^\text{18}\)


\(^{18}\) While the primary ethnic groups included Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Albanians, and Hungarians, fourteen recognized ethnic groups existed in Tito’s Yugoslavia, and for success, Tito understood that cooperation among all of them was critical.
Nevertheless, securing power has never been enough for a revolutionary, and Tito was no exception. Threats of internal counterrevolution originally centered on popular resistance to communist policies such as collectivization, but the elites worried constantly about the nationalist-based tensions between the country’s various ethnic groups. Furthermore, the tenuous international situation facing Yugoslavia during the Cold War, as one of the few nonaligned states neighboring both nuclear-armed superpower camps, compelled the Yugoslavs to recognize and address their own fear of maintaining independence in light of Western pressure for democracy and Soviet-led interventionism in Eastern Europe.

The Yugoslav government tried to gain moral advantage in international affairs through its nonaligned status and then sought refuge in the status quo, thereby reigning in an intrusive revisionism.

Because the threat of Soviet invasion plagued the regime in Belgrade—especially in the wake of the Tito–Stalin split in 1948 and the Soviet-led military interventions in Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968—politicians increasingly relied on a high level of popular political participation from all levels of society. An analysis of the

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19. The Yugoslav Defense Ministry conducted a poll in 1971 asking officers and non-commissioned officers what they felt posed the greatest threat to Yugoslavia. Fifty-four percent of high-ranking officers (rank of major and above), forty percent of low-ranking officers, and forty-seven percent of non-commissioned officers saw nationalism as the greatest danger, only 13.5 percent, ten percent, and 11.7 percent, respectively, saw foreign aggression as the greatest danger facing Yugoslavia. Cited in Adam Roberts, *Nations in Arms: The Theory and Practice of Territorial Defense*, (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1976), p. 200. Also see A. Ross Johnson, *The Role of the Military in Communist Yugoslavia: An Historical Sketch*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1978), p. 11–12. Johnson added, “Seventy-two percent of the “higher officers” thought the national question had been overemphasized in the public discussion of the Constitutional Amendments of 1971.” This is indicative of the kind of downplaying that higher officers wished on the entire issue of nationalism in Yugoslavia. Such public discussion could only but exasperate problems in their eyes.
nature of popular support for the Yugoslav government as manifested through party organs and state institutions illuminates the profound seriousness with which the ruling elites strove to strengthen the state against external challengers, not only through the adoption of a conservative and pragmatic foreign policy, but also under the guise of creating a truly popular and unified citizenry supportive of the LCY.

Following Yugoslavia’s ejection from the Cominform in 1948, Yugoslav elites searched for an ideological justification for the independence of their Marxist system from Moscow’s guiding hand. This change stemmed from the realization that the LCY could not continue to emulate the Soviet Party once criticisms from Josip Stalin reached epic proportions in the Soviet press, which labeled Tito a “fascist stooge” and the LCY a deviant, faithless, “Trotskyite organization.” The profoundly ideological nature of the Soviet accusations led Tito to embark on a course of national communism; soon after the split, he boldly declared, “no one has the right to love his country less than the Soviet Union.”

The chief ideologues in the LCY later called for a socio-political system that combined decentralization of state power and socialist self-management, which in principle meant that workers—rather than the state—owned the means of production. The withering away of the state thus began immediately in the wake of the Tito–Stalin split, but reforms in the system, once began, never ceased. An investigation as to why such reforms continued after the Soviet–Yugoslav split had been reconciled by the early 1950s will reveal the motivations of the Yugoslav leadership to build Marxism from the

bottom up with popular and credible support at each step along the way, including adapting a credible and receptive foreign policy that reached out to leaders in the Third World unwilling or unsure about an alliance with either Moscow or Washington.

In his 1989 book, *With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist splits in Yugoslav Communism*, Ivo Banac examined how Tito’s regime dealt with the fear of domestic challengers in the aftermath of Yugoslavia’s banishment from the Cominform. Banac argued that while attempting to escape the trappings of Stalinism, Yugoslav elites actually enacted contradictory reforms that, on the one hand, modified Marxism to make it more palatable to peasants and more inclusive by incorporating worker management, while, on the other hand, they created a system of internal repression that “mirrored the Soviet system.” Furthermore, Banac asserted that the early Yugoslav conflict with Stalin “played the same part in the shaping of Yugoslavia’s political system that collectivization and the purges of the 1930s played in the history of Soviet communism.” After almost twenty years, though, Banac’s assertion that the Yugoslav state adapted Stalinist trimmings must come under reevaluation in light of new evidence. Instead, evidence points to Tito having operated outside of the Kremlin as the first communist leader to shed the totalitarian Stalinist model; as a result, he altered the course of global Marxism and forced a reevaluation of the Cold War by the superpowers.

One of the most significant impetuses for later change came after the Soviets intervened in Czechoslovakia in 1968, thereby heightening Yugoslav fears of foreign invasion and causing LCY leaders to question their degree of success at home and

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abroad. Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev’s employment and later articulation of his doctrine against the moderate communist leadership in Prague raised the possibility that Moscow’s defense of socialism might serve as adequate justification for regime change in Belgrade. As Tito declared that the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia “violated and trampled upon the sovereignty of a socialist country and inflicted a heavy blow on the socialist and progressive forces of the world,” 23 thousands of Yugoslavs petitioned the LCY desperately seeking party membership in response to a sharpened level of uncertainty. 24 As a result, Tito was another step close to achieving the sort of strength and support for his state that he always wanted.

As the guardian of Tito’s state and his helpmeet in attaining power, the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) also underwent dramatic transformations in response to Soviet threats against Yugoslavia. Military doctrine changed with the adoption of the socialist self-management system and decentralization to create a system premised on Territorial Defense. Alongside the JNA—as the federal armed component—the Territorial Defense Forces (TDFs) came from the local populations and trained in the sort of guerrilla warfare that characterized Tito’s experience during World War II. The legitimacy of the TDF rested on solidifying a place for all people in the defense of the country and enlisting the

24. For data on the membership of the League of Communists see Dušan Pejanović, Josip Karavanić, Mihajlo Golubović, Ernest Mezga, Boška Stojanović, Božo Šašić, and Čedo Stanković, Organizacija SKJ u JNA, vol. 2, Razvoj oružanih snaga SFRJ, 1945–1985., (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1986), p. 259. “U toku te godine [1968] u Savez komunista primljeno je preko 20,000 novih članova, od kojih 6,000 poslije 21. avgusta, dakle, nakon intervencije pet zemalja VU u ČSSR.” (In this year [1968], in the league of communists they received an additional 20,000 new members, including 6,000 after 21 August, which was after the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia.)
army as a so-called school for the nation.\textsuperscript{25} Only with this in mind can we understand the assertion that “the strength of our [military] doctrine,” according to Defense Secretary Viktor Bubanj in 1970, “is that it is public and belongs to the people.”\textsuperscript{26} An examination of the army, as the strongest state institution, will demonstrate the varied responses that Yugoslav elites took to anchor their state. On 22 December 1971, Tito had explained that the army’s primary task was “to defend our country from external enemies, but also to defend the achievements of our revolution inside the country, should that become necessary.” This competing scenario was unimaginable for Tito, but he said, “if it comes to shooting, the army too is here.”\textsuperscript{27}

The 1970s passed and, soon after, so did Tito, leaving behind a state plagued with troubles but full of promise—if for no other reason than thirty-five years of relative success. At each juncture, Yugoslav elites met critical challenges to the legitimacy of their rule and, by the 1980s, Yugoslavia had embraced a partial market economy alongside greater civil liberties, self-rule, and varying degrees of democracy. The notion of building legitimacy with popular support grew increasingly important; a party report from the 1960s declared that “greater democracy earlier and greater affirmation of the LCY as a political carrier and organizer of electoral activity” was the key to success, because “the thoughts of the citizens of Yugoslavia must be an important factor in our

\textsuperscript{25} For a recent example of this argument see Ronald Krebs, “A School for the Nation: How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How it Might,” \textit{International Security} 28:4 (Spring 2004), pp. 85–124. I argue that the contact theory has particular importance for multi-ethnic societies because the army can serve as the primary venue for cooperation and inter-ethnic understanding.

\textsuperscript{26} Viktor Bubanj cited in Gow, \textit{Legitimacy}, p. 47.

electoral process.”

For the LCY, focused on reform and inclusion, it could be no other way, especially considering the fiercely competitive ideological battle that engulfed the world. The party, therefore, needed to be “very close to the widest circle of citizens.”

An early chief ideologue, Milovan Đilas, summed up Yugoslavia’s policy of successful independence as seeking to “defend not only our own ideas and the independence of our internal social evolution, but also the frontiers of the State.” Đilas continued by noting the fluidity of international relations: “And we have to defend these frontiers under the concrete condition of the world as it is today. Hence it is our obligation to concentrate our forces in the direction from which the main danger is threatening at the given moment.”

Pragmatism imbued with a Yugoslav ideology directed at both East and West: that is the essence of what Yugoslav elites strove to achieve at all levels and then maintain indefinitely.

One of the important points of consistency within Yugoslavia, during this time and until the bitter end of Yugoslavia, rested on the government’s appeal to persuade Yugoslavs to remain united because they were better off compared to their neighbors. The means to accomplish this took divergent forms, and while plenty of positive

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31. Alan Rubinstein, Yugoslavia and the Nondaligned World, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 198. Rubinstein has said, “Pragmatism, not dogmatism, has been the trademark of Yugoslav nation-building.” While I too emphasize the pragmatic, it seems clear that ideology—first aligned with Soviet interests and then independent—guided much in Yugoslav politics.
reinforcement existed, the government certainly took to manipulating divergent nationalisms and embracing dictatorial politics and nepotism, in addition to using the army and secret police to forcibly quiet opponents. This examination takes a closer look at how Yugoslav elites sought legitimacy—both the intense focus on reform as a means to drum up popular support and, at the same time, a foreign policy that could benefit from the precariousness of the Cold War—as the driving force behind this critical notion in Titoist Yugoslavia.

**Sources**

Because this dissertation focuses on the Yugoslav ruling elite, it relies primarily on archival sources that illuminate what party members said—both to each other and to the public. The Open Society Archive in Budapest has compiled a wealth of sources from the Cold War, which governments published, collected, and used in an effort to understand what lay on the other side of the Berlin Wall. Radio Free Europe played a key role during this time in bringing together data from Eastern Europe and using it in research reports and government communications. Included also in the Open Society Archive are transcripts from news reports on radio, television, and original newspaper and journal clippings. Such sources have helped me understand how some regular Yugoslavs interacted with the policies of the regime (if only passively), alongside what types of things the government encouraged for general consumption. Not all newspapers carried patriotic stories about how great the Yugoslav People’s Army was or how ready the Yugoslavs were to defend their country against outside aggression; some articles
instead spoke about the concerns the government had with respect to its ability to rule. What is included and excluded tells a great deal about how leaders saw public participation as a force of strength and change.

Certain specific pieces of my argument rely on how foreign politicians—chiefly in the United States and the Soviet Union—reacted to Yugoslavs during the Cold War. For the American perspective, I have been fortunate to discover that the U.S. government has declassified many documents and made them available in a mostly uncensored format. Regarding insights into the Soviet perspective, and indeed, directly from the Yugoslav perspective, I have relied on my major research endeavor for this project, which took place at the Archive of Serbia and Montenegro during summer 2007. I was able to collect a prodigious amount of materials there and owe a great debt to the archivists who helped in the acquisition of key documents from the Yugoslav Communist Party, such as minutes from central committee meetings and other important committees, including propaganda, constitutional reform, and foreign policy. With more than 70,000 individual pages from this, the former Federal Archive of Yugoslavia, I have been able to get a sense of what Yugoslav leaders were really doing, saying, and, to an extent, what they were thinking. Communist Party meeting minutes serve as an especially fruitful avenue into the machinations of political elites because of the closed-door nature of these gatherings. We can assume that the recordings of these proceedings represent the best insight into the reality at the top and represent an uncensored view into high-level deliberations.
Few, if any, Western researchers (or any researchers at all, in many cases), have viewed these Communist Party documents, and some of the information breaks new ground with respect to broader Cold War historiography. Since the governments of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States have made difficult any research in virtually all of the former Soviet archives to scholars working today (especially foreign scholars), assumptions and arguments about the Cold War must work around a increasingly diminishing stock of hard evidence. My research at the archive in Belgrade, though, has revealed a small treasure in not only Yugoslav–Soviet relations from both perspectives, but also uncovered some materials that the post-Soviet governments have locked away from peering eyes. I believe that my archival work in Belgrade will open new doors for scholars working on former Yugoslavia as well as the Cold War more broadly.

Finally, with the addition of newspaper accounts of the events—key Yugoslav papers such as *Borba, Komunist, Vjesnik, NIN*, and *Mladost*, as well as important Western periodicals such as *The New York Times*—I will try to bring to the forefront of this work the many voices of the time to better understand how Yugoslavs valued and strove for success.

**Towards a Definition of Conflict as the Helpmeet for Success**

Violence and conflict has marked the history of the twentieth century. States have come and gone alongside powerful ideologies; all the while, conflict remained. Karl Marx created one of the most powerful ideologies to move the modern world—communism—
that took hold of the idea of conflict and made it paramount to reaching a perfect society. The opening line to his famous *Communist Manifesto* (1848), has challenged readers with the ominous declaration that the “history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”\(^{32}\) Furthermore, philosopher Georges Sorel, in *Reflections on Violence*, equated conflict with life, creation, and virtue—things that mankind cannot live out.\(^{33}\)

Because conflict is an inescapable aspect of life that requires constant adaptation and flexibility, it can help to broker positive change from opposed positions. On a broader level, all societies must constantly adapt and an examination of Yugoslavia shows that Tito and his communist-party cadres succeeded for four decades in making the best use of conflict and building an unbeaten party-state as a result. Constantly worried about legitimacy and popularity, Tito knew he needed to build a society immune to conflict-based degradation; but, at the same time, his ideology forced him to conform to an ideology that held conflict in high regard. Because Tito fought to empower communism does not change how conflict intersected with his politics. Scholar Ralf Dahrendorf argued that “political conflict is a structural fact of society under every imaginable condition,” including communism, and because constant danger exists from the point of the view of those in power, any type of permitted groups—including aspects of the ruling party—might morph into an agent of revolution.\(^{34}\) Thus, in the Soviet


\(^{34}\) Ralph Dahrendorf, “Toward a Theory of Social Conflict,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2:2 (June 1958), pp. 182–83. This fear by the state seems to be quite a universal phenomenon. Some scholars have argued that leaders in Renaissance Italy also struggled with lawlessness and state control.
Union, the party devoured its own children under Stalin’s greedy watch, because his purges guaranteed loyalty from those few who remained. In the meantime, Tito, who was present in the Soviet Union during the climax of Stalin’s organized chaos, learned a somber lesson regarding state power and party loyalty, and, as a result, employed force selectively and only when absolutely necessary. The Yugoslav social revolution attempted to unite divergent groups—class- and ethnic-based—under the umbrella of the party rather than eliminate large sections of society because of potential threats. How Tito manipulated conflict or even competition between groups becomes more instructive following the break with the Soviet Union, which cast aside and isolated Yugoslavia from the rigidity of bloc politics.

The break between Stalin and Tito occurred primarily because power formed the most vital component of international relations in the post-World War II world. Power is both stimulating and intoxicating and, therefore, is a primary concept for scrutiny by scholars, especially when looking at a country such as Yugoslavia. Regarding how Yugoslav leaders mitigated conflict within the state borders, it becomes useful to see how internal controls operated. Sociologist Morris Janowitz wisely asserted that control over society rests on a “value commitment” of at least two elements: “the reduction of coercion,” although keeping in mind that some coercion is necessary in all systems,


alongside the “elimination of human misery,” despite some level of inequality. Social control’s opposite is coercive control, or the “organization of a society which rests predominantly and essentially on force—the threat and the use of force.” Unlike Stalin, Tito attempted to rely less on coercive control, though, at times, as will become apparent, coercion represented the most expedient method for Tito’s continued hold on power.

Apart from external invasion, Tito most feared internal disruptions that could challenge his rule; as a result, he sought to unify the people behind his message and alleviate any causes for frustration. With this concept in mind, sociologist Lewis Coser argued that a “well-integrated society” will not only tolerate, but also will even welcome group-based conflict, whereas, “only a weakly integrated one must fear it.” Tito used the tools at his disposal to build a strong society, but, at almost every point, he failed to construct a lasting legacy. His break with Stalin necessitated that a particular Titoist version of communism develop, and, while more popular than Soviet communism, it too failed to survive the end of the Cold War. The recognition of new ethnic groups—Bosnian Muslims (Muslimani, with a capital “M,” in the Serbo-Croatian language

36. Morris Janowitz, “Sociological Theory and Social Control,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 81:1 (July 1975), p. 84. On a similar note, K. Saeed argued that not only is a strong government important for sustainable economic development, but that “democratic government” is vital because of the restrictions on limiting civil rights. I would add to this that democratic government is vital not just because of a positive record on civil rights, but because competing groups possess an effective voice in resolving conflict through their respective political parties. Parties win and lose power in a never-ending see-saw, serving as the primary vehicle of conflict resolution. Armed conflict least likely occurs in a system where multiple, effective outlets exist. See Matilde Kamiya and Annababette Wils, “The Puzzle of Conflict Dynamics,” *International Political Science Review*, 19:4 (October, 1998), p. 411.


opposed to muslimani, or Muslims more broadly), and Macedonians, otherwise classified as Southern Serbs, Bulgarians, or Slavic Greeks—meant that Tito understood well the politics of nationalism, although his policies only temporarily relieved tension without solving root causes of nationalist-based conflict. His allowances for national rights within his federal state gave each national group, even religious identities and tiny minorities, a chance to believe in the larger system while still maintaining—at least rhetorically—some sort of sovereignty. Moreover, Tito’s regime experimented with establishing a so-called Yugoslav nationality; an identity that sought to supersede all others while avowing supreme loyalty to its creator, Comrade Tito.

More than anything else during the Cold War, Stalin’s ejection of Yugoslavia from the Cominform—the Communist Information Bureau—facilitated a new paradigm based on dissention and conflict and challenged the legitimacy of Marxism in Tito’s state. Tito stood in opposition to Stalin and it was this overwhelming opposition that defined the path that Yugoslav leaders would take; after all, how could Tito embrace agricultural collectivization and alienate a majority of his people—with farmers cited at still fifty percent in the mid 1960s—when he no longer had the support of Moscow to guarantee his power? 39 This conflict with Stalin resolved the divergent dualism inside Yugoslavia and achieved a sort of unity that, while based on a negative characterization of the other, turned out to fit within Tito’s goal of building a tangible Yugoslav patriotism. 40 Unity then, for Tito, originated from this scenario a working consensus and concord between

individuals, and, on a higher level, served to solidify the “ultimate wholeness” of the group”—the Yugoslav nation.\textsuperscript{41} Following the logic of German sociologist, Georg Simmel, it seems that Yugoslavia under Tito owed its unity completely to him and to the legacy of World War II, just as France owed the “consciousness of its national unity only to the fight against the English” since the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{42}

Analyzing the role of conflict as having constantly transformed a modern Yugoslavia is a rather novel idea despite the overwhelming violent twentieth century that forged and destroyed three Yugoslav states in 1919, 1941–1945, and 1991. While scholars have treated conflict as necessarily bad for Yugoslavia, it remains important to note how chief Yugoslav ideologue Edvard Kardelj recognized that violence set an example for the LCY because the “experience from the national war of liberation” served an important role as “a very reliable guide,” in establishing the fundamental basis of the new Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{43} But when historians speak about the Yugoslav state in the twentieth century, the issue of conflict is a focal point, though, not in the same way as Kardelj thought about it. Instead of seeing conflict as having built a Yugoslav nation through a common struggle and a system that attempted to serve common needs, scholars have instead noted the violence between the constituent ethnic groups: the seemingly endless

\textsuperscript{41} Simmel, \textit{Conflict}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{42} Simmel, \textit{Conflict}, p. 100.
\textsuperscript{43} See Edvard Kardelj, \textit{Borba za priznanje i nezavisnost nove Jugoslavije, 1944–1957}, (Ljubljana: Državna zalažba Slovenije, 1980), p. 77. The full quote is as follows: “Iskustva iz narodnooslobodilačke borbe bila su nam tu veoma pouzdan vodič, i to ne samo vodič u pogledu organizacije administracije nego i u pogledu osnovnih postavki Ustava.” (The experience from the national war of liberation was a very reliable guide for us, not only regarding the organization and administration of the country but also regarding the fundamental assumptions of the constitution.)
literature looks at issues of ethnic unrest and conflict as either primordial or representative of constructed identities that seek some sort of selfish benefits.\textsuperscript{44} For either view, there exists an ease with which to note the high level of inter-regional conflict during the twentieth century as somehow representative of a “Balkan normalcy” or “Balkan mentality” that even the LCY leadership acknowledged; after all, in comparison with the calm and peacefulness in Central and Western Europe, the “situation in the Balkans” seemed “forever fluid.”\textsuperscript{45} Much of this ignores, or treats as unique, the rather peaceful coexistence between peoples in Yugoslavia—at least as peaceful as others across the violent and conflict-riddled European continent over the last century.\textsuperscript{46}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} See Maria Todorova, \textit{Imagining the Balkans}, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Her argument centers on the term “Balkan” and how the West has viewed the region and its people with suspect; see Stane Dolanc in “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog bira,” ASCG CK SKJ IV K.7 7, 1971, p. 24. “Za razliku od popuštenja zategnutosti i smirivanja u centralnoj i severnoj Evropi, situacija na Balkanu još uvek je fluidna.”
\item \textsuperscript{46} Breaking down the levels of association between Simmel’s theory of conflict as a unifying force reveals gradations, which correspond to the level of cohesion in society. The lowest step in this scale is constituted “by associations which are held together only by a common mood,” in contrast to a greater aversion to a third party. Two types of unification then exist: the one most relevant to Yugoslavia is what Simmel characterized as “concrete but temporary,” meaning that persons who are not acquainted with each other but who share the same level of education or sensitivity find themselves together and remain “together by their common aversion.” Lacking other concrete bases for a shared existence, this method of unification, as extremely delicate, but of a wholly unambiguous character, “marks the extreme on the scale of unifications of completely alien elements through a common antagonism.” (see Simmel, \textit{Conflict}, pp. 103–104). Coser has embraced Simmel’s tendency to see positive features of conflict, which, under certain circumstances, he has argued as “strengthening the system’s basis of integration as well as its adaptability to the environment.” Coser cited in Jonathon H. Turner, “A Strategy for Reformulating the Dialectical and Functional Theories of Conflict,” \textit{Social Forces}, 35:3 (March, 1975), p. 434.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER ONE: A STRUGGLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS: IDEOLOGY AND YUGOSLAVIA’S THIRD WAY TO PARADISE

And, of course, it was a tremendous moral blow for us.¹
—Josip Broz Tito to Nikita Khrushchev about the Tito–Stalin Split

As much as the beginning, the end of the Cold War in 1991 unleashed profound changes throughout the world. Some scholars witnessed the defeat of communism and proclaimed the triumph of democracy and market capitalism as an “end of history.”²

Excitement at both the withering away of communism in Europe and the brutal civil wars that shook the political integrity of post-socialist states therefore marked this period of tense transition. Yugoslavia’s tragic demise during this time of transition forced a reevaluation of many contentious questions surrounding the broader fundamentals of the modern nation-state as well as the more noteworthy multiethnic Yugoslav experiment. In part because of the overwhelming speed of communism’s general collapse in the early 1990s, and partly from the brutal nature of ethnic cleansing, the particular events in Yugoslavia have been largely misunderstood.³ As part of an effort to realize how the

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². For example, Francis Fukuyama authored a series of works with this idea of an “end of history” in mind. See The End of History and the Last Man, (New York: Free Press, 1992); and Have We Reached the End of History?, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corp., 1989).

³. The debate over Yugoslavia’s demise still centers on either a nationalist-driven approach or an explanation based on Tito’s Yugoslavia as having suffered from dysfunctional politics (i.e., Tito as a strongman). For some examples see Raymond Duncan and G. Paul Holman, Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994); Richard Betts and Samuel Huntington, “Dead Dictators and Rioting Mobs: Does the Demise of Authoritarian Rulers Lead to Political Instability?”
beginning of Tito’s state might have influenced its demise, this chapter will analyze the manner in which the unique identity of Yugoslavia was born as neither fully communist nor fully democratic; as a result, I argue that the foundation of Tito’s success rested on a thorough and dynamic reform program. While communism’s death was an integral force securing Yugoslavia’s fate, Tito’s creation possessed a distinctive ideological worldview that also failed against the West.

Following Yugoslavia’s ejection from the Cominform—the Communist Information Bureau—in 1948, Yugoslav elites searched for an ideological justification for the independence of their Marxist system apart from Moscow’s guiding hand. This change stemmed from the Yugoslav Communist Party’s (LCY) realization that it could no longer continue to follow directives from Moscow. The verbal criticisms reached too high a level for a real and lasting reconciliation—at least not while Stalin lived. Having staked his wartime liberation movement on the politics of Marx, Tito found no possibility for wholesale retreat. Unable to veer too far from its path, Tito’s party nevertheless turned to patriotism and emphasized to the war-weary Yugoslavs the otherness of Soviet communism; the need was clear for centralism and a merging of the party and the state, but the Yugoslav leadership knew that “revolutionary discipline, of course,” could shift easily into Soviet-style “bureaucratic discipline.”

After having weathered the storm, Tito and the chief ideologues in the LCY reevaluated Marxist texts and found a genuine

\[\text{International Security} \ 10:3 \ (Winter \ 1985–86) \text{; and James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis,} \ (\text{London: Pinter Publishers, 1992).}\]

\[4. \text{See Branko Horvat, } An \ Essay \ on \ Yugoslav \ Society, \text{ trans. Henry F. Mins,} \ (\text{Belgrade: Jugoslavenski Institut za Ekonomsk\a Istra\v{z}ivanja, 1967), p. 196.}\]
path that could free them from any ideological contradictions while also building a legitimate Yugoslav alternative to Stalinism. The resulting self-management system called for a socio-political system that gradually devolved power away from the center. The party elites endlessly tinkered with this system, finding ways to strengthen it against all opposition, because, after all, the LCY did “not have a ready-made formula for socialism”; instead, the LCY elites needed to “constantly revise, correct, improve, and construct that socialist formula.” Part of this reform focused on including regular folks and designing a system that would serve as a mechanism to perpetuate self-management to include these people until true communism became a reality. As a result, by the 1960s, Yugoslavia stood firmly wedged between the two competing systems—the democratic-capitalist West and the communist East—and could not fully identify with either.

Scholars have enjoyed wide access to the sources of the Tito–Stalin split thanks to the opening of archives by the Yugoslavs, as well as the publication of biographies and testimonies from high-ranking officials such as Vladimir Dedijer, Milovan Đilas and Ambassador Veljko Mičunović. Most of the materials underwent publication in Western collections and seemed to portray Yugoslavia as representative of a neutral and benign socialist alternative to the Soviet system thanks to Tito’s departure on a reform campaign

that emphasized socialist self-management. Popular reception later of a foreign policy followed after Tito’s domestic reforms sparked an international agenda centered on nonalignment, at which point, at least rhetorically, the Soviet Union became a target for criticism as a country ruled by so-called antidemocratic imperialists. Some of this benevolence worked its way into scholarship, as Western sources have concluded that the split resulted from a combination of power politics and a careful awareness of geostrategic realities.

The text of the Soviet charges against the Yugoslavs told a different story, still; one filled with ideological rifts and deviations that set Yugoslav leaders in opposition to the true path to communism. A recent work on this subject, by Jeronim Perović, has benefitted from an opening of some Soviet archives, but he concluded that while the Yugoslavs emphasized the ideological charges from Moscow, the reality for the Soviets was the need for a firm control over Eastern Europe without competition or troublemakers. Later, when Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev flew to Yugoslavia to mend relations between the states in 1955, Yugoslav records show that an independent Yugoslav foreign policy that pressured the West after World War II placed Tito squarely in Stalin’s sights. Tito told Khrushchev, “we already saw” the reason for the split; “It

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8. Robert Pastor, “Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade,” National Security Council Memorandum, (7 August 1978). This document has summarized nicely the conflicts within the Non-aligned Movement, such as the struggle between moderates and radicals and how Yugoslav diplomats attempted to steer a middle ground for the sake of stability.

was a question of our interests towards Corinthia [Austria] and in relations over Trieste,” combined with the “question of [war] reparations.”

The newest scholarship has recognized the power politics involved over Tito’s expulsion from the Cominform, but has continued to rely on primary documents that do not represent direct Soviet–Yugoslav interactions. A political assessment, though, has identified that the Yugoslav territorial designs on Albania and Tito’s continued meddling in the Greek Civil War reinforced Stalin’s realist credentials to establish firm authority with little risk of retaliation.

One of the preeminent works on the topics of ideology in Yugoslavia, A. Ross Johnson’s *The Transformation of Communist Ideology*, has noted how dynamic Tito really was. For Johnson, when Stalin declared, “Mistakes are not the issue: the issue is conceptions different from our own,” the Soviet leader opened conflict for reasons of

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11. See Jeronim Perović, “The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9:2 (Spring 2007), p. 60. Perović has acknowledged that no document has emerged yet definitively pointing to Soviet intentions, but, “the most useful source currently available” was a report sent by Stalin to the Czechoslovak leader Klement Gottwald on 14 July 1948,” which emphasized the near-term goals for dealing with Tito: “I have the impression that you [Gottwald] are counting on the defeat of Tito and his group at the next congress of the KPJ. You suggest publishing compromising material against the Yugoslav leaders. . . . We in Moscow are not counting on the early defeat of Tito and have never counted on it. We have achieved the isolation of Yugoslavia. Hence, the gradual decline of Tito’s Marxist groups is to be expected. This will require patience and the ability to wait. You seem to be lacking in patience. . . . There can be no doubt that Marxism will triumph in due course.” The main problem with this source is, of course, that it is not internal correspondence and thus was drafted more likely to keep the Czechoslovak leadership on edge rather than justify the Soviet leadership’s policy of isolating Yugoslavia and not immediately forcing Tito’s hand. Furthermore, evidence that I found from meetings between Khrushchev and Tito in 1955 has revealed that Gottwald was in fact being threatened by Stalin, who told Gottwald at the time that his support was expected and that he needed to “answer for Czechoslovakia!” See “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56.
power politics and ideological reasons. Unlike most authors, Johnson saw a trend of independent action among Yugoslavs thanks to the peculiar rise to power of Tito and his party; meanwhile Johnson traced Tito’s “legitimacy to an essentially socialist revolution” that was dependent on the existence of the Soviet Union, but argued that the actual role of the Kremlin had been negligible. As a result, Yugoslav thinking from the beginning of the war of liberation against the Nazis stood on a direct collision course with Stalin’s conception of ideological unity within his socialist world; what came in 1948, then, was the freedom for Tito to realize completely his doctrinal potential.

This chapter will first explore how a particular Yugoslav socialism came into being, and then analyze the path that Yugoslav leaders navigated in order to define themselves in light of the initial Cold War standoff between sharply divergent ideologies. Tito’s solution, as it evolved by the end of the 1950s, was an emphasis on reform that would make his Marxist system a viable and legitimate alternative to the Soviet model.

**TITO’S BANISHMENT FROM THE COMMUNIST INFORMATION SERVICE**

When evaluating the Soviet threat to the United States and mapping out an adequate response, the American diplomat George Kennan saw “a subtle connection between traditional Russian habits of thought and the ideology which has now become official for the Soviet regime.” Because of this hybrid notion of ideology’s constitution, his regard

for ideology as a force of and for itself was small. Despite that, Kennan observed that communism provided key roles for the party elites. Primarily, Marxism served to legitimize an illegitimate government by supplying a historical imperative for ruling. Second, communism provided an outlet for both extreme sacrifice by the people and simultaneous repression by the state, especially enhanced if surrounded by hostile elements. In the wake of worldwide devastation after 1945, Kennan recognized it as an ideology that could speak to emerging peoples throughout the world, especially as decolonization efforts seemed already overwhelmingly led by leftists while Soviet credibility peaked following the Nazi defeat. As a capstone to his thinking, Kennan astutely defined ideology as the “product and not a determinant of social and political reality,” which caused him to see an inherent flexibility within the international communist movement.

While much of what Kennan diagnosed turned out differently, the notion that communism could act with flexibility proved both right and wrong. The events in 1948 between Stalin and Tito validated Kennan’s hope for separate deals with postwar communist countries. Yet, in the long term, Tito’s example made little impact in Europe and actually served as an incentive for the Kremlin to enforce an ever-tightening grip over the rest of Eastern Europe. But, the Tito–Stalin split did unveil a wave of hope among U.S. government elites seeking an alternative to a long-lasting cold war.

15. See, for example, the tremendous sacrifice of the Soviet people in Stephen Kotkin’s *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
Western observers—along with most in Yugoslavia—were, at first, genuinely taken by surprise by the Soviet condemnation in light of the feverish pace of Yugoslavia’s construction of communism, the results affected U.S. policy in an unsurprising way. Yugoslav leaders, while not abandoning communism, embarked upon a policy that led to a series of deals with the United States whereby Yugoslavia could remain outside of the Soviet orbit thanks to billions of dollars worth of American aid—$2.2 billion in economic and military aid between 1950 and 1965 to be more precise.  

TITOISM, YUGOSLAVISM, OR SIMPLY PARTICULARISM?

In painting Yugoslavia as a state of ideological traitors, the Soviets forced the Yugoslav leadership to respond in the only manner possible—with ideology. Unable to open up the question of Yugoslav territorial aggrandizement since he could find comfort in neither East nor West, Tito had to abandon his plans of actually bringing Albania under his control. Moreover, Tito knew that he had to do something to withstand Soviet pressure, and so he first trumped up the patriotism still fresh from World War II on the one hand, while still adhering to Marxism by pressing forward with collectivization and rapid industrialization on the other. Tito successfully tapped into and used the people’s collective memory from the recent past in his portrayal of foreign powers trying to dominate Yugoslavia. Harping on the issue of national pride was easy for Tito, not least because whether Yugoslavs agreed with him or not, they knew Tito as a man who fought against the Nazis and for national liberation. Tito’s use of pan-Yugoslav nationalistic

rhetoric also fit within a larger anti-Soviet design, which had clear roots in the interwar period.

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia, a discreet, revolutionary group, operated throughout the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslav with little success and even less popular support. The royal dictatorship imposed by King Aleksandar Karadorđević, along with the numerous inter-ethnic and inter-party disputes, negatively affected all political parties, but these events profoundly stigmatized the communists as illegal and subversive. This negative campaign produced unusually chilly relations between the Russians and the Yugoslavs that lasted through World War II. Part of the problem facing the Yugoslav communists during this time rested on a general hostility towards the Soviet Union thanks to an extraordinarily large and outspoken group of tsarist émigrés residing in Belgrade. This scenario set the tone for a general anti-Russian mood, upsetting the prior friendship and realigning Yugoslavia with the Central and West European powers. A rather active stance outside the country by communists contrasted with a generally low level of activity within Yugoslavia. Army sources revealed that 1,664 Yugoslav communists traveled to Spain to fight in the dramatic struggle against General Francisco Franco. About half of that number perished in the war while 350 returned to Tito’s side, with the rest having begun resistance movements in other countries.¹⁸ Nevertheless, this

effort at preventing fascism from triumphing in Spain proved a fruitless cause and further separated the communists from the prevailing political moods in Eastern Europe.¹⁹

Soon after Franco’s victory and the banishment of leftist opposition from Spain, Hitler unleashed World War II in Europe, and, by 1941, Axis forces had invaded and occupied Yugoslavia. Tito liked to point out after 1948 that during the period of occupation the Soviet Union provided little support for his Partisans. More aid had come from the Americans and the British than from the Soviets, but owing to a lack of Western troops in the Balkan theater of operations, it was the Soviet Red Army that helped the Partisans liberate Belgrade and it was to the Soviet Union that Tito and his entourage held passionate allegiances. Because of the limited assistance that the Soviets had provided Tito, though, and indeed the limited contact with the Yugoslav Party more generally, the Yugoslavs understandably felt rather self-sufficient and could easily tap into that independent mood after 1948.²⁰ In addition, the leading pro-Soviet factions within the Yugoslav Party—indeed many prewar Communist Party members—largely

¹⁹. There has been some exciting new work coming out on the influence that the Spanish Civil War had throughout the world. While much activity has been devoted to the Cold War as an ideological nightmare wrought with zero-sum games, the battle between fascism, democracy, and communism should not be passed over. While it looked at a point that fascism might triumph, it ultimately failed and crumbled with Hitler’s Germany. Being pro or anti-fascist meant a lot for deciding political careers, even in the United States. For more see, Michael E. Chapman, “Arguing Americanism: John Eoghan Kelly and the Spanish Civil War” PhD diss., Boston College, 2006.

²⁰. Ivo Banac has claimed, on the one hand, (with good reason) that the declaration of a provisional government in the Bosnian town of Jajce on 29–30 November 1943, was against the wishes of Stalin (at least at that time). Banac has argued that Tito was self-sufficient during the war and emphasized that point explicitly. See Ivo Banac, With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 11. In contrast, Perović has argued that while this might be the case, recent work verifies that Tito was in contact with the Soviets and they knew of Tito’s intentions. See Perović, “The Tito-Stalin Split,” pp. 36–37.
perished during the war. What emerged then was what Edvard Kardelj, chief Yugoslav ideologue and confidant of Tito, later described as a feeling of how the struggle for liberation against the enemies of Yugoslavia determined the independent nature of Tito’s communist regime. Kardelj logically linked the self-sufficient revolutionary struggle with the postwar socio-political reform stemming from the events of 1948.

**A YUGOSLAV WAY EMERGES**

Enormous tensions bubbled inside Yugoslavia as leaders fought a two-front struggle on behalf of the regime during the initial years following the split between with the Soviets. On the one hand, there existed the effort to consolidate the party by getting rid of the so-called Cominformists and, on the other hand, Tito knew he needed to build a credible military deterrent against a Soviet-led invasion. Kremlin operatives fueled these fires by attempting to drive rifts within the Yugoslav Party and inciting numerous border incursions into Yugoslav territory from Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Albania.

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21. The number of Communist Party survivors following the war was relatively small, but worse still was any influence that pre-war members might have had came under attack thanks to a tremendous influx of hundreds of thousands of new members. Some who had survived would perish or face imprisonment after the Tito–Stalin split, as was the fate of long-time Serbian Communist and then army General Sreten Žujović.


While Yugoslav sources reported “thousands” of border incidents, the fear of actual invasion among Yugoslav elites decreased with each passing day, purportedly because of a strong Yugoslav resolve in sealing the frontier. When the Yugoslav secret police uncovered several high-ranking military and political figures as covert Soviet agents, Tito used the opportunity to fight a high-profile campaign against all of his opponents, thus leaving him an enviable position of control of the country by the early 1950s. Yugoslav sources staked this early power on the “politically pure, unified,” and “monolithic,” army that prevented the “undermining” of the “great confidence and love of our peoples” towards the armed forces, and, by extension, the state. American aid, though slow to come, arrived in spades during the early 1950s when the U.S. government recognized a potential ally in Tito. Some Yugoslav decision-makers even declared a preference to

24. Banac cites 7,877 border incidents; a reasonable figure. See Banac, Cominformist, p.130. There were many reports of instability at all frontiers, and, after 1948, the Albanian and Greek borders with Yugoslavia were especially troublesome thanks to other unfinished revolutionary activity there.

25. See M.S. Handler, “Deserters of Tito Being Organized,” New York Times, 23 September 1948, p. 13. Handler noted that “Additional evidence of the lack of success of the Cominform’s drive is the substantiated fact that not a single member of the Yugoslav Politburo, or Central Committee, is known to have deserted.” An exception to this was the desertion of a couple of army leaders, including Colonel General Arso Jovanović, who officials shot near the Romanian frontier in an apparent attempt to flee the country. A situation report made during September 1948, took note of the success of Tito’s appeal to nationalism: “There appears no doubt that Marshal Tito gained considerable popular support among elements previously opposed to him when he was excoriated by the Cominform.” Cited in C.L. Sulzberger, “Anti-Tito Trend is Absent in Yugoslavia, Experts Say,” New York Times, 6 September 1948, p. 6.


27. For the impact at the time, see M.S. Handler, “U.S. Help at Once Held Vital to Tito,” New York Times, 29 December 1948, p. 10. Much later, General Ljubačić—the Yugoslav Secretary of Defense—petitioned the U.S. government for aid as news of Tito’s ailing health spread and his death drew nearer. While the most significant American aid ceased after the mid-1950s, such payments, gifts, or subsidies continued until the very eve of Yugoslavia’s demise. Ljubačić noted in 1980, a similar dilemma
join forces with the West and fall under the American nuclear umbrella already in place to protect Western Europe from Soviet aggression.28 The tensions eased over time but the fundamental problem faced Tito and his loyal revolutionary band lingered on: What to do in the face of Soviet charges of heresy? If survival meant that Tito would have to adopt a new line—one based upon elaborating the particular Yugoslav characteristics of revolution—then, they said, so be it. The groundwork for an ideological break already existed and all Tito needed to do was emphasize the errors committed by Moscow’s elite. With vast changes to the Yugoslav Constitution put into place in 1953, the two systems separated and the LCY soon began flirting with a new ideological position, which, thanks to Stalin’s actions, rested on a newfound unity within the Yugoslav federation; anything else would have been “an ugly dream” for the leaders in Belgrade.29

CHANGE BECOMES EVIDENT

When Stalin declared that under no circumstances would the Soviets intervene after the

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28. Yugoslav Colonel General Dapčević stated to the Associated Press in an interview in 1951 that “Yugoslavia is ready now to defend herself against any aggressor,” and he suggested that they “would like to have some United States atomic bombs,” and that Yugoslavia “could build more air fields for strategic bombing of Russian targets if given United States material.” See “Yugoslavia Wants U.S. Aid To Include Atomic Bombs,” *New York Times*, 31 October 1951, p. 4.

29. See Marko Nikezić, “Stenografske beleške sa sednice Komišije CK SKJ za Informisanje, 13 September 1968,” ASCG CK SKJ XXVI K.1 6, p. 27. The “disunity of Yugoslavia” for him, was “an ugly dream.”
war in the internal affairs of other people, he established a basis for Tito to demand unquestioned independence. Tito outlined his maverick nature as early as during his speech in Ljubljana on 27 May 1945, when he declared World War II a, “just war and we have considered it as such,” which gave them the right to “demand that everyone shall be master in his own house.” “We do not want to be used as a bribe in international bargaining,” Tito said, and “we do not want to get involved in any policy of spheres of interest.” Soviet leaders, of course, took note of the tone in the speech and were offended. I.V. Sadchikov, the Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia, cried out that Tito’s speech was an “unfriendly attack on the Soviet Union” and that another instance of such insubordination would be met with “open criticism in the press” and disavowal. Such a warning, though, failed to rein in Tito’s individualism bring about a subservient attitude among Belgrade elites.

The years following victory in World War II failed to alter drastically the balance of power in the Balkans. Relations between Moscow and Belgrade were often affable, but also frequently chilly. Tito’s hostile actions in demanding large sums as war reparations, alongside his brazen attempts to extend Yugoslav territory and influence among his neighbors, put Stalin’s position at risk as the Great Power in Central and Eastern Europe. Soviet responses continued to caution the Yugoslavs about their foreign policies, but the answers Stalin received constantly affirmed obedience, but without

drastic changes in policies. Nevertheless, when Stalin had enough by early 1948, he wanted a way to discredit Tito; the Cominform grounded its response in Marxist rhetoric and considered that the basis for these and other Yugoslav “mistakes” grew out of the “undoubted fact that nationalistic elements” influenced the leadership of Yugoslavia. Moreover, Moscow’s vanguard believed that Yugoslav elites considerably overestimated their domestic supporters and their influence, thinking that, as a result, “they can maintain Yugoslavia’s independence and build socialism without the support of the Communist Parties of other countries,” chief among which, was the Soviet Union. The path for the Yugoslavs, so the story went, rested with “healthy elements” within the party who could “return to internationalism and in every way to consolidate the united socialist front against imperialism.” In response to this and other condemnations by the Soviet Union, U.S. President Harry S. Truman finally wrote Congress a letter in 1952 stating, “I have determined that Yugoslavia is a country which is of direct importance to the defense of the North Atlantic area.” The Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided much the same prior to Truman’s declaration on behalf of Yugoslavia: “it is in the important interests of the West that Tito maintain his resistance,” but the United States government needed to foster “the reliability of the Tito Communist regime as an instrument of United States policy toward

32. While decreasing over time, actions in both Greece and Albania continued into 1948. While a host important issues were present, from commercial ties, including banking and import-export deals to military advisors—primarily Yugoslav citizens from the neighboring territory who spoke either Greek or Albanian—persisted even after Soviet warnings to the contrary. For examples see, ASCG CK IX 1/III K.12 1–16 and K.13 17–35 for Albania and ASCG CK IX 33/III K.12 1–30 for Greece.


the USSR.”35 By the early 1950s, Yugoslavia’s place rested securely in the middle; with even tacit American support, Tito gained freedom to maneuver and construct a new legitimacy in the wake of devastating crisis.

In the aftermath of this contest between Yugoslav and Soviet leaders, the repercussions mandated that ideology shift. The Kremlin lashed out against the Yugoslavs by noting that nationalism was rampant alongside a lack of democracy in the Communist Party and the corrupted security forces.36 Tito responded by charging that Stalin had perverted the Soviet Union’s path to communism and perpetuated, rather than weakened, the interests of the state, concluding that no resemblance to “state machinery which is withering away” yet existed in the USSR.37 The Soviets continued to harangue the Yugoslavs for the next thirty years, but, in general, their position grew more moderate following the death of Stalin. But, Stalin’s first actions after 1948 sought to destroy Tito’s appeal and strengthen his own position among the remaining eastern European satellites.38

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38. See M.S. Handler, “Other Satellites Snap At Yugoslavia’s Heels,” New York Times, 3 October 1948, p. E4. “Tightening of control, in a sense, blind loyalty to the Soviet Union and submergence of national interests to Soviet interests, is growing apace in states of the Soviet blocs. The movement is part of the general Soviet drive to mend Russia’s fences and establish greater unity of command. Advent of the Yugoslav question accelerated the urgency of this movement because of repercussions of Tito’s independent stand upon more independently-minded individuals and groups of Eastern Europe.”
In this dire challenge to his credibility, Tito found justification in the form of what would become his own ideology—Titoism—coupled with encouragement from the United States government. By the mid 1950s, Tito had even elicited the tacit approval of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who justified the idea of a heterogeneous communist movement and reaffirmed Stalin’s stated policy of non-intervention. Yet, Khrushchev sorely misjudged the ramifications of an independent Tito when they jointly pronounced, “that the roads and conditions of Socialist development are different in different countries . . . that any tendency to impose one’s views in determining the roads and forms of socialist development are alien.”39 That joint pronouncement opened the way for doctrinal change in the communist world and legitimized a new multipolarity.

The freedom Tito enjoyed rested, though, on the laurels of American declarations of support and Moscow’s hesitation to test American resolve. Especially after the Korean War unleashed a general condemnation of aggression coupled with a determined military response by the Western powers, an invasion of Yugoslavia by the Soviet Union or its allies seemed unlikely.40 While in 1951, American analysts still thought such an invasion

40. For example, while no known plans against Yugoslavia exist, Bela Kiraly, a former Hungarian general before the 1956 Revolution, claimed that the Soviets had a plan in place to use Hungary as a staging point for an armed removal of Tito by the Red Army. Scholars have found, though, that his claim was false. See Mark Kramer, “The Expulsion of Yugoslavia and Stalin’s Efforts to Reassert Control,” *Yugoslavia’s Expulsion from the Cominform Sixty Years Later*, AAASS National Convention, Philadelphia, PA, 22 November 2008. Bela Kiraly’s original work appeared as, “The Aborted Soviet Military Plans Against Tito’s Yugoslavia,” in *At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historical Perspective*, vol. 10 of *War and Society in East Central Europe*, Wayne Vucinich, ed., (New York: Social Science Monographs, 1982), pp. 273–88; also see, Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias*, p. 4. Here
possible, and notably so did Yugoslavs who called for vocal American support—even for American nuclear arms—that assessment significantly decreased by 1952 as the U.S. government saw Tito had consolidated domestic power.\textsuperscript{41}

While the main American concerns over aggression faded in 1952, the threat of instability in the Balkans remained a distinct possibility. Moreover, American policymakers worried throughout the early 1950s about the continued success and expansion of communism because not only did the devastation of war in Eastern Europe combine with the Soviet presence to weaken American influence there, but both France and Italy possessed influential communist parties that caused concern for American policymakers; after all, a dangerous cohort of “Marxian Socialists,” who have “consistently looked on the USSR ‘‘in spite of all its faults’’ as the hope of the world” remained influential in those countries.\textsuperscript{42} The U.S. government reviewed the situation in

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{41} The Department of State issued paper NIE-29 “Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951” on 20 March 1951 and determined that “the extent of Satellite military and propaganda preparations indicates that an attack on Yugoslavia in 1951 should be considered a serious possibility.” The Intelligence Advisory Committee conferred another meeting 3 May 1951 and reviewed the situation published in NIE-29/1. They noted heavier Soviet troop movements coupled with “high Yugoslav officials” privately expressing “increased concern over the possibility of an early Satellite attack. Although the timing of these statements suggests that they may in part have been designed to support the recent formal Yugoslav requests for arms and equipment from the US, the fact that Yugoslavia is openly requesting such assistance may also be interpreted as further evidence of genuine fear of Satellite aggression.” See “Review of the conclusions of NIE-29 “Probability of an Invasion of Yugoslavia in 1951,” NIE-29/1, (4 May 1951), pp. 1–2.

\textsuperscript{42} See Clare Boothe Luce, private letter to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, 15 June 1956. John Foster Dulles Papers, 1952–56, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. For more on the split of the Italian Communist Party and Tito’s role see M.S. Handler, “Titoism, Nemesis of Stalinism,” \textit{New York Times}, 1 April 1951, p. 18. “The resignations of Valdo Magnani and Aldo Cucchi were not the cause of the split in the Italian Communist party, but were a logical outcome of an internal struggle within the party—a struggle
\end{footnotesize}
1952, and noted several key features of the Yugoslav situation: “The assassination or death of Tito would weaken the regime and would afford added opportunity for the USSR to exploit political confusion and discontent, but would be unlikely to break the regime’s hold over the country or to produce fundamental changes in its foreign or domestic policies”\(^4\), that “from the outset, the regime has placed a heavy strain on the population, particularly the peasant majority”; but that “current and future peasant discontent will be firmly handled on a local level”; and, finally, that “a coup d’état directed against Tito by high members of the CPY [LCY], the armed forces, the security forces, or by other dissatisfied elements is unlikely.”\(^4\) The American government asserted that Tito had solidified his position as leader after having combated domestic competitors and that by 1952, he commanded, “the loyalty and obedience of the party and the armed and security forces, and even opponents of the regime apparently prefer it to the reestablishment of alien control from Moscow.”\(^4\) With a secure power base thanks to his loyal police and officer corps—recognized by American policymakers as

which was set in motion by the Yugoslav revolt against Stalinist dictatorship.” Further in the article, the struggles facing the French Communist Party were attributed to the “Economic recovery” that has hit the party “a hard blow and cost many rank-and-file members,” p. 59.

\(^4\) Though, it must be added that the report notes the following, “The Director, Joint Intelligence Group,” has acknowledged, “The assassination or death of Tito would so weaken the regime that almost anything could happen. It is possible that his present assistants could promptly stabilize the situation without any fundamental changes in policy. But it is also equally possible that the CPY could be torn to pieces and emerge as a regime subservient to Russia.” See “Probable Developments in Yugoslavia and the Likelihood of Attack upon Yugoslavia, Through 1952,” NIE-29/2, p. 1.

\(^4\) See “Probable Developments in Yugoslavia and the Likelihood of Attack upon Yugoslavia, Through 1952,” NIE-29/2, pp. 1–3

strengthened by “confidence in themselves,” and a “particularistic pride in their own achievements”—and international recognition by the United States, Tito enjoyed the flexibility to pursue his own policies with a much-needed vigor.  

The U.S. policy of supporting Tito in the early years after the split paid off. Intelligence officials credited the efforts by the United States as key in convincing the USSR “that an attack by the adjacent Satellites would involve not only serious risk of war between the US or UN and these Satellites, but also the danger that such a conflict would develop into a general war.” American officials determined that “without doubt,” the Soviets would instead “exploit all possibilities short of war to liquidate the Tito regime.” The estimates of the Kremlin’s assessment of Tito and his successful resistance against its overtures led the Soviets to prevent further resistance from undermining their control in other East European countries. No doubt disappointing to American policymakers, this realization of further Soviet crackdown stood in stark


48. See FRUS, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union Volume V (1949), p. 948. “Although Tito’s heresy represents an intolerable challenge to Soviet authority, the Soviet Government is not likely to risk a direct military attack on Yugoslavia which might develop into a general conflict.”

49. For some discussion of this process, see Roy Macridis, “Stalinism and the Meaning of Titoism,” World Politics, 4:2 (January 1952), p. 235. “Soviet leaders undertook a vast campaign of purging the Communist parties of the satellites to eliminate all dissident elements. In some cases, as in Poland, direct command of military personnel was entrusted to Russians.”
contrast with what was hoped on 30 June 1948—at the outset of the Tito–Stalin split—when policymakers such as Kennan and institutions such as the Central Intelligence Agency—indicated that if Tito won “substantial concessions from the Kremlin or is successful in breaking away from Kremlin control,” then the Satellite countries would find it difficult to control their “nationalist” elements, who were reportedly “already rebelling against blind obedience to the Kremlin.”

Although, by 1956, John Foster Dulles received a letter from the U.S. ambassador to Italy that Tito’s “triumphant entry into Moscow,” that year had helped him become “the physical symbol of this Brave New Day of a reformed, reconverted and peacefully evolving communism.”

Something seemed to have worked from an American perspective.

THE YUGOSLAV PERSPECTIVE OF TITOISM

Yugoslav political elites struggled to maintain a high-level of awareness among their members and, as a result, reach deeply into larger society to build support for the regime. Tito’s most intimate supporters recognized that the best method for constructing a popular legitimacy rested on the policy of reforming Marxism vis-à-vis socialist self-management and decentralization of power. When political elites rejected the reforms that worked towards realizing self-managing goals, Tito removed them. Much later in 1966, Aleksandar Ranković, vice president of the federation and heir apparent to Tito, not


only used the power of his influential security service (UDB-a) for his own political agenda, but also made frequent public and private statements against decentralization and the path of Yugoslavia’s socio-economic development.52 Unable to tolerate such behavior, Tito removed Ranković, and created a stir inside Yugoslavia that firmly solidified the course of reform and forever banished authoritative totalitarianism. Self-management became more than a rhetorical device for LCY leaders. Central Committee member Nijaz Dizdarević “stress[ed]” that it was necessary to put forth the question of the ideological awareness of the LCY members, because it was “of essential importance,” for the LCY’s role in society to “help the working man in his struggle for self-management.”53 This emphasis on the individual was markedly different from the Soviet case, where decrees by the elite vanguard managed the lives of the workers.

One of the primary institutions that touched all families in Yugoslavia, the army, also served a vital role in the construction of a Yugoslav ideology. The Yugoslav People’s Army pledged that its members would be “uncompromised fighters for the unity of the Yugoslav Socialist society, brotherhood and unity,” and the “development of social self-government” in a democratic society.54 Owing to the nature of the revolutionary armed struggle during World War II, the army’s role in the state—vis-à-vis the LCY—was paramount. During the 1960s, a critical time in the history of the Cold War, a sharpening of laws and policies in the League of Communists emerged, but also

52. Department of State Telegram, “Rankovic’s Fall – Part V,” 7 July 1966. LBJ Library.
Alongside the adoption of a series of educational courses to indoctrinate members of the armed forces, educators introduced a course entitled “The History of the LCY” with a special emphasis on understanding the conditions of social development. The syllabus for the course outlined the “dialectic approach and solution of complicated problems” in the period of preparations and carrying out the revolution, as well as in the period of the “construction of socialism”—including a direct emphasis on the position of the individual in socialism; namely, Yugoslav socialism.  

The roots of a particular Yugoslav identity remain clouded by the events of the 1948. How reliable are the sources that have painted Tito as a maverick unwilling to bow to Stalin? Moreover, what did Stalin think he was going to achieve by expelling Tito from the Cominform? While Yugoslav sources typically have painted Tito as independent-minded from the beginning, no sources prior to 1948 describe a unique Titoist ideology—as a sort of Yugoslav Communism in contrast to the communism of the Soviet Union. The latter emerged because of the split; this is undeniable. What happened, though, in Yugoslavia after 1948, was not just a blind groping for survival;  


56. I contend that after a thorough review of Yugoslav documents—including Soviet-Yugoslav and American-Yugoslav conversations—Tito was not only a tough negotiator and shrewd politician, but also incredibly confident in himself and his position. Tito’s confidence though seems to have mattered greatly as he not only weathered the storm of Soviet critiques but also took the dangerous path towards reforming his state in the face of hostility. Edvard Kardelj, Titoism and the Contemporary World: Edvard Kardelj’s Speech to the Fourth Congress of the People’s Front of Yugoslavia (New York: National Committee for a Free Europe, Inc., 1953); and, John C. Campbell, Tito’s Separate Road: America and Yugoslavia in World Politics (New York: Harper Row, 1967).
rather, a deliberate system materialized that not only built legitimacy for itself, but also maintained a logic and consistency.

Self-managing socialism lasted the entire life of Tito’s state and as it progressed, so did all other aspects of ideology and practice. When the army reformed in the late 1960s, it did so according to self-managing principles; likewise, with decentralization of the federal apparatuses came a reliance on local leaders that encompassed hundreds of thousands of Yugoslavs into the direct management of the state. While not without its inefficiencies, defects, and other tensions over control of resources and authority, self-management quickly became the mantra of Tito’s reform regime. While domestic policies took center stage for self-management, the important changes that Tito introduced into his system greatly expanded into all spheres of Yugoslav life.

Because of the far-reaching reforms towards further decentralization and self-management, a parallel foreign policy promptly emerged. In 1955, when a group of newly independent Asian states met at Bandung, Indonesia, Tito latched onto and helped develop the principles that these leaders formulated. The resulting Non-aligned Movement spoke of lofty goals and primarily influenced change in the 1960s, including having spearheaded the fight against new colonialism (vis-à-vis a binding alliance with Moscow or Washington), domination, racism, and any interference in a country’s domestic affairs by another state.\footnote{“Budući da je nesvranost efikasno, oružje malih i srednjih zemalja u borbi protiv bilo kojeg oblika dominacije i homogenije i za očuvanje nacionalne političke i ekonomske nezavisnosti, to očito ne odgovara ambicijama da se nesvstan pretvore u instrument politike lagera, a prije svega Sovjetskog Saveza.” From “Promašeni napadi na nesvrstanost,” \textit{Vjesnik}, 21 September 1968, from HU OSA 300–10–2 Yugoslav Subject Files I, Non-Alignment Foreign Policy 1 of 2, 1964–68 [NAFP1, 64–68], cn. 286.} The last point is obvious from Tito’s own experience
with Stalin and the resulting Yugoslav fear of Soviet or Soviet-bloc invasion. The Kremlin leaders kept this fear real with the suppression of riots in East Germany in 1953, protestors in Poznan, Poland, and the 1956 invasions of Hungary, which were meant to protect socialism; but also much later in 1968, when events in Czechoslovakia involved Red Army intervention.

A Yugoslav path necessarily opted out of either course laid out by Moscow and Washington. As a working alternative to choosing sides, this third way naturally had the most potential in the Third World, those countries “liberating themselves from colonial slavery,” who only desired “to formulate their own policies, to be equal in international affairs, and to preserve freedom of action.” Yet, as history has shown, Yugoslav socialism failed to export itself as a political model for emulation. Its limited success in drawing in members of the newly liberated countries of Africa and Asia towards a friendly relationship succeeded only as long as Tito could supply economic aid alongside moral and political advice, such as the delivery of arms to Indonesia or Egypt. As Odd Arne Westad has argued, during the Cold War there existed two blocs, along with a host of revolutionaries whom all courted yet no one could control. The revolutionaries took sides according to the level of economic, military, and political aid dispersed. Tito unfortunately had little money to finance a successful Non-aligned Movement and use that as a vehicle to export his worldview. Tito had only words, and in international

relations, words are cheap. Traveling to Africa and Asia as part of goodwill missions, Tito tried also to promote trade, but his economy was never large enough to finance revolution. In the important Yugoslav daily, *Komunist*, Gavro Altman said that “the lasting political interests of our own country and the well conceived interest of our economy” calls for a further involvement with fellow unaligned countries.\(^6^0\)

Indeed, Yugoslavia’s trade in the mid-1960s heavily favored the United States and Western Europe with forty-eight percent compared to thirty-three percent with the Soviet Union and its satellites and a mere nineteen percent with the nonaligned countries.\(^6^1\) Altman’s call for an increased Yugoslav economic presence across the world mirrored the hopes of politicians who saw trade as an innocuous manner of expanding Yugoslavia’s influence throughout the world. Tito declared, “Yugoslavia has its own ambitions,” including what he termed as the “interests of further development of socialism and the furthering of the revolutionary development of all progressive people.”\(^6^2\) One path towards that goal of leading the way among all so-called progressive people rested on Yugoslavia’s economic expansion; with a healthy and diverse economy, Tito could have looked to selling his ideology along with his country’s products.

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\(^{62}\) See “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/1 K.2 45–90, folder 56. “Jugoslavija ima svoje ambicije, da ona hoče da igra tako neku naročitu ulogu u socijalističkom svetu i da prema njoj treba drugačije postupati nego prema drugim socijalističkim zemljama. Naime, drugim rečima, ja mislim da teba tako postaviti odnose ne samo specijalne prema Jugoslaviji nego uopšte u socijalističkom svetu. Ja govorim u interesu daljeg razvijanja socijalizma i daljeg revolucionarnog razvoja i omogućavanja okupljanja svih progresivnih ljudi...”
RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENT PATHS

A tremendous success for Tito’s reform program and the construction of his ideology after the 1948 split came not merely from a willing domestic audience, but with recognition from outside sources. While the American government saw Tito as a useful force and supported him in the overall fight against the Soviets, Tito could not rely on support from Washington alone to sustain him. In 1955, a summit between top leaders from the Kremlin and Belgrade met to hash out their differences and achieve a working relationship again. During this Soviet–Yugoslav summit in the summer of 1955, Vice President Edvard Kardelj stated that the Yugoslavs believed that diplomatic relations with all countries stood out as a moral and socialist objective. As a result, he supported international socialist parties in addition to communist parties, whereas Kardelj harangued the USSR’s elite for supporting only those under their control. Such a policy, according to Kardelj, was foolish. Dizdarević also voiced his willingness to “collaborate with all socialist countries,” but, in particular, those familiar “countries in the socialist camp and the Warsaw Pact.” The Yugoslavs defended their position because, as they saw it, support for social-democratic parties would help draw those parties away from the capitalists, while the opposite would occur if left isolated. This

63. See Lorraine Lees, Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War (University Park, PN: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).
64. Kardelj in “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56.
66. See “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56. “Mi ne mislimo da su socijal-demokrati danas bolji nego što su bili pre 20 godina. Naprotiv, u mnogim stvarima oni su možda otišli još
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position supported the Yugoslav sense of sovereignty and cooperation, but it also fit within the larger dilemma of European security, especially in light of the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with West Germany’s inclusion in 1949. Khrushchev and Tito alike had jointly recognized the German problem as the bane of European stability and social development.67 The difference in the positions of the two leaders, though, revealed themselves with the proposed solution. Obviously, Tito had less to lose by recognizing one Germany whereas the Soviets needed to have East Germany—as a sovereign German state—legitimized by other parties.68 But the Soviets could gain little ground in the West, according to the Yugoslavs, because with secrecy and exclusion, Western Europe—in particular countries such as Britain and France—had more to fear from the Soviets than from a resurgent Germany.

From the Yugoslav point of view, the Soviet brutalization of other parties stood as a testament as to why the LCY had to remain steadfast on ideological questions. Yugoslavs could not tolerate such a hierarchical system within self-management, but

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67. At the 1955 summit in Belgrade, Khrushchev said, “The question of Germany. The central question is Germany.” (Pitanje Nemačke. Centralno pitanje je Nemačka). Later in that same day, Tito said, “That means, the question of resolving the German question is closely bound with the question of European security at the same time.” (Znači, pitanje rešenja nemačkog pitanja usko je vežano sa pitanjem evropske bezbednosti, u isto vreme). See “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56.

68. See also “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog bira,” ASCG CK SKJ IV K.7 7, 1971, p. 96. The discussions at this 1971 meeting outlined the thoughts of the committee in terms of Brezhnev’s visit to Yugoslavia in that same year. It coincided with a “definite turn to solve the German problem” and finally rest easy regarding security in Europe. The Soviets had ratified talks in Bonn, which maintained the status quo and agreed to set a time in the near future for what would become the Helsinki Accords and put an end to the uneasiness over borders in Europe.
while admittedly different compared to the Soviets, the founding members of NATO told Tito that Yugoslavia was ineligible for membership because of its one-party system. In some instances, Western governments afforded Tito some flexibility and held out stimuli—the Italian government, despite its territorial dispute with Tito over Triest, followed the Americans’ lead and encouraged Tito with a commercial agreement. For the West, Yugoslav leaders fit the original Joint Chiefs’ declaration of anti-Soviet attitudes that would benefit U.S. foreign policy; importantly, though, because Tito refused to abandon Marxism and embrace the American system prohibited his inclusion into multinational systems such as NATO and, later, the European Economic Community (EEC).

The appreciation shown to Tito by the West, while in effect allowing Tito to reform his Marxist principles in peace, underscored the larger problem of legitimacy for the dictator. The lack of real inclusion into a foreign system or association helped reinforce the fear in Belgrade over their position in time of war. Yugoslavs could easily question how far the West would go to save Yugoslavia if attacked and how much economic and military aid the Yugoslavs might receive in the future without abandoning Marxism. Uncertainty plagued the West on this score too, and George Kennan had already noted in 1949 that the U.S. response to an independent Tito needed to avoid

69. Tito told Khrushchev, that the forming members of NATO told him that Yugoslavia cannot join because “You have a different system and because of that cannot come into NATO.” (Vi imate drugi sistem i zato vas ne možemo primiti u NATO). See “Fragmenti” ASCG, CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56.

“extremes.” Americans could neither “beseech” Tito’s favor and ruin his domestic standing nor “repulse” him and cause a victory for the Kremlin. Leaders in the West tried, though, to modify Yugoslav domestic politics because of the critical aid provided during the post-1948 Soviet economic blockade—Khrushchev criticized Tito in 1955, saying, “If the Americans gave you help, they did not do it for good publicity.” Tito defended himself to Khrushchev when he explained that he had not been a fool; in fact, as Tito declared, “It was not only that they used us, but we used them too.” Over time, it became clear that Tito used this ongoing uncertainty shrewdly to extract concessions from both sides; the problem in the early 1950s rested on the need for someone to recognize Tito as the undisputed leader of his Yugoslavia.

True to his revolutionary character and the socialist principles for which he and his followers fought, Tito strengthened his credentials as a Marxist and, in 1955, was granted something completely unforeseeable since the summer of 1948—recognition by the Soviet Union. The results of the Soviet–Yugoslav summit in 1955 opened up new avenues for Yugoslav policy and helped to consolidate the legitimacy of Tito’s communism. Having admitted that “our ideological development has always stuck with Marxism-Leninism,” but that the Yugoslav system has employed different means to realize the Marxist-Leninist vision, Yugoslav leaders successfully negotiated for a series of concessions and admissions from the Soviet party, including the notion that different paths to socialism existed. Yugoslavs then successfully debunked the myth of an

immaculate Soviet design, and secured guarantees by the Soviet Union not to mingle in the internal affairs of other countries—including economic and ideological affairs.  

With the stroke of a pen, Moscow held up Tito’s system as valid. The Kremlin’s recognition of Tito as an independent socialist actor paved the way for further reforms and strategies for Yugoslav ideologues to perfect the new Yugoslav system under the communist umbrella. While within less than a year, Soviet tanks would roll into Hungary to protect socialism there against so-called “reactionary elements” of the Hungarian party, Tito could nonetheless rest easier than at any time since 1948.

The result of this reassurance of sovereignty meant that for Tito and the LCY, a further revision of their principles and methods could proceed unhindered. By the early 1950s, the LCY dominated the state and Tito reigned supreme without serious domestic competition thanks to the unswerving loyalty of the armed forces and police. Tacit acknowledgement by the West of Yugoslavia’s security and recognition of independence by the Soviet Union gave Tito the freedom to experiment with ongoing reforms to help perfect his new self-management system without risk of Soviet intervention. Initially serving, after 1948, as a way to make the Yugoslav system different from its Soviet progenitor, self-management—the idea that workers would theoretically own the means

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73. “Soviet–Yugoslav Communiqués on Policies and Party Aims,” *New York Times*, 21 June 1956, p. 10. Negotiations continued for more than a year and in the end the Soviets and Yugoslavs uttered several important phrases; one such includes, “Abiding by the view that the roads and conditions of Socialist development are different in different countries,” relations between progressive forces throughout the world should be based “on complete freedom of will and equality, on friendly criticism and on the comradely character of the exchange of views on disputes between our parties.”

74. See “Fragmenti” ASCG, CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56.
of production and have a larger voice in the administration of the state at all levels—quickly grew to dominate the political geography and define Yugoslav socialism.

Edvard Kardelj asserted in 1953 that the Yugoslav Federation had become, “above all a bearer of the social functions of a unified socialist community of the Yugoslav working people.” The assertion of the rights of the working people was deliberate, because elites regarded them as the backbone of Yugoslavia and the ones who would take the initiative and work towards communism. To that end, the Constitutional Law of 1953 stated in Article 2 that, “all power belonged to the working people, who exercised their power either directly (social self-management) or indirectly, through representative organs.” The decade following the enactment of the 1953 Constitutional Laws displayed to Yugoslav elites that a more thoroughgoing reform platform needed implementation because society had not progressed as thoroughly as they wanted. The resulting constitution in 1963 sought to clarify the role of worker in factory units and the nature of a working administrative system that could adapt to the changes. The basics of self-management as originally described meant that people would work to satisfy both the personal and common needs. Framers defined people to acknowledge workers as the cornerstone of the country’s ongoing success. The introduction to the 1963 Constitution noted that the “peoples of Yugoslavia” were “aware that the further consolidation of their

76. Hondius, The Yugoslav Community, p. 196.
brotherhood and unity” was necessary and that to accomplish that task they “have founded a socialist federalist community of working people.”

Self-management took center stage alongside the recognition of worker’s predominance in Yugoslavia. Self-management gave each Yugoslav citizen a stake in the government and served to boost the popularity of the regime in the wake of ideological contradictions following the split with Stalin. The workers became the de facto center point of Yugoslav politics and represented the ideal Yugoslav identity that leaders vied for because, as Veljko Vlahović, a member of the committee on socio-political relations stated, the profound “strengthening among worker’s organizations and a quality grasp on our self-management” will uplift all of Yugoslavia. LCY members desired reactions from the people and took input seriously as part of self-management’s continual transformation—when people pointed out negative aspects of the Yugoslav system, elites countered with a boilerplate charge that reform was incomplete and “intensive” changes needed to flourish in the rest of society. Despite all of the rhetoric, a clear gulf existed between theory and practice and as people responded favorably to reforms leaders recognized that their new socio-economic system might solve all of their problems.

In constructing a Marxist state, the chief Yugoslav ideologues turned towards a

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policy of self-management that stressed the nature of a decentralized administration of industry, agriculture, and government. At first, self-management spoke to merely the working class, but the concept expanded to include virtually every sector of society with the exception of the armed forces (and then until 1968, when army leaders adopted the same within the defense sector). Representative of the Yugoslav spirit of reform, Miljenko Živković, a Yugoslav military thinker, reckoned self-management to be the answer to questions of divisions throughout society. Because “self-management and self-directing societal relations form the basis of the unity of the classes, political and national interests, as well as all nations and nationalities,” Yugoslav leaders confidently boasted of their success in uniting the citizenry and building Marxism. Leaders might have begun to win over people to Marxism, but the more important question was whether Marx had the formula for a successful and lasting society.

In attaining self-government, the regime assigned the duty of the working people in the social-political communities to “decide on the course of economic and social development, on the distribution of the social product, and on the matters of common

80. Yugoslavs repeatedly cited the JNA as being the only Yugoslav institution that was not self-managed. Many Yugoslav elites claimed that a military could not function under self-management due to inherent hierarchy issues prevalent in any army. Yet it is interesting to note that one of the justifications for the creation and strengthening of the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF) during the late 1960s was the self-management system based on self-directing principles. Namely, the TDF (operating on an equal level with the JNA) allowed Yugoslav citizens to participate in the defense of the country but in an organization that was inherently opposed to self-management. For examples of this consult, Colonel-General Viktor Bubanj in *Teritorijalna obrana* (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1970), p. 7; Miljenko Živković, *Teritorijalna obrana Jugoslavije* (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1985), p. 180.

concern." Self-management would continue as the primary means of state-driven ideology and, as such, play a commanding role in giving people a stake in the system and incorporating them indefinitely into it. What Yugoslav leaders at the time did not envision, though, was how dangerous constant reform of a one-party state might ultimately prove.

**SELF MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE**

Tito’s system had emphasized decentralization so much that any desire to centralize moved “backwards,” in the minds of certain leaders, and created an “extremely dangerous” scenario for “the development of self-management.” When the party experienced an increase in participation and membership in the early 1970s, leaders called the time a “renaissance” that sprang from the LCY’s “positive program and the prospects it offers society.” The more pressing reason for increased participation came after the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia because of the popular fear that Yugoslavia was next on Leonid Brezhnev’s list. Whatever the case, the overall value of participation in government vis-à-vis self-management—despite the convoluted rhetoric—showed itself through the logical consistency with the overall Yugoslav notion of independence. When Tito rejected Soviet control of the Yugoslav economy through joint-stock companies and import-export deals, Tito rejected the entire platform whereby...

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a central authority directed the state and the economy. Self-management grew to become the rhetorical and ideological personification of Tito’s independent mood. Giving more power to the workers in an abstract sense meant that more people would have some sort of say in how Yugoslavia progressed, but also that leaders respected diversity. As a result, centralism became a synonym for “neo-Stalinism” and “dogmatism,” and thus solidified the logical base of Yugoslav planning.85

Local solutions to local problems destined that no central planning board ever determined quantities of goods or laid out specifics regarding worker productivity. While the party always had goals and expectations, the reality ensured that workers operated alongside managers in what became an intricate system of shared authority. Because elites pressed this logic of catering to local interests throughout Yugoslav society, it also becomes clear how between 90 and 100 percent of Serbs in Kosovo learned Albanian, whereas Serbs in Vojvodina or Croatia would have had neither any reason nor availability to do the same.86 When it came to discussing how to help farmers within different regions and populated by different ethnicities, the Commission on National Minorities member Geza Tikvički declared, “the federation does not have any kind of possibility nor does it have the instruments to help”; instead, areas such as Kosovo or Macedonia needed to rely on local government.87 Strahil Gigov agreed with Tikvički and

noted that the state had not “yet realized such instruments” and that differences between the regions and the entire country posed unique problems. To that end, the idea that each region, or larger commune, would have a “Common Investment Fund,” to help modernize or improve other aspects of the locality took hold as a potential solution to foster growth. Naturally, the “question of cadres,” became an important sticking point for the LCY, as it needed to maintain a certain amount of “moral” influence within each worker commune. After all, Comrade Laća emphasized at a committee meeting that “we cannot insist that everyone conform to a single rubric.” “We are,” Laća said, “looking at things in a practical way.” That so-called practical nature helped create the intricate self-management regime that would touch almost every Yugoslav at one point or another despite problems of cooperation or a lack of an overarching authority.

Because the central problem in Yugoslavia was supposedly “economic” in nature, the character of self-management as an economic system had tremendous influence in shaping Yugoslavia’s entire development. Moreover, because the leadership rested on their credentials as directors of the Communist Party, the question of ideology remained

Self-management, as it first developed in the early 1950s, tackled the economic issues facing Yugoslavia, and was the first step in a larger attempt to gain credibility from the people in light of Soviet repression. Once the system began to function normally, managers saw room for improvement and, by 1959, leaders saw further reform as necessary to create new economic units (make the size of the work commune smaller), and to build in the costs, quality control, maintenance of capital, and profit sharing techniques within the larger business environment.\footnote{See Branko Horvat, \textit{The Yugoslav Economic System: The First Labor-Managed Economy in the Making}, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1976), pp. 159–160.}

Before 1948, Tito could always look to the Soviet Union to legitimize his situation, no matter how popular, or unpopular, he was in Yugoslavia. After 1948, though, Tito’s only chance for achieving the kind of general legitimacy he so desired rested with the people of Yugoslavia. With this idea of reaching out to the people, self-management strove to provide people with the tools to realize their stake in the regime and reaffirm Tito and his LCY as their councilor, naturally in accordance with Tito’s flexible prescription of Marxism. While self-management later touched all aspects of Yugoslav society, an examination of how it functioned within factories or larger work communes gets to the crux of the issue of how, in the Yugoslav case, labor employed capital instead of vice-versa.\footnote{See Howard M. Wachtel, \textit{Workers’ Management and Workers’ Wages in Yugoslavia: The Theory and Practice of Participatory Socialism}, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 59.} In a factory setting, it was typical for the workers there to have several organizations of authority. The most important factory organizations were the workers’ council and the managing board. These two combined to represent all the
employees at the factory and gave workers a chance to cooperate within a structure of shared authority. Complementing these two organizations, the labor union committee, youth organization, and the League of Communists organizations served as further avenues for advancing the cooperative spirit that leaders desired alongside trusted government auxiliaries.96 While LCY members typically formed a minority on the workers’ councils, they represented a powerful voice in the overall system, and workers likely reelected LCY members to key positions within the decentralized factory management system. Depending on the size of the factory, the workers’ council might have eclipsed the power of the labor union committees—the smaller the factory, the more likely the workers’ council catered to need individual needs of workers, whereas the larger the factory, the more likely bigger management issues would preoccupy the workers’ council. Devolved authority, though, meant that a worker possessed multiple avenues for compensation and recourse.97 Furthermore, to manage the rights of workers and prevent against an overwhelming management led by university graduates, or other white-collar workers, the law mandated that at least three-fourths of all members of the workers’ councils be production workers and no more than one-fourth in any sort of office or management position.98 Finally, derived from the workers’ council, the management board—also in accordance with the same job-specific regulations as the workers’ council—served as the executive organ of the council. The management board

implemented policies from the larger body and it was this group that developed monthly operational and production plans.\textsuperscript{99}

The laws allowed management boards flexibility in operation that gradually worked to establish a general economy based on market socialism. But, because Yugoslavia could never open up to a true market economy, the limitations on industries’ ability to prosper and grow became apparent during global recessions or price increases on energy. Despite that, reacting to the market and using supply and demand along with world prices helped these firms develop and prosper in a way that the Soviets or their allies in Eastern Europe could not. Nonetheless, the party was always in the background and served to communicate the directives set down by the government to the workers and urged them to comply with socialist aspects of development.\textsuperscript{100}

An interesting consequence of the self-management system led to a common disparity in earnings among not only different industries, but within industries as wages depended on the success of the individual enterprise. Because the workers’ councils determined what to do with excess capital—pay out extra wages, increase existing wages, make capital improvements, or hire more staff—being part of a profitable company could yield great financial results regardless of individual performance. In contrast, a struggling firm might not reward a good worker because the employer could not compete in that industry or suffered with some sort of larger problem such as high energy or transportation costs. In such cases where the company ran a deficit, the local commune

\textsuperscript{99} See Wachtel, \textit{Workers’ Management and Workers’ Wages}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{100} See Wachtel, \textit{Workers’ Management and Workers’ Wages}, p. 79.
or regional government would typically loan money at a favorable rate to help reverse matters.\textsuperscript{101} Often, though, such financial guarantees by the state kept management in a business-as-usual mindset and failed to spur credible ingenuity to respond correctly to market forces.

In summary, the Yugoslav self-management system allowed for and adapted to diversity, and succeeded in bringing common folk into the decision-making system. While the LCY served as a guiding ideological institution, it did not monopolize workers’ councils nor did it dictate all policy. It did set limits and worked to increase its own size in Yugoslavia as a truly popular party that could, as leaders liked to boast, with unity of purpose and dedication, uplift Yugoslavia. A partial market system, though, did create inequality in a system that was supposed to liberate and draw support for the regime among its core group of supporters—workers. Perhaps most importantly, self-management served as a bellwether of consistency for the ideological position of Tito’s system—it helped differentiate between the Soviet and Yugoslav systems and legitimized Tito’s reform package in the post-1948 environment that could continue indefinitely so long as reforms moved towards prosperity.

**TOWARD A UNIQUE YUGOSLAVIA**

This description of events following Stalin’s 1948 polemic banning the wily Yugoslav dictator from the Cominform shows Yugoslavia’s unique place in the community of

nations. Tito’s survival—in any form—meant that reform of Marxism would take on critical importance in his regime as he first sought to re-mold communism into his own system and then perfect it over time. The reform agenda that came about in the early 1950s never ceased as Yugoslav leaders recognized the transformative nature of identity at all levels, public and private. Claiming never to have strayed from the tenets of Marx, Tito sought to make his rule legitimate in the eyes of his people and throughout the world. Yugoslavia’s identity fluctuated over the years, but elites compared themselves to their neighbors in the East. Twenty years after his banishment by Stalin, Tito’s comrades understood that the focus of their comparison always rested on how Yugoslav Communism—principally vis-à-vis self-management—was better than the Soviet variety.

As a member of the LCY’s Commission for Information and Propaganda, Marko Nikezić, outlined this view following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; he stressed how the Warsaw Pact leaders “intervened in the first place because” of their own dysfunctional systems. In stark contrast to the “very closed system” in the Eastern zone, the Yugoslavs had a less systematic bureaucracy and proceeded by way of a positive spirit of reform.102

Having tied the Yugoslav identity to the existence of a failing, hostile, Soviet Bloc, elites in Belgrade established the concept of a menacing other to highlight the progressive nature of their own system. At each juncture during the remainder of the Cold War, Yugoslav elites pointed to political mishaps, economic misery, and social

unrest as part of a generally unpopular existence under the Kremlin’s control. Dramatic events such as the invasions of Hungary in 1956, or Czechoslovakia in 1968 enhanced these opportunities for propaganda victories, having given the Yugoslavs fuel to prove the differences between the two systems. Yugoslavs argued in the press and in private about these stark differences between the socialist systems, such as the openness and liberalism in Yugoslavia compared to “other socialist countries,” with closed frontiers and harsher standards.¹⁰³

Soviet power, though, scared the Yugoslav elite and set a mood of caution among party members in Belgrade. Despite this, LCY managers were on a quest to make Yugoslavia something that contrasted with their estranged cousins in the Kremlin. During normal times too, the two ideologies stood apart. Nijaz Dizdarević, another member of the Commission for Information and Propaganda, reaffirmed the superiority of what set Yugoslavia apart; that is, self-management, because “it solves all dilemmas,” and that “reform is key to success.” The challenge, though, to the course of reform and the course towards what leaders like Dizdarević described as “democratic socialism,” required genuine success and popularity among the Yugoslav people.¹⁰⁴ Soviet leaders spoke of the LCY as “revisionist” partly because of the problematic nature of foreign capital infused within their command economy; but, Yugoslav elites could parry such


offensives because, according to Nikezić, the LCY isolated itself from the Soviet Union by pointing out the lurid hypocrisy emanating from Moscow. As a capstone, Nikezić added that importance rested with the public seeing reality as it truly was and this was possible only in Yugoslavia and would solidify the course towards progress.105

While Tito could always outline the differences between his system and the West, he needed to work a bit harder to differentiate how and why people needed to look to him as a socialist leader instead of the vanguard in Moscow. Tito’s task grew easier over the years following 1948, especially as Yugoslav elites pieced together their own unique interpretation of Marx vis-à-vis their commitment to socialist self-management. Tito had in fact created his own worldview, but the contrast to the Soviet Union made an important difference when defining what it meant to be a Yugoslav. They were wealthier, freer, allowed to go to church, had more control over their daily lives, and thus, could be considered happier than their counterparts in the Soviet-controlled East. Yugoslavs, while not quite Occidentals, were not exactly Orientals either, and that mattered greatly as identities underwent constant refashioning. Pivotal for leaders was that in contrast to its eastern neighbors, “socialist practice and socialist theory” in Yugoslavia existed, “in harmony” because “dialogue” was “completely open.” Yugoslav secret police, of course, kept track of just how “completely open” dialogue was among anti-regime elements, but the Yugoslavs were correct to note the contrast between the domineering Soviet police state with their own.

The prevailing view of Tito’s state during this period—indeed until 1966—is that the state underwent a centralization program by the LCY in order to solidify its reign. This is also what historian Ivo Banac has referred to as Tito taking on Stalinist trimmings in the wake of the 1948 split. Only after 1966, this view has contended, did Tito relax the reins of power and allow for self-management and decentralization to take place without question. This period of openness then ended quickly once the anti-regime protests in Croatia mandated a return to central control over Yugoslavia’s constituent republics in 1971. A general review of the armed forces supports this view since army officers only embraced self-management in the army—vis-à-vis the Territorial Defense—in the late 1960s and then quickly moved to recentralize. Although this view has merits, an exhaustive search in the archives of former Yugoslavia shows that this centralization program was neither so expansive nor such a large part of Titoist history. Instead, elites constantly reformed Marxism to fit the changing needs of the country—before and after 1966. Eric Kocher, the interim U.S. Charge d’Affaires in Belgrade in 1965, held that domestically, “Yugoslav socialism has departed from many Marxist norms and is now,” and seems ready to continue to be “devoted to a search along ways of its own choosing” as a vehicle to “perfect its identity.” Self-management—as outlined from the beginning—by definition meant devolution of authority from the center and provided people more of a voice in their own lives and the affairs of the state. While in the initial

years following the split, Tito sought rearmament and used his police to crack down on Cominformists, this was but a brief effort to stabilize the regime to face the greater fear—that is, a dangerous and aggressive Soviet Union. Reform was the hallmark of Tito’s system and while the system moved back and forth at times in response to different threats, a reformist agenda was nonetheless always present and as Kocher noted, already well established by 1965. This move for constant reform distinguished Tito’s Marxism from any other at the time. Soviet leaders always remained reluctant to speak of reform and they made no bones about it, telling Tito in a 1967 meeting, “they saw no reason to change [a] system which had been effective for fifty years.” Moreover, Tito’s endless tinkering with his political-economic views strengthened the Soviet sources of disagreement.109

CONCLUSION

When Hitler committed suicide in his besieged Berlin bunker in May 1945, fascism as a viable worldview went up in flames alongside his charred body. The two remaining competitors—communism and market capitalism-democratic liberalism—thereafter possessed awesome power over molding the direction that the new Europe would take. For a time following the end of World War II, it looked as if the entire world was going to fall into two categories and another great conflict would soon engulf mankind. Not only did World War III grow farther from reality with each day, but the notion of

infallible control from the two centers of the postwar world also proved to be false. Much of the Third World entered global politics without pledging allegiance to either side, because the period after 1948 gave birth to the possibility of a competing socialist system, providing that Tito remained in control of Yugoslavia and continued his active criticism of both blocs. The documents clearly show that Tito’s real revolutionary nature came of age after 1948 as he fought to not only survive as the uncontested leader of Yugoslavia, but also affect wider change throughout the world. His break from Stalin reinforced already independent motives of his LCY comrades and gave them the freedom to embark on a reform campaign to refashion Marxism’s identity to fit their special circumstances. At home, the logic of self-management grew to become the hallmark of the reformist agenda that would last until the last days of Yugoslavia; meanwhile, intersecting with self-management’s principles at home, several key Yugoslav officials reached out and found ideological compatriots abroad.

After 1948, the Soviets made Tito a wanted man. That he survived meant that the Cold War, still in its infancy, needed realignment. Titoism as a viable ideology confidently emerged by 1953 with the passage of numerous constitutional amendments but Titoism as a “separate path to socialism” meant that throughout Eastern Europe and especially in the emerging Third World, the Soviets moved to the defensive. Building upon the success of those initial reforms, the LCY continued to adapt and cater to changing environments; nevertheless, the party always remained the sole interpreter of Yugoslav thought. A particular Yugoslav system, once emerged, sought legitimacy at home, and then abroad as a third way—Titoism represented a complete Weltanschauung,
which implied a distinctive foreign policy, tied heavily to the principles of peaceful-coexistence and sovereignty for all nations.

The changes that the Yugoslavs put into practice fundamentally shifted the rhetoric of the new state from that of a tight, federalist system based upon Stalinist principles, to one marked by a decentralized administration, self-managed communes, and worker rights. Yugoslavia truly stands out in the history of Cold War-era European politics with the emphasis placed by the LCY on the world’s stage vis-à-vis nonalignment. Tito’s system thus gained a voice among the decolonizing peoples and those newly free from colonial rule. I argue that a multipolar world reemerged soon after 1948, because neither the Red Army nor its patrons in Moscow were seen as invincible, perfect, or unquestionable—nor was the West the only opponent: Those illusions died on in the summer of 1948 when Stalin exiled Tito and his party.
CHAPTER TWO: NONALIGNMENT AS YUGOSLAVIA’S ANSWER TO BLOC POLITICS

Yugoslavia is permanently and fatefully committed to the policy and movement of non-alignment … In the case of Yugoslavia, to renounce non-alignment would mean to reconcile itself with the gradual loss of freedom and independence and of the right to determine independently its way of internal development.

—Yugoslav scholar Ranko Petković

When Stalin waved his little finger at his opponents, they had an uncanny way of disappearing. Before World War II, when the Soviet leader sought to consolidate his power and fortify his regime, his fellow citizens well understood the power of that wave. But when the conclusion of the war brought Soviet control farther West than any of the Russian tsars could have ever dreamed, Stalin’s wrath had a grander purpose of incorporating Eastern Europe into the Soviet system. Stalin thought that in 1948, through his employment of the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform), the banishment of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito would mean the return of pro-Soviet elements to the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party. That this did not happen proved to have far-reaching consequences for Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and the broader Cold War.

As the Yugoslav Party struggled in the wake of this challenge to maintain its sovereignty in light of aggressive Soviet towards rhetoric and actions throughout Eastern Europe, Tito undertook an ambitious reform program of his communist system that would eventually sever any resemblance to its Soviet cousin. For ideological reasons, though, reforms could never bring Yugoslavia into line with the competing model offered

by the West; therefore, surviving between the awesome Cold War superpowers meant making tough choices, not least of which included navigating a successful course outside of competing bloc politics.\(^2\) Tito and the regime he created suffered from grave threats from outside—primarily from the Cold War standoff—and from within the country. True to his revolutionary nature, Tito could never be content with simple survival—he needed to affect greater change and, as a result, he sought a legitimate and powerful outlet for his ideas that could, at the same time, provide much needed flexibility despite the rigid international political environment. While some in the West described nonalignment as simply part of Tito’s “groping towards a conception of world society,” Yugoslavs did see a global perspective at hand—namely, in the way operating outside of blocs allowed leaders to “exercise their sovereign right to choose freely their internal ways”—most especially, “their own way of socialist development.”\(^3\) This chapter contends that Tito’s quest for legitimacy and confidence compelled him to help establish the Non-aligned Movement to determine a genuine third force in world affairs in a larger effort to strengthen his regime.

Scholarly work on the Non-aligned Movement is rather limited in nature, as most authors wrote contemporaneously with roughly three competing viewpoints: a Marxist interpretation, Yugoslav moralism, and political realism. The Caribbean political


scientist A.W. Singham took the Marxist perspective in his argument over the roots of nonalignment in having underscored it as a powerful social movement fighting against the capitalist and nation-state formulations of the capitalist world. Nonalignment for Singham was not a political move taken by political actors to secure some sort of peace and cooperation, but rather an institutionalization of the “redistribution” of wealth that eventually would claim victory in a brutalized Cold War world divided by a struggle on the part of “European capitalism trying to resurrect itself,” combined with what Singham hinted at as a racist program to destroy the “Asiatic tyranny” of communism.4 Beyond his emphasis on economics and social classes, Singham did correctly allude to the real power of nonalignment—that is, one where national liberation movements (presumably beginning with Tito’s) gained “international legitimacy” through cooperation.5

Leo Mates, former Yugoslav ambassador to the United States, wrote in 1972 that nonalignment was not a predictable policy for the Yugoslav government to accept; rather, as soon as Stalin banished Tito, the Yugoslavs found themselves in an isolation that forced them to reevaluate their tenuous plight between both blocs. The result inspired LCY leaders to cooperate with newly independent actors in the Third World—initially Burma, Ethiopia, and India. What Mates emphasized, though, was how the cooperation began as economic and only made strides in the political domain “soon after,” which fomented into a clear policy of nonalignment.6

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5. Singham, Nonaligned Movement, p. x.
“played a fairly important role” in the formative period of the Non-aligned Movement, he retreated on how Yugoslav leaders manipulated foreign policy as part of a larger project. “Through the policy of nonalignment,” Mates concluded, Yugoslavia “could not hope to achieve anything other than her affirmation in a quite general sense of developing ties with countries with which she felt a kinship.”7 Seen by Mates as a sort of disinterested observer lending merely moral support, he has rejected the idea that Yugoslav leaders saw practical benefits in their association outside of the blocs and had more at stake than simply kind words.

Finally, then, the look at nonalignment from a realist perspective understands power politics as an arbiter of change and recognizes the intersection between pragmatism and conformity with a dynamic Yugoslav ideology. Yugoslav scholar Alvin Rubinstein wrote a compelling thesis on Tito and nonalignment, which outlined three primary goals for the Yugoslavs: “to reinforce Yugoslav efforts to end its position of relative diplomatic isolation”; “to link Yugoslavia to the “‘progressive’” forces in the world”; and to “develop the markets Yugoslav enterprises thought they saw” in the Third World.8 But, Rubinstein failed to identify the desire by party elites to export their ideology; instead, he stalwartly denied that Yugoslav leaders tried to ever “‘sell’” their model because of what he termed a “psycho-political climate conducive to the leisurely” exchange of ideas.9 He confused the idea, though, and quoted Tito as having urged

economic expansion in developing countries, “so that Yugoslavia would be an exemplar of equality, dependability, and disinterested involvement in the strengthening of socialism and mutual ties between states and peoples.”\(^{10}\) As was Tito’s view of the power of economics influencing political change, this chapter will later unveil high-level conversations between Yugoslav leaders that point directly to their desire to “sell” Yugoslav socialism to the rest of the world.

Political scientist William Zimmerman correctly linked the internal development of self-management as a domestic ideology with similarities in nonalignment’s foreign policy. But, Zimmerman took the two policies and argued against what he termed as the popular Western and Yugoslav view of development; namely, instead of nonalignment coming out of self-management and the chaos since 1948, he saw self-management as having come from nonalignment. He theorized how a “primacy of foreign policy considerations” was overwhelming, because the Yugoslavs needed to find a way to position themselves between the blocs—the “domestic expression” of that need became “self-managing socialism.”\(^{11}\) Zimmerman got it right when he saw the fluidity between the two spheres of policy, but what neither he, nor any other author, have linked together was how these policies—whether related or taken separately—articulated a deliberate attempt on the part of the regime’s elites to construct a tangible legitimacy for themselves and the worldview that they purported to have. That this process was dynamic shows the pragmatism of the Yugoslav leaders in their quest for survival and success, but in any

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case, it was from this concern for their right to rule that they sought the vindication of their efforts by the Yugoslav people. If others in the Third World—or any other for that matter—cared to recognize them, the better.¹²

**THE DYNAMIC OF CHANGE INSIDE YUGOSLAVIA**

The internal challenges in Yugoslavia following Stalin’s condemnation of Tito and his comrades forced a dramatic realignment in Yugoslav political thought. As a result, elites dedicated themselves to molding Marxism to fit best their needs and took a bold new step in creating a fresh trend in socialist thought outlined as socialist self-management. The seriousness with which people took this new Yugoslav approach inside the country was real, at least for elites. Yugoslavia needed to be different from the Soviet Union and if it became apparent that Soviet tendencies entered the new political life of the Yugoslav Communist Party (LCY), then Tito’s loyal followers immediately attempted to rectify matters. Yugoslav politicians branded the great Soviet evil, as represented by bureaucratic chauvinism, “an expression of non-democratic and bureaucratic relations” that emerged in a “period when it became clear that it was impossible to continue developing socialist democracy and self-government relations in society,” while at the

¹². See Eric Kocher, “Foreign Policy of Yugoslavia and Its Effect on U.S. Policy.” Kocher noted that “As the GOY [government of Yugoslavia] continued its experiments with self-management, it believes with some justification that its vulnerability is less in the eyes of its traditional friends if Yugoslavia follows conventional Socialist positions in foreign policy matters.” Thus, internal reform worked to gain the favor of Yugoslavs, while foreign policy remained rooted to socialist principles that would keep Tito in a sort of positive middle ground.
same time retaining a hierarchy with power concentrated in the center. In contrast, the Yugoslav system, according to General Ivan Gošnjak, head of the Yugoslav People Army’s (JNA) security service, relied on “progressive thought” formed because of “the party and its forums,” but also out of “self-government organizations” instead of hierarchical and archaic bureaucratic processes. Ceda Kapor, a member of the Central Committee from Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH), argued, “everything should be done” so that communists and working people realize that the “implementation of the decisions” meant “struggle for the further development of socialism and socialist social relations, not only one for clearing up the national problems and relations.” Reform in Yugoslavia had become, in fact, the only reality for leaders to construct a popular and legitimate system and reform operated as the watchword of progress and the solution to all cantankerous dilemmas.

**Nonalignment’s Prehistory**

In the spring of 1953, at the beginning of decolonization, Asian socialist leaders met in the capital of newly independent Burma. The Conference of Asian Socialists in Rangoon included representatives from states across the world, including China, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Kenya, and observers from the recently renamed League of Communists of

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Yugoslavia. At the opening of the conference, conscious of the potential for creating change, the Israeli delegate, M. Stein, called forth a prayer that the conference “lay the foundations of a “Third Force” which shall alter the existing balance of power and shall prevent a new world catastrophe.”16 Global war, particularly nuclear war, was high on the list of participants’ worries—Japan’s delegate Suzuki called atomic devastation a “major problem”—but leaders also worried about the continued movement to lift the “foreign yoke” from colonies across the world.17 When Comrade Aleš Bebler from the LCY rose to make his statement during the opening ceremonies, he recited the recent struggles fought out in the heart of Europe between his party and the Kremlin, because, for Bebler, conflict set the tone for socialists worldwide. He took for granted a general animosity among the conference participants for the Soviet Union—complete with its “socialist and peace loving mask” used to trick hapless Marxists as part of a larger “insatiable hegemonistic appetite.”18 To prevent Soviet aggression into this awakening Asian and African paradigm, Bebler reiterated the struggle against all types of oppression, equality among peoples, and peaceful international coexistence.19

Influence from the small Yugoslav delegation of just three men—Milovan Đilas, Aleš Bebler, and Anotelko Blažović—made a noteworthy difference in the direction that socialists worldwide would take in the coming years. Many of these leaders no doubt desired simply to exercise neutrality in political and economic disputes, but most of them,

partly thanks to speeches like that by Bebler, helped to push for a more proactive, non-neutral foreign policy.

Real neutrality was difficult in the Cold War environment—indeed, branded “immoral” by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles—and the Third World leaders who met at Rangoon, formed a nucleus of actors who took the concept of neutrality and moved it forward by using a non-allied status to gain concessions from multiple world powers. The increased contact between the parties from India, Indonesia, Egypt, and Yugoslavia in particular also helped form such new methods of political thought despite the zero-sum attitude of the early Cold War, because the rhetoric emphasized the sovereignty of all countries and the resistance against forming lasting alliances—regardless of ideological similarities. Yugoslav leaders shared a common fear among the newly liberated leaders in Africa and Asia of dominance by superpowers and had begun as early as at Rangoon to foster cooperation with an eye towards resisting directives from stronger powers. In that spirit, if anyone at the conference held out positive ideals about the Soviets, Bebler strongly condemned Moscow by asking people to look no further than the “Yugoslav experience” to learn the evils of supremacy by any group.

While the short conference set the groundwork for how socialists could compare notes and cooperate in all respects, many of the foreign-policy statements that arose had
logical links with the broader principles of the Yugoslav brand of socialism coming into its own based on socialist self-management. Beginning in Rangoon, elites had found a way to extend their principles to the sphere of foreign policy, because of the unique circumstances between the competing Cold War blocs and the compelling desire of many leaders of the recently independent or soon-to-be independent countries to maintain their sovereignty. The Cold War dilemma was not the only problem, facing leaders in nonaligned countries. Competition over political control from domestic challengers also forced the hand of these leaders, including Tito. LCY leaders overtly boasted about how their influence in foreign affairs gave them credibility and such rhetoric surely worked for dual goals; that is, not only did nonalignment boost support for the regime among Yugoslavs, it also marginalized any potential opposition group. With this balance between foreign and domestic forces, the work of political scientist Steven David has proven important. His concept of omnibalancing has taken into account traditional balance of power considerations, but also employed the need of Third World (and Yugoslavia’s) leaders to counter “all threats.” David has recognized how most of the Third World states faced primarily external threats from one or the other superpower; but, moreover, “the needs of leaders to appease secondary adversaries as well as to balance against both internal and external threats” marked the quest for political survival.23 A common feature for the Third World leaders, as outlined by David, was the idea that leaders were “weak and illegitimate,” and therefore, the stakes in domestic politics

trumped those of external threats. Such logic applies to Yugoslavia too, but more so with respect to the issue of legitimacy rather than the weakness. Tito had handily defeated his domestic enemies and while he spoke out against fringe groups at times of crisis, the reality saw his loyal army and police in unquestionable positions of dominance. Nonetheless, the idea that nonalignment served dual masters and that these leaders employed omnibalancing has considerable merit. Without any other positive foreign policy and in tandem with the construction of a positive, ideologically driven legitimacy, the profound consequences of nonalignment stood out as critical aspects of state relations during the Cold War.

Attending the conference in Rangoon meant that each of the participants desired international legitimacy for their regimes and for their worldviews. By sending a delegation, the Yugoslavs attempted to break out of their isolation and align themselves with a movement shielded against condemnation by either the United States or the Soviet Union. Asian socialists largely already understood the dangerous situation facing the world and thought about how they could alternate between Moscow and Washington—and the emerging power in Beijing. Tito’s flexibility to move within these Asian circles—for example, with respected party members such as Vladimir Dedijer visiting India as early as 1948—grew as tremendous help from the United States government arrived in depth throughout the early 1950s, which mainly served the American interest in weakening the power of the Soviet Union. Despite poor harvests and potential

25. President Harry S. Truman wrote Congress a letter stating, “I have determined that Yugoslavia is a country which is of direct importance to the defense of the North Atlantic area.” See,
upheaval by allies of Stalin, Tito had survived and his top ideologues and comrades—Edvard Kardelj and Milovan Đilas—were hard at work to create a better socialist system. But much work still remained as Kardelj unveiled his new constitutional restructuring in 1953 as a means to further distance Yugoslavia from the Soviet Union—not only for the Yugoslavs but for socialists throughout the world.

FROM RANGOON TO BANDUNG

Two years after the Rangoon meeting of 1953, many of the same leaders organized the Afro-Asian Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, and boldly proclaimed a new spirit guiding foreign affairs. The attendees at Bandung cried out that they did not “want any domination either by force or by ideology,” but, instead, simply “genuine peace.” The path to peace rested in a “willingness and determination” to live together, exude “mutual respect for each other’s national sovereignty,” to foster the “abhorrence of aggression,” and never to interfere in “each other’s domestic affairs.”26 Five guiding principles of Bandung’s meetings set out to change the face of global politics: Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in

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each other’s internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful co-existence.

Building on the long struggle of independence from Asian and European colonial powers, the meeting sought to establish a new system free of entangling alliances and hostilities.

India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru proved an important figure in establishing the basis of what these ideas would come to mean for the conference participants, thanks to his experience leading an independent India since 1947, and having played a significant role as a leader among South Asian states (specifically, as part of the Colombo Five). While Nehru at first denied the centrality of India’s role in Asian geopolitics following India’s independence, he quickly discovered the complexity of his country’s importance once the Communist Mao Zedong proclaimed victory over his nationalist rival Chiang Kai-Shek in nearby China. With two massive empires in Asia furthering the cause of international communism, Indian leaders, despite a modest degree of sympathy for Marx’s ideas, clearly felt enormous pressure to succumb to a combination of Soviet and “belligerent” Chinese force.²⁷ Nehru felt that Indian foreign policy before independence was a product of British imperialism and that India possessed

²⁷. See George McTurnan Kahin, *The Asian–African Conference: Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 5. Kahin argued in his summary that the conference participants “envisaged the Conference as providing an opportunity for working towards three important objectives of their foreign policies: (1) avoidance of war, most immediately between China and the United States; (2) development of China’s diplomatic independence of Soviet Russia; (3) containment of Chinese and Vietminh military power and political influence at the southern border of China and the eastern boundaries of Cambodia and Laos, and the combating of illegal and subversive Communist activities in all non-Communist Asia, particularly in their countries.” In the mid-1960s, Tito noted in a conversation with Governor Averell Harriman and Ambassador C. Burke Elbrick that China stood opposed to the policy of nonalignment and, “in fact, the belligerent Chinese do not want to promote peace in the world but wish to aggravate the international situation.” See Department of State Airgram, “Conversation between President Tito and Governor Harriman and Ambassador Elbrick,” 30 July 1965. LBJ Library.
no historic hostilities with any people in the region, and, as a result, he attempted to shape policy accordingly, while also placating the diverse religious, ethnic, and linguistic interests under his control. He swiftly recognized the advantages in a coordinated policy of neutrality that would weaken any so-called artificial hostilities because of an alliance with either Moscow and Beijing or Washington—to that end, Nehru coined the term nonalignment during his April 1954 visit to Colombo, Sri Lanka.28

The global political realignment that occurred following the end of World War II gave a voice to many formerly underrepresented actors. While some European countries fought to hold onto their earlier possessions, most were too broken at home to deal with troublesome appendages half a world away. One-by-one, the old colonies broke free. In a flurry of excitement, local leaders—including a wealth of pragmatic revolutionaries—declared the independence of new countries and set on a path towards building new states. While India was a tremendous new addition to the global community during the first stage of decolonization, another significant Asian country to emerge was Indonesia. On the island of Java, the new government, led by the nationalist Sukarno, took form and soon encompassed almost all of the former Dutch East Indies; but, as in India, the idea of a united vision for a diverse state proved troublesome. Unlike Nehru, Sukarno could avoid civil war and partition, but his foreign policy could not avoid the reality of both the obvious Cold War divide and the emerging significance of Islam as a political force. Like Nehru, Sukarno desired a foreign policy that could allow for flexibility and relieve the embattled country of any problematic alliances.

Finally, the other major leader to seek an independent foreign policy and grow as a regional power surfaced in the turbulent Middle East. Despite certain Western leaders having promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine since the Zionist movement took shape in the late nineteenth century, the real embodiment of this pledge only appeared at the end of World War II. While the region itself hosted some of the battles during the war—most notably in Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia—the postwar power vacuum fostered a eruption of independence movements. A focused and anti-Western Muslim attitude soon developed with the establishment of Israel by the Western powers.\footnote{Synopsis of the Second Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, (Cairo: Information Department, 1964), p. 4. Abdel Khalek Hassuna, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, argued that Arabs were, in 1964, “still fighting against imperialism, which has driven the people of Palestine from their own land and established Israel as an instrument of aggression, threatening the security, unity and progress of the Arab hope.” I would argue that Western support for Israel from day one has defined most of the history of the modern Middle East. From the beginning, anti-Israeli feelings were rife among Muslims and the important support from the United States of Israel made sure that while certain Arab regimes found a friend in Washington—thanks to the importance of oil—no truly positive partnerships could be created. While Saudi Arabia, for instance, would become a staunch U.S. ally, Saudi motives rested in large part by the ruling elite seeking to win international backing against revolutionaries and other popular anti-regime elements inside the kingdom. True alliances between Arab states and America remained difficult to forge and maintain partly because of the pro-Israel position of the U.S. government. The contradictions were too clear to allow for American aid to beget American-style regimes in the Middle East and the entire region had fallen easily as potential prey to the Soviets. Soviet success was limited partly because of the posturing by Nasir that helped to strengthen Tito at the expense of Moscow. The ramifications of American policy in the Middle East, of course, have become clearer as the Cold War ended; the United States still finds difficulty in forging positive, popularly accepted partnerships in the region because of continued support for Israel, and, moreover, having suffered for so long without real economic reforms to enrich the people of the region, none of the states are economically viable or stable in an integrated, global environment.} Unable to expel the Jewish settlers, most of these newly emboldened Muslim leaders nonetheless tried to resist the change as best they could.\footnote{While Israel was invited to participate at the conference at Rangoon, the rhetoric there from the delegates from Egypt and Lebanon drew lines of controversy that continued at Bandung; at the latter,
powerful nations in the Middle East, Egypt soon became the foremost place for advocates of Arab positions. The personification of this new voice, Gamal Abdel Nasir, attempted to bring his impoverished state to a higher level using the Cold War dilemma to his favor by gaining high technology and modern weapons to create a new Egypt. But Nasir faced not only the tremendous handicap of bordering a powerful and motivated Israel; indeed, he also fought for contested space in Lebanon and later merged with Syria to form the United Arab Republic as a way to change the overall balance of power in the Middle East. The results of the meeting at Bandung, coupled with the complex and rapid pace of change across the globe, had persuaded Nasir of the benefits of seeking closer ties outside of the Cold War divide. Nasir’s logic—similar to a Nehru or a Tito—rested on the idea that if enough leaders of small states could organize and resist overtures from the superpowers, they would not only break free of traditional neutrality but by so doing, would guarantee their own sovereignty and build their economies through trade and concessions from both blocs. But prior to, and again at Bandung, Indonesia’s Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo asked pointedly, “‘Where do we, the peoples of Asia and Africa, stand; and for what do we stand in this world dominated by fear?’”31 Over the next few years, Tito revealed his provocative answer.

Pakistan effectively blocked the participation of Israel despite Burma’s and India’s desire to have Israel there. See Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference*, p. 3; and, Ahmad Hussein in *First Asian Socialist*, p. 28. Hussein of Egypt equated socialism with justice and therefore could not “recognize Israel” because Egyptian leaders could not “tolerate imperialism in any form.”

**YUGOSLAVIA AND THE THIRD WORLD**

When the French demographer Alfred Sauvy created the term Third World in 1952 to describe the areas of the world ravaged by poverty, high birthrates, poor infrastructure, and the like, he sought a comparison with the distraught Third Estate of the French revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century. The comparison struck a chord among the leaders of the emerging states, and the organizers of Bandung adopted the term at the conference to describe their plight and raise awareness over these issues that most affected them. With that in mind, Yugoslav participants must have felt out of place at Bandung and afterwards, when delegations travelled and spoke with Nehru, Sukarno, and Nasir—all Asian leaders who faced profoundly differing challenges.

Yugoslavia had, though, two critically important reasons for becoming involved with the organizers of Bandung. The more pressing of the two was the incredible promise that these third-world statesmen held for reinforcing independence and resisting bloc domination. Having an already abundant store of rhetoric speaking to issues such as sovereignty, non-intervention, and peaceful co-existence, from their diatribe with the Soviets and their reform of Marxism that set into place socialist self-management, Yugoslav leaders pinned their hopes on making these statements politically important and bringing their foreign policy agendas to the forefront of decision-making across the globe.

During the early 1950s, leaders all over the world molded ideology to fit their own unique needs—including Tito in Yugoslavia. With decolonization, new movements

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searched for a way to organize the economic and political system that they fought to control. When the Socialist Conference of Asian Nations opened in Rangoon in 1953, men such as Tito saw it as a venue for shaping the future. He sent one of his most trusted colleagues at the time, Milovan Đilas, who played a prominent role in the initial transformation of Yugoslav ideology following the Tito–Stalin split. Years later, of course, Tito persecuted Đilas for advocating for reforms that Tito saw at the time as too radical.33 That other world leaders held out sympathetic notions for Tito’s project and encouraged by his success at thwarting Moscow without succumbing to the promise of American aid should not be surprising. The significance of Đilas in Rangoon and a Yugoslav delegation at Bandung shows the convergence of ideology and global politics as systematic and deliberate rather than reliant upon whimsical or idealistic leaders. Leaders throughout the Third World, and in Belgrade, assigned great value to a united non-bloc foreign policy and leaders like Tito used it to reconcile problems with domestic affairs.

While Yugoslavs began to reach out into the Third World in the early 1950s, the domestic arena also underwent great reform and proved critical for understanding the rest of Yugoslav history. Edvard Kardelj, the well-placed Yugoslav politician and theorist, had noted how peace relied upon “the struggle for real independence,” and for a “gradual abolition of the backwardness which divides the developed and underdeveloped nations.” In other words, Kardelj vied for more partners in the quest to unite his message with

those in the Africa and Asia. To achieve the goal of peace, “great political struggles and many social forms” would come to the fore, but of course, Kardelj envisioned the victory of his socio-political system. Nonetheless, in two simple thoughts, Kardelj had anticipated much of Bandung’s spirit and automatically made Yugoslavia a natural ally of the emerging nations in Asia and Africa.\(^{34}\) Joining hands with the statesmen at Bandung, and using issues such as cooperative neutrality and peaceful co-existence as a working policy, not only opened up trade possibilities with emerging states, but more importantly helped Yugoslav leaders fight continued Soviet pressure with moral and spirited rhetoric. While not accepted as official conference policy, the words of Sir John Kotelawala, the Prime Minister of Ceylon, certainly vilified the Soviets when he loudly declared at Bandung that everyone should voice their opposition to “Soviet colonialism as much as Western imperialism.” After all, Kotelawala asked in perplexity about “Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland,” were these countries somehow different from the “colonial territories in Africa and Asia?”\(^{35}\) To the partners of Bandung, there certainly was no difference.

The second key reason that Yugoslav leaders latched onto the idea of nonalignment and involvement with the Third World rested on the regime’s manipulation of positive ideals to help build legitimacy for itself, vis-à-vis foreign-policy related


victories. The examination of the domestic reforms enacted by the Titoist regime in the wake of the Soviet threats after 1948 has shown that Yugoslav elites sought to establish something that was both different and meaningful. In response to Soviet indictments, a Yugoslav ideology surfaced that not only promised to “build a better life” for the people, but also began to deliver at least the semblance of progress thanks to American aid in the early 1950s, and the movement away from collectivization that together, jumpstarted the Yugoslav economy and allowed self-management to show real promise.36

Yugoslavia’s path outside of Soviet control brought with it a different kind of responsibility in foreign relations. Acting independently meant that on one hand, the difficult task of making tough choices rested on Yugoslav shoulders and answers could not simply mimic the declarations of others. On the other hand, meanwhile, nonalignment allowed the Yugoslavs and other participants to avoid pressing questions and tense foreign-policy dilemmas. Foreign Minister Koca Popović declared that independence and good relations with all was the most desirable policy for his country. In fact, Yugoslav political elites understood their legacy of independence since Tito’s Partisans took to the battlefield with liberation on their minds as the LCY had taken “upon itself” the “historic responsibility for the fate of the peoples of Yugoslavia.”37


37. Fabijan Trgo, “KPJ i obrana zemlje do aprilskog rata 1941,” Vojnoistorijski glasnik 2 (Vojnoistorijskog instituta, 1970), p. 30; Edvard Kardelj directly linked the later policy of nonalignment with the Yugoslav experience in World War II. He saw the power in independent thought and national liberation movements when he mentioned that in “China, Yugoslavia, Vietnam” had genuine “people’s and socialist revolutions” as an “outgrowth of national liberation wars,” and making themselves “as one of the significant factors in resolving world problems and antagonisms.” See Edvard Kardelj: The Historical
Popović surmised that if the Yugoslavs knelt to one or another power then they would not be acting in a “correct” manner, therefore exposing their position as a genuine force in world politics and jeopardizing the delicate construction of legitimacy (vis-à-vis self-management) from within.³⁸

The preeminent goal of the Yugoslav leadership rested with an understanding that they needed to reconcile their domestic policy and its currents with the direction of the country’s foreign policy. To that end, Kardelj observed that Yugoslavia must fight to change the world, because “the world will not change by the dissolving of blocs but blocs will disappear with the changing of the world.”³⁹ Kardelj’s opinion, of course, rested on the newfound morality of Yugoslav socialism as it had developed since 1948. That same year when Kardelj presented the address at the Fourth Congress of the People’s Front of Yugoslavia, he outlined the nature of global politics as he saw it. Having recognized evils in both Soviet imperialism and Western economic might, Kardelj promptly redefined Yugoslavia as special.⁴⁰

Just as in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, the notion that policy justified the right to rule, Kardelj recognized the dilemma facing the Soviet Union. He hypothesized that

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³⁹. See Edvard Kardelj: *The Historical Roots of Non-alignment*, p. 60. Kardelj further elaborated the Yugoslav idea of what nonalignment meant by understanding the movement as “not only a form of international policy and action, but also a form of social, class, economic, political and cultural redeployment of the modern world.” To Kardelj, the Non-aligned Movement was consistent with the idea of Marxism’s progress towards reaching utopia.
⁴⁰. See Edvard Kardelj in *Titoism and the Contemporary World*, pp. 1.9–1.10. Kardelj claimed that the Soviets must seek greater domination as the “only method of preserving” their system.
Soviet leaders used their system of “extremely aggressive, menacing, coercive” behavior and the “immense concentration of military and political power” to “justify” their existence before their “own society” because they had “exhausted all possibilities of progress” inside their “own country.”

Kardelj sought to refrain from military repression and thus favored positive reinforcement as the means for progress in Yugoslavia. Toward the same end, justifying a special and unique place for Yugoslavia laid the groundwork for the vocal foreign policy that would embody the Non-aligned Movement. Moreover, the place for Tito’s Yugoslavia would be in influencing the further expansion of socialism and future revolutionary developments of “all progressive people,” living in those countries “liberating themselves from colonial slavery,” who only desired “to formulate their own policies, to be equal in international affairs, and to preserve freedom of action.”

Vice President Svetozar Vukmanović, in an interview with the New York Times, downplayed the consequences of opposition with the Soviets when he observed that the ideological differences between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union represented a

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42. See “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/1 K.2 45–90, folder 56. “Jugoslavija ima svoje ambicije, da ona hoće da igra tako neku naročitu ulogu u socijalističkom svetu i da prema njoj treba drugačije postupati nego prema drugim socijalističkim zemljama. Naime, drugim rečima, ja mislim da treba tako postaviti odnose ne samo specijalne prema Jugoslaviji nego uopšte u socijalističkom svetu. Ja govorim u interesu daljeg razvijanja socijalizma i daljeg revolucionarnog razvoja i omogućavanja okupljanja svih progresivnih ljudi...” (Yugoslavia has its own ambitions, that it wants to play these idiosyncratic games in the socialist world and that towards this it must be different than towards other socialist countries. Namely, in other words, I think that it must situate relations not only especially toward Yugoslavia but also in principle in the socialist world. I am talking in the interests of further development of socialism and furthering revolutionary development and the possibilities of gathering all progressive peoples....) See “Belgrade: Nonalignment – Antithesis to Policy of Position from Strength,” Radio Belgrade, 11 June 1968, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSF1 NAFP1, 64–68, cn. 286.
“normal occurrence,” and that such differences should not interfere with general policy.\textsuperscript{43} Following the Tito–Stalin controversy in the summer of 1948, while the Yugoslav leadership consistently reaffirmed the pledge neither to join other blocs nor to submit to outside pressures from any side, they did flirt with temporal regional alliances, but once nonalignment took off as a credible alternative, the LCY abandoned those too. In response to controversial bickering between the Cold War Goliaths, the Yugoslavs stressed peace and disarmament that fed on the intense fear of nuclear devastation.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT: INSTITUTIONALIZING LEGITIMACY}

Racked by external and internal challenges since Stalin discarded Tito and publicly called for his ouster, Yugoslav leaders had struggled to retrieve momentum and build a positive legitimacy based on popular support of Tito’s right to rule. By using nonalignment as a vehicle for legitimacy, though, the Yugoslav leadership managed to vocalize their unique views of Marxism, but, most importantly, Tito could take the lead regarding so-called progressive thought and advocate on behalf of Yugoslavia to a global audience. On a par with the kind of ideological changes within Yugoslavia, the LCY used its newfound international voice to sponsor its leadership in global ideology; in 1958, the LCY pronounced, “Marxist thought in the course of the last two decades has not kept in step with the advance of contemporary society.” In other words, the Soviet Union fostered an illegitimate version of Marxism ruined by “bureaucracy and statism,” and its attempt to

\textsuperscript{44} See “Yugoslavs Issue Party Platform; Affirm Own Road to Socialism,” \textit{New York Times}, 14 March 1958, p. 3.
build an “ideological monopoly”; both factors that perverted true Marxism, according to the Yugoslavs, who recognized the dynamism of ideology and, as a result, fostered a system that would keep pace with society’s constant transformations.\(^{45}\) Tito’s logic behind nonalignment rested on equality among states because, as he put it, “internationalism means respect for equal relations,” among states and the indivisibility “into camp and non-camp groups”—just like how Titoism spoke about equality and respect, internationalism was also “universal.”\(^{46}\)

Nearly a decade later, in 1968, Central Committee member Nijaz Dizdarević buttressed Tito’s argument for nonalignment by hailing its “universal character” as representative of the LCY’s aspirations to find solutions to “major, vital questions” plaguing the world, such as threats to peace and stability.\(^ {47}\) The Soviet threat remained in force despite periods of goodwill and normalization. One such ebb in relations came in 1955, when Stalin’s successor, Nikita Khrushchev, flew to Belgrade and worked out a deal with a stronger and more resolute Tito. While the Soviets recognized that “separate paths to socialism” existed, they declared that they would not threaten Yugoslavia as they once had; but soon, in 1956, the invasions of Hungary harkened back to the days of overwhelming Soviet power.\(^ {48}\) Use of force by the Soviets in 1956 left Tito hesitant to

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47. “Dizdarevic: Non-alignment is not only for Small Countries,” *CMD*, 27 December 1968. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI, Non-aligned Foreign Policy 1964–68 (2 of 2) [NAFP2, 64–68], cn. 286.

48. When in 1955, Tito and Khrushchev recognized and pronounced the idea of “separate paths to socialism,” they again renewed their stance the following year in 1956, during a visit to Moscow by Tito. The joint declaration from 26 June 1956 reasserted, “the path of socialist development varies according to
condemn forcefully any of the parties involved as a way to maintain influence in Budapest but his lack of any meaningful pronouncement hurt his credibility. In the end, Tito had held out lukewarm support for both the actors in the first invasion, and then for the Soviets in the second (when the Soviets moved in to prevent the removal of socialism as government policy); as a result, he robbed himself of any outlet for lofty critique that resonated among his Third-World friends. Tito had remained too hopeful for a peaceful solution prior to armed intervention and in fact supported the Hungarian government in its quest for a separate path until he realized that leaders there directly challenged Communism’s success in Budapest. While he lent some moral support and then recognized that things had gotten out of control, it was clear to see that Tito was indecisive and therefore too clouded on policy to make a decisive statement.

Nonetheless, time and again, Yugoslav leaders reacted from personal experience against Soviet overtures, and they would not find themselves again in such a chaotic position as they had in 1956. Shortly thereafter, in 1958, Tito called for a Communist Party Congress for Yugoslavia and set the stage for another ideological clash with the country and conditions,” and furthermore, that “the multiplicity of forms of socialist development tends to strengthen socialism.” See “Declaration on Relations Between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,” in The Second Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute, p. 9.

49. Department of State Intelligence Report, “Yugoslav Relations with the Kadar Regime,” 28 February 1957.

50. Tito took great pains to avoid placing blame on the events in Hungary and reconcile his confused position. An excellent example of this is during his speech in Pula, on 11 November 1956, when he condemned the first intervention as unnecessary and the second premature. In a rare moment of resolve on this issue, he declared, “it was a great mistake to call the army of another country to give a lesson to the people the country, even if there had been some shooting.” See Robert Bass and Elizabeth Marbury, eds., The Soviet–Yugoslav Controversy, 1948–58: A Documentary Record, (New York: Prospect Books, 1959), p. 72.
Soviets. At this congress, Vice President Edvard Kardelj mentioned the Soviet Union specifically when he assailed interference in another’s internal affairs. According to Kardelj, the LCY recognized the need for “solidarity among Communists,” but rejected the “idea that one party should impose its dogma on another.” With that, Kardelj had set the stage for renewed conflict with the Soviets over ideology.

With an improved ideological vigor claimed by the Yugoslavs, the Soviets not surprisingly retaliated with words and sought to limit the power and persuasion of Yugoslavia’s messages. A second Soviet–Yugoslav dispute then emerged, pitting the veteran Tito against the already embattled Khrushchev. Scandalous ideological attacks marked this largely academic and journalistic debate. But while the first split in 1948 enabled Tito to strike out on his own and mold Marxism to fit his own desires, this second split was significant not just for the solidification of Titoism inside Yugoslavia but as the impetus for Tito’s movement in calling forth the first Non-aligned Conference a short three years later. The second Soviet–Yugoslav split paved the way for a true change in world politics and emboldened Yugoslav leaders—themselves more secure in their sovereignty—to make the morality of the Bandung Conference into something more. Renewed Soviet pressure against the Yugoslav ideological position in 1958 effectively gave birth to the Non-aligned Movement as a political institution, especially as it coincided with other ideological and security threats to Tito’s Bandung partners.

Following Stalin’s critique of Tito in 1948, the Yugoslavs responded with pronouncements aimed at demonstrating the unity within Yugoslavia against any invader.

As a result, Milovan Đilas enthusiastically announced at the Fifth Party Congress in 1948 that his fellow party members should be proud of their “unwavering” adherence to the principles of “Marxism-Leninism,” because they did “not fear any hardships in the struggle for their victory.”52 At the outset of the second Soviet–Yugoslav dispute, Tito expanded the message into the realm of foreign policy, praising the universalism and unity of the LCY’s message. He emphasized with confidence what he saw as the rock-solid “unity” of the LCY members and peoples of Yugoslavia, declaring that no one was beset by “narrow national interests,” but instead rested upon, and responded to a feeling of “international solidarity with all the labor and progressive movements,” including the important “colonial peoples who are fighting for their freedom and independence.”53 When Tito uttered those words to the LCY Congress, he not only attacked the Soviet Union, but he also made himself the ostensible protector of “colonial peoples” then struggling for their independence—much like he himself did against the fascists during World War II, and the Soviets after 1948. Immediately establishing the Yugoslav position as one with international interests and significance meant that the rhetoric needed meaningful action to follow. Ever since the Rangoon and Bandung meetings in 1953 and 1955, respectively, Tito had kept in close contact with Third World leaders such as Nehru, Sukarno, and Nasir; but, by 1958, the time was right to make the rhetoric into reality and bring together the powers of many into an organization that could speak for broader issues.

Tito attempted to ground his new position on “principle,” both in “international and in internal matters,” and tried to forestall any Soviet attacks as something that would cause “damage to all” socialist states. 54 Since the successful Yugoslav resistance in 1948, and the relentless path towards communism as the country’s guiding ideology, the leaders in Moscow had a great deal to fear. The events of the early to mid 1950s—the East German rebellions, the riots in Poznan, Poland, and the 1956 invasions of Hungary—left the people living under Soviet communism without doubt regarding Moscow’s desire to control international Marxism. In the Third World, the devastating shock of the combined assault of the Suez Canal in 1956 by the Israelis, British, and French forces made leaders like Nasir even more cognizant of their relative weakness compared to either bloc. 55

Responding to the Soviet declarations against Tito’s position in 1958, his supporters in the proto Non-aligned Movement raised their voices in unison. During May of that year, Nehru denounced Soviet criticism of Yugoslavia’s position, and he argued that such negative and abusive rhetoric represented foreign interference in another’s domestic affairs. In a display of even greater camaraderie with the besieged Tito, Nehru expressed his approval of the idea of “separate paths to socialism,” by stating its

55. While upset at the invasion of the Suez because of his geographic proximity and his work with Nasir, Tito could merely voice regrets. Eleven years later in 1967, when the Israelis occupied the canal, Tito called for a return to the status quo ante, condemned the Israeli behavior, and pressed ahead with moral support for the Arabs in the region. But in 1958, when Yugoslav leaders restated their well-known beliefs at their Fifth Party Congress, they forced the Soviets to further clamp down on any deviation within the Soviet zone. See Josip Broz Tito, “Letter to Lyndon Johnson,” 24 August 1967, LBJ Library.
consistency with Indian political norms. The proof that Tito’s vocal stance outside of the Soviet system allowed for a third way as a plausible movement showed itself in spades during the last half of 1958. Nasir visited both the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in short sequence following the outbreak of the second Soviet–Yugoslav dispute, and, therefore, strengthened the Yugoslav position by symbolically treating both as equals. Egypt played a large role in any Soviet strategy in the Middle East and if Yugoslavia successfully courted Nasir, then Moscow feared that it might lose a valuable ally in a key position in the world. This trend of Soviet leaders posturing for allies in the Third World would continually menace them and have long-lasting consequences for the nature of the Cold War. While many nonaligned participants sympathized with Marxism and even received aid from the Soviet Union, most leaders in the Non-aligned Movement successfully thwarted attempts to fall under the direct sway of Moscow. Refusing direct Soviet power a platform for expansion hindered Moscow elites in the overall Cold War struggle because no victory in this sense equaled a defeat. On a micro level, Nasir’s own drive towards a formal policy of nonalignment must be treated as similar to that of his peers—that is, it cannot be seen apart from his experience in opposition to regional and global powers.57

Nasir’s joint displays with Tito clearly showed his attempt to maneuver between the competing superpowers. By 1958, Nasir and Tito had met four times, and their July 1958 meeting laid the groundwork for the first formal Non-aligned Conference, scheduled soon thereafter in Belgrade in 1961. Cementing their ideas of peaceful coexistence at Tito’s villa on the Adriatic island of Brioni, Nasir and Tito called for a summit to end the production and testing of nuclear weapons, and they cried out for adherence to the United Nations Charter as the basis for state relations and the “cooperation among nations on the basis of independence and equality.”

*New York Times* journalist Elie Abel evoked great enthusiasm for new foreign policy that was developing in the late 1950s, when he recognized Tito as the “storm center of the Soviet bloc,” while Nasir was at the “vortex of the turbulent Middle East.” With these words, Abel recognized the power of unity when he declared, moreover, that not one of the besieged statesmen alone was in a “position to influence” a decisive solution—instead, a joint force might create tremendous headway. A few months after the flurry of activity between Tito and Nasir, the premier of Indonesia traveled to meet with both leaders and worked out a plan of mutual action and, as a further boon to the Yugoslav position of independence, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower continued to uphold support for keeping Yugoslavia free of any foreign domination. Tito needed every bit of potential support against renewed Soviet aggression in Europe, especially

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when tensions over Berlin threatened to unleash hostilities.\(^{61}\) Conflict thus set the tone for the political turn of nonalignment’s founders as each of the statesmen faced a new round of pressure in 1958: Nasir felt the need to win support of the other Arab countries and therefore deter an aggressive and powerful Western-backed Israel; Sukarno needed fresh support for his conflict against Holland over Dutch New Guinea; Nehru faced ever-increasing tensions with China over Tibet and the Sino–Indian border; and finally, Tito feared a Soviet-sponsored invasion of Yugoslavia following the second split.

The culmination of fears over renewed international conflict became apparent when Nasir and Tito issued a joint communiqué in July 1958, which stated that following a favorable development towards a relaxation of international tension, “a tendency in the opposite direction” had emerged in the form of an arms race and a pronounced trend of breaking the sanctity of sovereignty. The leaders of the newly emerging states saw the Cold War as a tremendous menace to world security and tried to use the popular fear of war throughout the world to build support. Among the important demands that Nasir and Tito called for was the “need of holding a summit conference” to ease tensions. This clearly laid the foundation for a formal establishment of the Non-aligned Movement, as it would take form in the early 1960s.\(^{62}\) Finally, the last part of the 1950s ended as Tito embarked on a grand world tour to gather support for this movement, which spanned two-and-a-half months and included far-away Burma, Ceylon, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia,

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**NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT IN PRACTICE**

While Tito deserves little credit for inventing the concept of nonalignment—that should go to all of the original participants at Bandung—he did ensure that Yugoslavia would play a commanding role in shaping the Non-aligned Movement by solidifying its political presence and ideological underpinnings, at least during the 1960s. After a series of visits between Nasir, Nehru, Sukarno, and Tito during the latter 1950s, and several joint pronouncements of the need for a conference to address issues affecting world peace, they finally met in 1961. The city of Belgrade hosted the event, drawing official delegations from twenty-five countries—from Afghanistan to Yemen—and promoted a mood of progress and hope in a world dominated by fear. The opening statement decried the conflict and trepidation that had brought them together and noted that the participants must fight instead for a united approach toward solving their common problems. Summit contributors recognized inaction as the most dangerous response because ever since in the late 1950s, “international events have taken a turn for the worst” and “seriously threatened” world peace as a consequence.\footnote{The Belgrade Conference: September 1–6, 1961, Documents, (Cairo: Information Department, 1961), p. 3.} They felt the need to act and stand together to avert the destructiveness of war.

Echoing the Yugoslav pronouncements of the 1950s in justification of their peace-loving ideology, the conference members understood the world as “characterised by the existence of different social systems,” which should not “constitute an unsurmountable [sic.] obstacle” for peace provided that others abstain from interfering in the “internal development of other peoples.” As a logical extension, “all peoples and nations have to solve the problems of their own political, economic, social and cultural systems in accordance with their own conditions, needs and potentialities.” The similarities of these messages with what Tito had uttered to Khrushchev in 1955 show that a consistency had emerged regarding a Yugoslav ideology—both domestic and foreign policy had grown more connected and, with international recognition, Yugoslavia stood a great chance of securing a pivotal role as a new global force.

Yugoslav influence during the 1961 conference represented the heightened role of ideology in world affairs. By then, branded by the world as an ideology, Titoism represented the unique way of attaining socialism vis-à-vis the Yugoslavs’ interpretation of Marx’s writings. As a result, LCY officials noted that they were “aware that ideological differences” necessarily remained a part of the “growth of the human society,” but argued that people should “refrain from any use of ideologies for the purpose of waging cold war” or “imposing their will”—a direct attack on how they saw

65. The Belgrade Conference, p. 6.

66. For a complete transcript of the Khrushchev–Tito meetings, see “Fragmenti iz zapisnika o sastanku plenuma CK KPSS Jula 1955. godine na kome je vođena diskusija o politici SSSR-a prema Jugoslaviji posle povratka Sovjetske Dele Legacije iz Beograda,” ASCG CK SKJ IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56.
Soviet policy used abroad. Such statements also advocated on behalf of the exportation of Yugoslav ideology among its Third World partners—for that, pronouncements of self-determination were a critical first step. The resolutions of the conference verified that, “all nations have the right of unity, self-determination, and independence,” through which they can freely determine their political status and pursue their “economic, social and cultural development without intimidation or hindrance.” Tito no doubt hoped that once the superpowers left the Third World alone, the LCY could step in and serve as the merchant and banker for progress and development.

Attendees of the Belgrade Conference linked decolonization with a general trend towards the cessation of “foreign oppression,” and vigorously tied “national independence” to “equality.” Yugoslav leaders used nonalignment as propaganda for domestic consumption, claiming that “the problems of the developing countries have a special place in Yugoslav foreign policy,” because Yugoslavs could cooperate freely with their “honored” friends in Africa and Asia, recently relieved of their heavy colonial “burden of the past.” Writers for Komunist confirmed, “Yugoslavia has closely collaborated with the developing countries” and has relied “on its own rich experience from the struggle for its own independence and economic development.” Yugoslav media outlets had in fact made a direct connection between their own struggle for

68. The Belgrade Conference, p. 11.
69. The Belgrade Conference, p. 5.
independence—from both the Nazis and the Soviets—with the struggle of colonial peoples in their quest for freedom and sovereignty.

Three years after the Belgrade Conference, a second nonalignment conference convened in Cairo. As a much larger and better organized conference, the Cairo meetings attempted to turn what leaders perceived as the moral success at Belgrade into political dividends, because while Nehru boldly proclaimed at Bandung that “moral force counts,” such force faced enormous amoral competition in the form of devastating nuclear holocaust. Recognizing that international tensions had decreased by 1964, the leaders of nonalignment nonetheless spelled out a cautious and proactive path for the so-called peace-loving countries of the world. Nasir told the crowd of diplomats in Cairo that with the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the Cold War “had reached the peak of violence and brutality,” and had confronted the world with the possibility of a “definite nuclear tragedy.” The battle for missiles and strategic bombers had dictated the security concerns of the United States and the USSR and missile stockpiles continued to dominate the thinking of American and Soviet military elites. Despite an easing of tensions by the time of Cairo, the threat of the Cold War erupting into devastatingly global conflagration drew even greater attention to a Non-aligned Movement strongly advocating for peace and cooperation without a seemingly larger agenda. “It is not by coincidence,” the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug proudly boasted to its readers, “that news agencies and the


At the height of the Non-aligned Movement’s influence in the world following the Belgrade Conference, nonaligned leaders won a seat at the global disarmament talks between the Americans and Soviets. The Cuban Missile Crisis indeed, had brought the world to the brink of catastrophe and leaders in both blocs recognized a need to caution. That they included the leaders of nonalignment speaks to the significance that both sides gave to what Tito had helped create. Nasir confidently concluded that the Cairo Conference marked an even greater progression toward world peace and boasted at the progress made throughout the world. He noted that the “great Bandung Conference” directed attention to the “evils of imperialism,” while the “great Belgrade Conference” proclaimed the unity of peoples against the “perils of war,” and finally, he saw how, at Cairo, the world was achieving the “consolidation of peace through international cooperation.” Nasir might have added that nonalignment had yet done little to ease the economic and social grievances among those who participated, but instead, he congratulated Tito for his strong role as a peacemaker. Nasir and other Egyptian leaders simply had “expressed high tribute to the support that Yugoslavia and particularly President Tito himself” had given, based upon Tito’s “efforts to oppose” the “aggression


74. See, Synopsis of Cairo Conference, p. 53.
and external pressures and work for the consolidation of peace” throughout the world.  
Tito did deserve credit for hosting and organizing meetings and placing several important 
Yugoslav ideologues at the disposal of nonalignment but Nasir saw the real value of the 
movement not only in logistics but also in the moral victory they had won on among 
other world leaders.  Ironically, the trend towards the dialogue between the Moscow and 
Washington advanced peace through greater cooperation that effectively derailed the 
Non-aligned Movement by robbing it of its greatest unifying force—the fear of global 
conflict.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR POLITICAL NONALIGNMENT

Threats of nuclear catastrophe throughout the 1960s spurred some nonalignment 
believers into action again despite the continued presence of American forces in Vietnam. 
The crippling speed with which the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact forces invaded 
Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968 caught many world leaders by surprise—
including Tito, who had met with the Soviets less than a fortnight prior.  These events 
reminded the Yugoslavs of their own precarious position and, according to one German 
journalist at the time, the invasion of Czechoslovakia was an attempt by “the Moscow 
 Polemics” to check directly against the successful “Yugoslav path to socialism.”

75. See Slobodan Stankovic, “Tito in Moscow: Roots of a Sudden Anti-Semitism,” p. 2. Original 
citation from Politika, 24 May 1967. HU OSA 300–8–3 Background Reports, 1956–1989, Yugoslavia [BR 
56–89Y], cn. 63.

76. See Nicholas Katzenbach, “My Meeting with Tito,” Department of State Telegram, (20 
October 1968).

77. Wolfgang Libal, DPA correspondent, “Tito to Activate the Uncommitted Counties,” 30 
September 1968, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI NAFP1, 64–68, cn. 286. “Es vergeht kaum ein Tag, ohne dass
Regardless of Soviet intentions against Yugoslavia, Tito expressed enough displeasure to call for a three-day long meeting to begin in Belgrade on 7 July 1969. LCY elites hoped that such a meeting would “lead to a non-aligned summit”; after all, Tito had constantly, if not untruthfully, defended Yugoslavia as a comradely “socialist and non-aligned country,” that has “never hesitated when it was necessary for it to react to aggressions” against whomever.78 Despite the personal abhorrence of the Soviet actions against the government in Prague, representatives from Yugoslavia and several other countries were anxious that the meeting of nonaligned countries should not put too much emphasis on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia because they feared direct repercussions by Moscow such as removal of economic credits or revocation of treaties.79 Nijaz Dizdarević in fact, stated as part of a meeting of the propaganda committee of the LCY in 1968, his aversion to taking too strong a stance against the Soviets lest they threaten Yugoslavia more directly.80

Partly because of the complexities in outlining dangers to global peace without blaming obvious perpetrators, this Yugoslav push for a new direction for nonalignment failed to rally support. Egypt had been humiliated again in the Six Days’ War against

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Israel in 1967 and Nehru had already died in 1964 so, without effective leaders in the Third World to both encourage and push Tito and the Non-aligned Movement, progress seemed stifled. An unnamed Asian diplomat expressed this displeasure with the movement, saying, “the majority of nations present realize the futility of convening another summit—at least now,” because “there is nothing to say except generalities, nothing to be accomplished save words.” Tito’s failure to rally support for a new conference also coincided with a failed effort to expand the reach of nonalignment to encompass non-state actors, newly independent states, and members of small defense pacts.

Gradually, as larger numbers of African countries won independence but sorely lacked the resources to join the global community, they turned to the Non-aligned Movement and naturally pressed issues that dealt with development and economics, not political and ideological legitimacy. The Lusaka Conference in 1970 epitomized this transformation of the movement. The Swiss Review of World Affairs noted how “vague” nonalignment had become and indeed, classified it as a “negative” term because of the “highly variegated standpoints” of those present. President Kaunda of Zambia took pride in this concept, noting that the strength of nonalignment rested on the “unity in diversity,” but this was merely a rhetorical device. While Radio Australia’s correspondent noted the political potential of the program as a non-bloc entity, the real


emphasis, he concluded, was the “need for economic development.” What stood in the way of this economic development, for many in the association, including Kuanda, was the “imperialism, colonialism, and racial oppression and exploitation” present in southern Africa. Sir Seretse Khama, president of Botswana agreed with Kuanda and noted how the nonaligned countries needed a “greater awareness of needs and opportunities, a stronger determination to assist” one another, and “clearer understanding” of the problems facing the world. These African leaders, though, had a distinctive understanding of development and independence that clashed with the greater political goals first envisioned by Tito.

Tito’s plan for nonalignment, especially in the wake of the Soviet moves against Czechoslovakia relied on his stewardship of the movement and the furthering of Yugoslavia’s economy and the attractiveness of the LCY abroad. Taking a moral stance against the superpowers—such as with arms sales to South Africa’s apartheid regime—would complement, according to Tito, the development programs that not only strengthened the African states, but also fostered growth in Yugoslavia too. With the inclusion of Fidel Castro and his powerful place in nonalignment—coupled with Nehru’s earlier death—Tito stood alone without either the economic power to aid his nonaligned allies directly or the ability to champion his cause in the face of such an overwhelming contingent of poorer and underdeveloped fledging former colonies. If successful, the Yugoslav plan for widening nonalignment further by including Titoist allies might have

84. Radio Australia cited in Resolutions of the Third Conference of Non-aligned States, p. 45.
86. Sir Seretse Khama cited in Resolutions of the Third Conference of Non-aligned States, p. 36.
saved the movement as a political force and kept it on the minds of policymakers in Washington and Moscow. Instead, nonalignment drifted towards issues of lesser importance for the superpowers. Nasir had clarified earlier that the goal of the Non-aligned Movement’s policies should be to work with the competing blocs in solving problems and not to serve as a foreign policy base to leverage for “securing the highest portion of privileges” as a result of a “trade in the strife between the two blocs.” By the time of Tito’s rushed Belgrade meetings in 1969, nonalignment had already largely become what Nasir had feared most—isolated and weak in the political sphere.

Still, the roadblocks Yugoslavia encountered in the wake of the Prague Spring made little difference toward changing the LCY’s goals for the international movement. The linkage between Yugoslav ideology and the existence of a vehicle to foster that ideology throughout the world remained too important for Tito and his chief advisors simply to abandon; after all, they were fearlessly carrying their ideas of “non-intervention” and “peaceful coexistence” boldly into the future. For practical economic and political reasons, the Yugoslavs wanted to open up relations with the emerging states in the Third World and benefit from that relationship. As Marxists, the Yugoslavs believed in the promise of their ideology and felt that fostering the organizations of likeminded people to mobilize for change under the auspices of the Non-aligned Movement was a good idea. The LCY targeted the modern working class and revolutionary intelligentsia as a potential driver of change in the emerging Third World

87. Synopsis of Cairo Conference, p. 46.
because Yugoslav leaders recognized that “in most of the underdeveloped countries” the “class structure in practice makes impossible the forming of vigorous capitalist[s]” and “provides great opportunities for the development of progressive and socialist movements.” At the Fourth Party Congress in 1948, Dilas had explained that the “Party emerged victorious” in Yugoslavia because its members were “deeply loyal to the Party,” and because it “always connected ideological struggle with revolutionary practice.”

The challenge for Yugoslav leaders embracing nonalignment during the 1960s was to forge together the complementary notions of loyalty to the party and revolutionary zeal among their friends abroad. As a result, the LCY clearly saw the 1960s as a period of opportunity despite the practical limitations facing the party, including the lack of money. LCY leaders thought, though, that the limitations in the Third World hindered capitalism and Soviet communism even more and allowed Yugoslavs room for expansion. In the end, the Yugoslavs observed a promising outlook for the future because “the declarations for socialism in the underdeveloped countries” were often louder than their realization; for the Yugoslavs, it was now their job to export ideology and make declarations into reality.

The last conference to make a lasting contribution to a nonaligned political program occurred in 1970, in Lusaka, Zambia, a full two years after the Soviet repression of the Czechoslovak Communist Party leadership and the resulting occupation of that tiny

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country. Yugoslav leaders had been outspoken opponents inside Yugoslavia of the Soviet action, but despite that, Tito could not rally enough support to assemble at least what had seemingly become his moral community of states. In an effort to make up for the lack of international condemnation the Yugoslav government—outside of the Non-aligned Movement—flooded the domestic press with statements condemning the Soviet intervention as not only dangerous to world peace but also as “the greatest form of violation of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of an independent country.”

Despite the concerns following the clear violation of Czechoslovakia’s rights as a sovereign nation, the Lusaka Conference ignored issues of politics and emphasized instead lofty principles such as cultivating the “spirit of self-reliance,” and focused the debate on racism and Africa’s economic plight. Outspoken distress over continued American involvement in Vietnam also plagued the leaders gathered in Lusaka but politics took a largely secondary position. Only President Seretse Khama of Botswana noted the events—in passing—inside Czechoslovakia as invalidating the progress towards freedom. As the host of the conference, the president of Zambia, Dr. K.D. Kaunda, only went so far as to reaffirm the pledge against the “non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, the urge for peaceful coexistence and for the pursuit of independent policies,” without naming any country specifically. The movement grew too clouded by individual events and effectively ceased to live up to its expectations; all

93. See Resolutions of the Third Conference of Non-aligned States, p. 22.
94. See Resolutions of the Third Conference of Non-aligned States, p. 35.
95. Dr. K.D. Kaunda in Resolutions of the Third Conference of Non-aligned States, p. 29.
that it could do was utter generalities of little consequence. Nonalignment, as Tito had founded it, faced challenges as the tremendous numbers of the new African and poorer Asian states eclipsed the original political meaning and spoke to a different set of realities. Third World leaders simply worried more about economics than political posturing between power blocs and sought aid from whomever would give it—including Moscow and Beijing. While the 1961 meeting strove to ease relations between competing blocs, the 1970 meeting inspired little confidence as to the movement’s future. Participants mused over “what non-alignment really means, if anything, or what shared goals the self-styled ‘non-aligned’ can best pursue collectively.” Tito’s challenge to this evident decline in nonalignment’s stature remained finding an alternative for this external source of legitimacy.

By the early 1970s, the Soviet-led intervention in Czechoslovakia had stirred Europeans, and given Tito a renewed sense of urgency to institute a strong security regime against external threats. This was part of the realization not just of the vulnerabilities of mounting an adequate defense against the Soviets, but moreover, part of an understanding of the critical strategic position of Yugoslavia. Nijaz Dizdarević expressed his understanding of the heightened Soviet interest in the Balkans as a product of the “geo-strategic position of the region” and any dramatic change in Yugoslavia, in particular, was an invitation for Soviet aggression. Dizdarević understood that in moments of weakness, the Soviets looked at how best they could benefit; after all, “they

have their own interests in our internal situation." For the members of the party hierarchy, Yugoslavia represented a pillar of resistance against Soviet designs in southeastern Europe and in the Middle East and they reinforced this logic as a foundation for their continued rule.

**BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF NONALIGNMENT AND THE COLD WAR**

In 1955, when the attendees of the Bandung Conference met to discuss issues that directly affected newly independent or struggling peoples, much of the world was at peace as neither of the two superpowers was embroiled in direct combat following the bloody and relentless stalemate in Korea. Still, local conflicts abounded, and it was such small-scale struggles against former colonial powers, local elites, or neighboring tribes that had defined the tone of Bandung. The threat of larger involvement loomed, but until that came closer to reality, any sort of Non-aligned Movement seemed destined to generate only token support. Nineteen fifty-six brought a return of hostility in several regions of the world; the British, French, and Israelis intervened to stop the nationalization program of the Suez Canal by Nasir, and the Soviets sent troops into Hungary as part of an effort to reaffirm dominance over the communist leaders there.

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98. At the 1970 conference in Lusaka, the official declaration mentioned the phenomenon whereby “the immediate danger of a conflict between the superpowers has lessened, because their tendency to negotiate in their mutual relations is strengthening. However, it has not yet contributed to the security of the small, medium-sized and developing countries, or prevented the danger of local wars.” See **Resolutions of the Third Conference of Non-Aligned States**, (Johannesburg: The South African Institute of International Affairs, 1971), p. 2. In general, the ideological tone of nonalignment weakened as it gained more members and as the Cold War matured into normalcy.
Tito had mixed emotions over Soviet action in Hungary, and despite his assertion that the first intervention was “absolutely wrong,” he remained unsure over the implications of the second intervention and thus failed to take a strong stand against the Soviet Union because of his contradictory rhetoric. In part, this stemmed from his realization that some elements of the Hungarian ruling clique threatened to de-emphasize communism in its break away from Moscow—something Tito had never envisioned. All this followed the important summit meetings between Tito and Khrushchev, which had recognized “separate paths to socialism” and relaxed tensions directly regarding Yugoslavia; as a result, Tito acted cautiously for fear of prematurely straining the new friendship.

“Separate paths” gave the Yugoslav leader the external legitimacy he craved but, moreover, the renewed friendly relationship with the Soviet Union relieved pressure on the Yugoslavs and opened up avenues for aid packages and cooperation in cultural and economic spheres. Tito also flirted in 1956 with Third World leaders, but too many contradictions stemmed from Yugoslav inaction because of the Soviet crackdown and the resulting embarrassment of Yugoslavia’s position. Tito needed to rectify this chaos regarding Yugoslavia’s domestic and foreign policies before he could proceed with a bold new global foreign-policy.

After 1956, meetings with Nasir and Nehru emerged poised to clarify Yugoslavia’s views. For the domestic audience, the presentation of nonalignment and Tito’s successful diplomatic missions and friendships with leaders across the world enhanced the credibility of the regime and, by extension, the Yugoslav communists, in

the face of ongoing ideological battles within the party.\footnote{100}{The Croatian Communist, Vladimir Bakarić, admitted in 1964 that ideological problems in Yugoslavia had been fast accumulating. He noted to the weekly magazine NIN that: “As far as the further political development of our country is concerned—I mean ideological-political development—today there are really many problems. I am not denying this; what I am denying is that these problems have been of such a nature as to divide us, although there have been such tendencies, too.” Cited in Slobodan Stankovic, “On the Eve of the Sixth Plenum of the Yugoslav Central Committee,” Radio Free Europe/Background Report, HU OSA 300–8–3 RRFE/RLRI, BR, cn. 124.}

By drawing popular attention to events outside of Yugoslavia and placing Tito’s foreign policy as a premier piece of Yugoslav policy, negative features of the regime waned in comparison. In a continual effort to court supporters among the many Yugoslavs unconvinced about Tito and his system, the forceful entry into a meaningful foreign policy discredited opposition. Miloš Žanko, a member of the Central Committee of the LCY, noted as late as 1967, that “for us, it cannot be black and white,” and “our system is in a crisis.”\footnote{101}{See “Komisija CK SKJ za pitanja društveno-političkih odnosa, 1967–1968. godina,” ASCG CK SKJ XXIII K.4/4, folder 56 (Beleška sa santanka prve radne grupe “Problemi razvoja društveno-političkog sistema”).} Tito’s answer rested with success outside the country to reinforce his legitimacy as a world-class statesman. If he could solve the world’s problems the argument went, then he could solve Yugoslavia’s.

With plenty of hostility against Tito and his system in place throughout Yugoslavia, a large foreign-policy victory, such as with the resulting Non-aligned Movement, promised a quieting of the opposition. The pomp surrounding Tito’s trips and his hosting of world leaders dazzled the Yugoslav press and presented the impression that Yugoslavia was of pivotal importance in global politics. No matter what, though, the regime combated antisocialist forces because Yugoslav leaders understood well—from
their own experience—the danger of giving any opposition group a legitimate political outlet. Kardelj argued within the same 1967 Central Committee meeting as Žanko that, “in today’s phase neither our democracy nor our entire system can be open for antisocialist and similar elements.” Furthermore, if “we open up, if our system expands with democratic forms,” we must, at the same time “fight against a breakthrough by antisocialist forces.” Taking the fight abroad solved many problems for Kardelj and if successful, Yugoslavia might have served as a beacon among Third World leaders and the axis of a third force.

A salient feature of these Yugoslav machinations remains the degree of change that followed from Tito’s posturing. While Moscow had little to fear from a renewed campaign in Eastern Europe, several statesmen maneuvered for the least bit of flexibility and independence for their states—Romania having been the most successful. Nonalignment certainly aided these moves, but while no other Warsaw Pact country could fully accept nonalignment’s consequences, those states could manipulate popular rhetoric for their own good. Romania drifted the furthest from Moscow’s orbit by the mid to late 1960s, but always stayed just close enough to avoid the fate of a Hungary, or later, a Czechoslovakia. Leaders in Prague and Budapest stood apart from others in the Eastern bloc, because, as Romanian scholar Ghita Ionescu has aptly argued, the “logical nexus between internal national communism [i.e., not emanating from Moscow] and external neutralism” brought such significant challenges for Moscow that armed

intervention could not be avoided. It was apparent that with the death of Stalin, the leaders in the Kremlin worked with their clients in Eastern Europe and understood—certainly following public rhetoric of appeasement and pluralism—that not all countries under their control needed to follow their political line exactly.

Moscow’s policymakers surely considered the geo-strategic repercussions as paramount compared to some internal fuzziness in ideology. They simply accepted the primacy of foreign policy and would return to this mantra with the Helsinki Accords a decade later. This became even more perceptible when men such as Nikita Khrushchev—described by deposed Czechoslovak leader Ota Sik as a believer in “ideas” with a “propagandistic” personality—and Leonid Brezhnev, the simple bureaucrat with “no imagination” and “incapable of ideological creativity,” had both ignored internal issues affecting their East European allies so long as they did not seriously threaten the ruling communist regimes there or advocate a withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

Ionescu has pointed out that the Romanian leadership understood the line along which they could proceed and recognized concepts such as absolute neutrality to be so dangerous as to carry a death sentence.

At the height of Tito’s search for legitimacy, Khrushchev criticized him for having attempted to tie “unrelated issues”—Yugoslav ideology and its path toward self-management and an independent foreign policy—together and deceive people as part of a


campaign for self-aggrandizement. Khrushchev deplored the “prattle about a ‘nonbloc’ policy” as a deliberate method to fool the “people and obtain their approval” for Tito’s ignorance of socialism and his concurrent boost of the Yugoslav “policy of neutrality.”

Nonetheless, Tito defended himself by stating that he had put together his “foreign policy” based upon the “principles of coexistence” and the need for cooperation with “all countries” without catering to any sides besides his own. Kardelj and Dizdarević voiced their willingness to “collaborate with all socialist countries,” but, in particular, those “countries in the socialist camp and the Warsaw Pact.”

The way it turned out, Tito’s characterization of Khrushchev as the one filled with foolish thoughts proved truer.

Once again under attack in 1968 following the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the Non-aligned Movement needed to justify itself as a viable organ for world peace. Even Yugoslavs noted the trend away from their goals for nonalignment and defended themselves by exclaiming that attacks on nonalignment merely represented an “expression of fear of the principles of peaceful coexistence” by political leaders who


107. For Kardelj’s thoughts see, “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56; Dizdarević in “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog biroa,” ASCG CK SKJ IV K.7 7, 1971, p. 50. Kardelj also vetted his logic behind support of even social-democratic parties: See “Fragmenti” ASCG CK IX 119/I K.2 45–90, folder 56. “Mi ne mislimo da su socijal-demokrati danas bolji nego što su bili pre 20 godina. Naprotiv, u mnogim stvarima oni su možda otišli još dalje od marksizma. Međutim, oni imaju za sobom radničke mase i u radničkom masama ima tendencija za jednom aktivnijom socijalističkom akcijom.” (We do not think that social democracy today is better than it was twenty years ago. Just the opposite, in many aspects, they have probably strayed farther from Marxism. In the meantime, they have with their own working masses and in worker masses the tendencies for united, active, socialist activity.)

maintained an alliance with one or another bloc. After all, Yugoslavia had—according to Zagreb radio—dealt with two decades of “unscrupulous attacks” by the Soviets that failed to alter Yugoslavia negatively. Yugoslavs argued that when Tito met with Nasir and Nehru at his vacation complex on Brioni Island, the statesmen regarded hostile international actions as “momentous,” but argued that they themselves stopped short of creating a “third bloc.” The creation of a third bloc, though, was precisely what made their neutrality different and enabled nonalignment to make positive gains in world affairs. Finally, Yugoslavia’s existence outside of Moscow’s control served as encouragement to any sense of individualism among her neighbors but the dynamic of change had limited growth potential. According to Soviet scholar Adam Ulam, Stalin’s successor would find himself thrust into a world where the battle with the United States demanded quick and popular results.

Khrushchev—Stalin’s titular successor—unleashed a new era, which meant for the USSR an “introduction of enlightened totalitarianism” with a “conscious effort to


111. “пут дуг преко две деценије,” Борба, 8 June 1969, p. 18. “Брионски сусрет био је у оно време оцењен као један од најкрупнијих међународних догађаја .... Други листови чинили су разне претпоставке, најчешћа од њих била је да тројица лидера намеравају да оснују “трети блок.”” (Brioni meetings were at the time, regarded as one of the most important international events .... Other fields also rendered assumptions that the most common of them was that the three leaders worked against a “third bloc” HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI NAFP2, 64–68, cn. 286.

dispense with the pathological, uneconomic, and plainly unnecessary aspects” of Stalinism. One of the underlining points of this chapter has been that while Tito clearly inspired reaction from the Eastern-bloc satellites in light of direct and often overwhelming Soviet control, Tito’s real significance was that he unleashed ideological change throughout the Marxist world because of his successful existence outside of Moscow and his ideological advances through the Non-aligned Movement. For this reason, Khrushchev followed Tito’s lead regarding socialism and reacted to changes in both communist ideology and the uses of that ideology throughout the world. Whereas many scholars have looked at Titoism as an ideology and the Non-aligned Movement as an agent of progressive change for the Third World, few have yet understood how interrelated these two concepts were and how they both served as pillars of Tito’s quest for legitimacy. Ulam’s work, dating from the height of the Cold War, pointed out contradictions in the postwar Soviet state in light of alterations to totalitarianism and the fluid nature of domestic and foreign policy in a high-stakes, conflict-driven world. American diplomat George Kennan also saw hope in the immediate aftermath of World War II that eventually communist forces would recognize the fallacy behind the ideological assumption of the collapse of capitalism, because “no mystical, Messianic movement—and particularly not that of the Kremlin—can face frustration indefinitely without eventually adjusting itself in one way or another to the logic of that state of


114. In addition to this author, only Sabrina P. Ramet has hinted at the link between Tito’s state-building project and a search for legitimacy in the Non-aligned Movement. See The Three Yugoslavia’s: *State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006).
Tito’s survival in Europe added to the woes of those in the Kremlin, and Tito’s success in helping bring together diverse forces from across the world to face the troublesome nature of the Cold War proved damaging to Soviet credibility. This, though, would not become obvious until much later in the Cold War, when the political phase of the Non-aligned Movement had already served its course.

CONCLUSION: NON-ALIGNMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

When Sukarno came to Belgrade in January 1958, he and Tito advocated for a series of proposals, including a cessation of the “senseless armament race and the perfecting of weapons of colossal destructive power.” Despite the call for peace, the two leaders agreed to a weapons deal, whereby the Yugoslavs would sell the Indonesian Army small arms. The Indonesians needed these guns because they were engaged in a bitter and violent dispute with Holland over the continued Dutch presence in New Guinea—an area claimed by the Indonesian leadership. This shows that, at some level, the kind of cooperation between countries meant more than the peace-loving rhetoric—rather, it demonstrated an attempt to establish some sort of third bloc, in which the countries could rely on each other for trade and develop independently of Moscow or Washington.

115. Ulam, New Face, p. 127; Kennan as cited in Ulam, New Face, p. 141.
117. Tito noted in a letter from 1955 sent to Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin that U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had informed Tito of the delicacy required to maneuver between Israel and the Arab world, Egypt in particular. Because of Israel’s existence, the United States government could not sell arms to the Egyptians and Dulles implored Tito that it was his job to “work for the peace between Israel and Egypt.” “But,” Tito pointed out, “we must think that it would be a very unhappy idea to create in the Middle East some form of pacts which will never have another effect except for the division of the Arab unity and the creation of permanent conflict in that part of the world.” Tito would later sell Nasir
Belgrade stood directly in the center of this system, since Yugoslavia—in contrast to her Third World partners—possessed a sizable industrial sector centered on weapons and heavy machinery, both excellent items for export. According to Yugoslav sources, in 1961—the time of the Belgrade Conference—Tito extended credit in the sum of $20 million to Nasir to purchase equipment and, in 1964, during the second nonalignment conference, Tito doled out another $35 million to Nasir. Although Tito had already stopped receiving aid from the United States by then, his financing Nasir came at a domestic expense of making positive improvements at home. Furthermore, Yugoslavs noted that the countries of the developing world represented a “potential and very important partner” for Yugoslavia. Unfortunately for Tito, any significant export economy dwindled once technology outpaced any capacity for Yugoslavia to produce viable weapons by the middle 1960s. The Soviets gave away the same equipment and the Americans subsidized higher-value arms to their allies during a time when oil prices


120. By the mid 1970s, a National Security Council memo noted that the “Yugoslavs are anxious to escalate the sophistication of their arsenal and lessen their dependence on the Soviets by purchasing advanced weaponry and equipment from us.” Tito continued to secure U.S. arms contracts but failed to receive the latest technology for fear of leaking information to the Soviets. See Clinton E. Granger, “Arms Relationship with Yugoslavia,” Memorandum for General Scowcroft, 8 August 1975, Gerald R. Ford Library.
rose dramatically—something that by the 1970s had severely handicapped Yugoslavia’s industrial sector. While an arms trade among so-called peace-loving nations seems paradoxical, it rather shows the pragmatic views of nonalignment’s founders and speaks to their hope in creating a working political system to balance against the superpowers and establish an independent legitimacy. In any case, a politically based nonalignment could only exist as a concept in a conflict-driven world beset by uncertainty and mistrust between Moscow and Washington.

The 1960s was the heyday for the Non-aligned Movement; the two most important conferences met in Belgrade in 1961 and in Cairo in 1964, but both failed to establish any cohesive bloc of like-minded statesmen representing the participating countries. The movement organizers took advantage of the tense rivalry between the superpowers and the frustrations of smaller countries in Africa and Asia, but the bonds were not lasting. But a bloc of united and staunch fighters for world peace and the end of the Cold War would have meant the creation of a competing bloc, against the wishes of the nonalignment elites. The movement remains a testament to the power of the weak in a world dominated by the strong. Nonalignment lingers on into the twenty-first century but its bold stance and compelling leadership disappeared with the deaths of Nehru and the removal of Nasir, and the sidelining of Tito’s premier role by the end of the 1960s. Conflict pushed Yugoslavia and its Third-World allies together during a time

121. Time and again, the organizers of the Non-aligned Movement deemphasized the idea of a third bloc: “The non-aligned countries represented at this conference do not wish to form a new bloc and cannot be a bloc.” The reality though, necessitated a strong, united group to lobby against the prevailing Cold War dynamic as seen by the same demand that “the non-aligned nations should be represented at all future world conferences on disarmament,” See The Belgrade Conference, pp. 7, 12.
of intense insecurity, yet only kept them together as a significant force during the remainder of the 1960s when global devastation threatened not just the supporters of nonalignment but also the entire world. The last conference where Yugoslavia played a meaningful role—in 1970—occurred following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the renewed concern over the new path that Soviet leaders would take, but Yugoslav delegates failed to make that the primary focus for the conference attendees. Economic and social issues correctly transcended politics for many of nonalignment’s adherents as the Soviet Union retreated from the Brezhnev Doctrine’s employment in Europe and the 1970s hosted a time of relaxation marked by détente. With meaningful dialogue between the primary Cold War actors sparked under the turbulent and controversial Richard Nixon presidency, détente became a real possibility, and international tensions lessened. Partly as a result of this, during the 1970s, and thereafter, the Non-aligned Movement shrank until it no longer played any noteworthy role in global politics and merely watched as the final collapse of communism brought an end to the Cold War—they themselves got caught up in the chaos and destroyed each other in a decade-long process of dismemberment.

Documents and statements by Yugoslav leaders show that Yugoslavia’s entry into nonalignment had taken the shared principles of Rangoon and Bandung to a political level in emphasizing issues of sovereignty, non-interference, and peaceful coexistence. Such rhetoric worked within the ideological transformations at home and reinforced the moralizing tone of the Titoist regime, especially in comparison to the Soviet Union. While Tito and his comrades held no monopoly on these concepts—men such as Nehru
took great pains to note the same phenomena—Yugoslav actions lifted the concepts to the center of the Cold War debate and made Yugoslavia a global actor with an important voice. Milovan Đilas claimed that he was “instrumental in getting the Yugoslavs in touch” with these Third World leaders and he saw the Yugoslavs as the driving force, since as Dilas noted, he “would not take” these “so-called uncommitted people too seriously.”

By the end of the 1960s, when the Cold War tensions eased, Yugoslavia’s political commentary ceased to matter as much and the Non-aligned Movement returned to its original Bandung spirit: “to promote goodwill and co-operation among the nations of Asia and Africa”; to “consider social, economic and cultural problems”; to find solutions to the “problems affecting national sovereignty and of racialism and colonialism”; and, finally, “to view the position of Asia and Africa and their peoples in the world of today and the contribution they can make to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.” At the same time, Yugoslav leaders struggled during the 1970s to not only deliver on their promise of reform and material wealth to the people, but also to co-opt the next generation of young people into supporting the regime.

At the beginning of the Cold War, George Kennan had commented that the Soviet Union could potentially identify with the aspirations and frustrations of discontented elements outside of Europe. Kennan correctly noted the value of decolonization and

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124. During 1971, Yugoslavs noted how the “young people” had begun to feel “cheated” and experienced a “complete loss of confidence” in the ruling elite. See Slobodan Stankovic, “Yugoslavia’s Students: Their Sucesses and Failures,” 9 December 1971, Radio Free Europe Research, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.
rightly feared that the Soviets would stake their ideology among those dispossessed masses throughout the world and create within the international communist movement a powerful instrument with which to project influence beyond the Soviet Union’s borders. The enormous potential that the Soviets had in extending their control into the so-called Third World could have changed the face of the Cold War. This continued once it became clear that many within the Non-aligned Movement were nominally socialist or harbored sympathies in that direction. The reality, though, was far different because the Soviets never derailed the Yugoslavs in their efforts to make nonalignment the logical derivative of their own unique communist ideology. I argue that an independent communist Yugoslavia discredited the Soviets—although, not to the large extent that some feared and others predicted—but when Tito successfully latched onto influential third-world statesmen at an opportune time in Cold War history and used the Non-aligned Movement as a vehicle to popularize his opinions, the Soviets clearly lost.

When Tito outmaneuvered the Soviet leaders, he created an international authority for nonalignment and peaceful coexistence as watchwords of progress, and won a huge moral victory. At the same time, he used that external success to fortify his regime and create a lasting legitimacy that began in earnest with the domestic program of socialist self management. That the Soviets failed to stop nonalignment might not have dramatically altered the course of the Cold War; not depriving Yugoslavia of a leading voice in the Non-aligned Movement during the turbulent 1960s, though, created a great

problem for the Soviets, as communism justifiably possessed multiple voices. Tito’s actions and the establishment of nonalignment as a global force eclipsed Moscow’s monopoly on ideology, itself already reeling from Stalin’s death. This Soviet weakness in the Third World would later become much more apparent after the numerous adventures by Soviet agents seemed to have worked; competition with China in Asia and Africa, primarily during the 1970s, strained the Soviets and helped exaggerate the reform process that Mikhail Gorbachev initiated a decade later. The resulting strain on Soviet energy, finances, and political authority only added to the already overwhelmed Soviet system and led the Kremlin into seeking concessions (vis-à-vis détente) from the West to maintain the status quo. While the Soviet revolution was clearly over, that reality still eluded many across the globe—including the Yugoslav People’s Army.
 CHAPTER THREE: THE POLITICS OF FEAR AND TOTAL NATIONAL DEFENSE

But if it comes to shooting, if we have to defend our achievements, the army too is here.¹
—Josip Broz Tito, Thirtieth Anniversary of the JNA, 1971

The guardian of Tito’s state and his helpmate in attaining power, the army, underwent dramatic transformations in response to the threats against the Yugoslav regime. First established to expel the reportedly 300,000 domestic quislings who cooperated with the Axis Powers to destroy Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) served as the model institution devoted to their commander, Marshal Tito.² As the most loyal group, JNA officers acted as close confidants to their commander and made sure that they always would take an active role in state building at each stage of Yugoslavia’s history. With the dual role of defending the revolution against internal challengers and deterring and fighting against external aggression, JNA leaders sought to solidify their authoritative role in the state. But, the army elite also had to deal with the powerful Communist Party (LCY), and while JNA elites remained the most steadfast pillars of the party, they also had to accept certain uncomfortable aspects of party rule. In response to the success of socialist self-management since the early 1950s, military leaders could not continue to resist reforms in their own institution; as a result, they altered Yugoslav defensive doctrine to meet the decentralized reform regime. The military solution implemented at

². See, Đordo Novosel et al., Savezni sekretarijat za narodnu odbranu I, vol. 7.1, Razvoj oružanih snaga SFRJ, 1945-1985 (Beograd: Vojnoizdavačka i novinski centar, 1990) p. 27. “Oko 300.000 ustaša, četnika i drugih izdajnika napustilo je zemlju i uključilo se u antijugoslovensku kampanju i pružanje podrške reakcionarnim i neprijateljskim snagama u zemlji.”
the end of the 1960s was the advent of Territorial Defense (TDF), which harkened back to the Partisan experience of World War II and drew common citizens into an active defense regime, described as completely “integrated with the social structure.”

Alongside the federal army, these territorial defense forces came from local sources and trained primarily in guerilla warfare techniques; the TDF soldiers represented the popular and large-scale reserve force that would supposedly unite all peoples while enhancing the defensive posture of the armed forces. After having embraced reform in the army, JNA leaders initially saw the TDF as necessary to build a democratic and unified Marxist Yugoslavia, but they soon felt sidelined and attempted to reduce the influence of the TDF as nationalism appeared on the forefront of Yugoslav politics at the beginning of the 1970s. That the officers succeeded is a testament to the critical role that the army played in Titoist Yugoslavia—fear of Soviet invasion propelled all leaders into opting for a popular system of defense that could serve to align more people with the regime. Nonetheless, the critical question for Yugoslav leaders to answer was whom did they fear more: the Red Army or their own people?

In this chapter, I will argue that Yugoslav politicians ultimately shaped their policies according to the unrest and rebellion by their own people. Following Stalin’s expulsion of Tito from the Cominform and the aggressive rhetoric that threatened the stability of Tito’s state from the outside, elites were concerned chiefly with rearming the military to counteract this threat. With the critical aid from the Americans Tito had rebuilt the peacetime army during the early 1950s to reach towards the 800,000 men in

arms during World War II. This external threat also had a small internal element, but one that Tito’s secret police (Uprava državne bezbednosti, UDB-a) handily controlled. The series of arrests of potential internal enemies was so thorough that most accounts showed Tito in full control of the country by early 1952. Such control enabled the army to stand at the ready with newly acquired American weapons and with the de facto support of the Western nations in case of a broader European conflict; as a result, the internal reform process of the LCY had begun in earnest and proceeded in most other sectors of Yugoslav society. Socialist self-management gained credibility as a method to secure the legitimacy of the regime among the people and as a way to deliver on the promise of material prosperity and social equality. A vital aspect of this reformist system rested on how the army could help construct popular support for the regime. As the only institution to touch virtually all people in Yugoslavia, the role of the army was potentially paramount towards securing a positive idea of the state among the common folk.

“The strength of our doctrine,” boasted Defense Secretary Viktor Bubanj much later in 1970, “is that it is public and belongs to the people.” Bubanj’s comment came at a time when the fear of the Soviet Union returned to center stage following the intervention in Czechoslovakia when Yugoslav elites sought to reinvigorate support for the army. Soon, though, the army elites and the party questioned bringing the people into the system and correctly recognized that Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev was

4. See “Probable Developments in Yugoslavia and the Likelihood of Attack upon Yugoslavia, Through 1952,” NIE-29/2, pp. 1–3
uninterested in crushing Yugoslavia with armed force. But, with the onset of internal
riots and nationalist uprisings in 1971, the regime reanalyzed the commitment to the
JNA–TDF arrangement for defense and sided with a professional and unswervingly loyal
officer corps at the head of the armed forces. This prompt series of transformations of
defensive doctrine in Yugoslavia—based upon an emphasis and then de-emphasis of
popular participation—intersects directly with how the regime interpreted threats:
External threats brought about a need for a more inclusive regime, whereas domestic
challenges required the reliance on a trusted and unified cadre. The outside aggressor
united Yugoslavia’s peoples by drawing on their common patriotism and common
struggle against historic external forces. The internal challengers, meanwhile, proved the
most dangerous because they brought Tito to alter the reform process in Yugoslavia and
call into question the viability of his worldview. With a clear disconnect between the
LCY’s rhetoric and the reality in the country, the trust that the party and the army was
supposedly building was frittered away and lost forever once defense became the focal
point for the state’s stability.

THE PARTY’S VISION

The leaders of the LCY continually sought to build legitimacy for themselves in
Yugoslavia; they showed themselves as a dynamic group and used both internal and
external factors to rally people behind the cause of Marxism. The Yugoslav People’s
Army was the primary vehicle to achieve a lasting unity behind the party’s principles
because as leaders insisted, the “JNA was for all of Yugoslavia,” and represented “every
people” and fought on behalf of “every republic.” In contrast to these claims, political scientist Ronald Krebs has argued over the value of this custodial role played by the military. Krebs has stressed the need to revamp the entire study of civil-military relationships, abandoning Huntingtonian models that describe the military as profoundly influential during the state-building process. For Krebs, the military aids the modern state in nation building thanks to its institutional integrity; nonetheless, he has discounted the three main theories of how the military has traditionally served as a nation-builder—what he calls the contact, socialization mechanism, and the elite-transformation hypotheses. While potentially relevant for other studies, Yugoslavia’s multiethnic composition forced leaders to envision a proactive army that could in fact expose members of the various national groups to each other and build a unified identity according to Tito’s model. LCY leaders repeatedly relied upon the army as their most loyal institution to maintain the strength of the party among the people and build a better Yugoslavia. “It would be,” Bubanj argued, “a bad investment of our society,” if the JNA merely functioned during a time of war.

Historic roots from the struggle in World War II shaped the perceptions of the JNA as army leaders attributed the victory against the Nazis to a combination of the “large-scale participation of the population, moral-political unity,” and the “close ties

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between the people and the fighting forces.”9 Such a combination, the theory held, would further reinforce the state and build a better society according to the real legitimacy that the army earned during the struggle against fascism. Earlier chapters elaborated that this process was not static. Reform was a primary facet of the Yugoslav system after it emerged from the Tito–Stalin split in 1948; constant transformation—at all levels—was an explicit defining characteristic of Yugoslavia. Members of the armed forces were not static actors nor did they fight change; instead, they often prescribed methods of reform and served on the frontlines of building a genuine and legitimate Yugoslav community. The fact that the party and the army worked so closely together to forge and transform Yugoslavia made it clear that the army’s role in safeguarding the state took on a broader definition. Army elites were proactive in their campaign to serve Yugoslavia and the continued focus on the army by officials throughout the state showed how important the “moral and political” status of soldiers was for the general wellbeing of Tito’s creation.10

But the fear of nationalism drove Yugoslav leaders to maintain an overall balance and accommodate all Yugoslavs. As Todo Kurtović, president of the Republican Conference of the Socialist Alliance of Bosnia-Hercegovina, explained to a fiery crowd in the town of Kakanj in late November 1971, “every aspect of nationalism, from simple traditional chauvinisms,” to the more dangerous “unitarist negation of a nation,” is destructive. Yugoslavia would suffer, Kurtović emphasized, because of this renewed

sense of chauvinism, but he rested confidently on the unity of Bosnia’s “joint institutions,” and inter-ethnic cooperation.\(^\text{11}\) In this vein of unity and cooperation, World War II, with all its divisive civil conflicts and massacres, forced Tito to downplay hostility and simply label all wartime casualties as “victims of fascism,” and “domestic traitors” instead of blaming any particular group.\(^\text{12}\) One of Alan Rubinstein’s works on Yugoslavia saw this fear of nationalism as the solution for everything. It was, “indeed, a compelling argument” for the continued “one-Party system in Yugoslavia,” according to Rubinstein, as well as possibly having “provided Yugoslav leaders” with the impetus to promote nonalignment.\(^\text{13}\) It seems clearer still from Kurtović’s words that self-management provided the people with a rhetorical device to propagate unity in the face of nationalism at local levels, but this issue generated even more tense discussion. While nonalignment, the LCY, and even self-managing systems all seemingly fought nationalism, the army was the one institution that had the opportunity to affect change thanks to its inclusive and captive audience. From the barracks, army leaders encouraged their soldiers to reach out to society and act as models of cooperation and socialism in the overall drive for a more equitable representation for Yugoslavia’s ethnic groups.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^\text{11}\) Todo Kurtović in Tanjug, 28 November 1971. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI, Croatia Opposition [CO], cn. 95.


\(^\text{13}\) Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia*, p. 203.

\(^\text{14}\) Leaders called for equitable representation at “ALL levels.” See “3rd Session of the YPA Conference at the LCY: Only a Strong Yugoslavia can Define her Independence,” *Borba*, 12 November 1971, p. 6.
But just what sort of people identified with the army and the regime? Ethnicity in the JNA deserves attention since it was a major force conditioning the role of the army in Yugoslavia. Numerous studies have pointed to the dominance of Serbs in the officer corps of the Yugoslav People’s Army. Despite some debate on the issue, the fact remains that Serbs comprised the largest share of officers and non-commissioned officers in the JNA. Historian John Lampe has stated “by ethnic origin, some 60 percent were Serbs and 8 percent Montenegrins.”

He has noted also that as early as 1946, a still partisan-led Yugoslav Army possessed a decidedly Serbian cast. This trend continued. James Gow has argued in numerous works for a Serbian domination of the middle and junior ranks as late as 1990, with 60 percent of the total, leaving Croats with only 12.6 percent. (See Appendix B for more.)

Ethnic percentages demand attention because despite all the rhetoric on brotherhood and unity within official circles, the JNA needed to appeal to all members in the state in order to gain support for itself and then proactively support the regime. Even

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16. Lampe, Yugoslavia: Twice there was a Country, p. 250.
17. Gow, Legitimacy, p. 142. See also Mije Bjelajac, Jugoslovensko iskustvo sa multitetničkom armijom 1918–1991., (Beograd: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 1999), p. 81. Bjelajac also has cited the same figures in similar numbers of Serb domination in 1991, basing his information on the Slovenian newspaper Obramba: sixty percent Serbs, 5.4 percent Yugoslavs (probably Serbs), 6.2 percent Montenegrins, 12.6 percent Croats, 6.3 percent Macedonians, 2.4 percent Muslims, 2.8 percent Slovenes, .6 percent Albanians, .7 percent Hungarians, and 1.6 percent others. The historian Matteo Milazzo essentially has agreed, having contended that Serb dominance tainted the entire twentieth-century Yugoslav history: The Chetnik Movement & The Yugoslav Resistance, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 186: “Even the Partisans … were an overwhelmingly Serb movement until well into 1943, and there is considerable evidence that they often expanded their ranks by appealing to national sentiments which had little to do with allegiance to the Yugoslav idea.”
the military leadership realized that it was important to reduce any social divisions within the ranks. As Admiral Branko Mamula explained, “facts of social affairs have a most direct influence on the army,” because the “negative features influence the consciousness” of soldiers as well as “their mood, motivation and conduct.”

In 1983, a leading LCY newspaper, Borba, reported that despite the large threat to Yugoslav unity, the situation in the army was stable and good. Included in the list of enemies for the army was nationalism, shown to be, without exception, the favorite costume for separatism, irredentism, or unitarism.

An ethnic key—or affirmative action program based on maintaining an equality among ethnic groups—powerfully influenced the army high command because, in 1971, of the twenty-four highest military commanders, “33 percent were Serbs, while 38 percent were Croats.” But, in reality, “Serbs dominated the officer corps in the Yugoslav military, the civil service and secret police; Belgrade was Yugoslavia’s power center.”

The theory behind equal representation in key institutions such as the army clearly differed from reality because despite a superficial realization of some goals—personified by the ethnic balance in the army high command—Serbs remained in the

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19. “Situacija u Armiji dobra i stabilna,” Borba, 25 March 1983. “Ukazano je na obavezu komunista i organizacija da se u armiji, kao i do sada, ne stvori prostor i mogućnost ispoljavanju nacionalizma, bez obzira da li je on odijenut u seperatističko, iredentističko ili unitarističko ruho, kao i drugim željama i tendencijama sa pozicija suprotnim socijalističkom samoupravnom društvu, ideologiji i politici SKJ.”
majority among government employees and especially among lower and middling ranks. In 1963, the army recognized the abundance of Serbs within that institution relative to the demographic reality in Yugoslavia (see Appendix B). Between 1970 and 1985, the ethnic imbalance in the military academy in Belgrade showed that among army cadets, Serbs again comprised the majority. Despite the presence of the ethnic key, Serbs simply outnumbered other ethnic groups and generally remained dominant at the lower and middle levels of authority. While some high profile successes of the ethnic key—notably the fact that Croats staffed 38 percent of the high command despite a smaller overall demographic balance—the consensus showed that continued work was necessary to bring in more non-Serbs into the government.

The army consistently acted as the bulwark of the regime and despite, or, because of, its ethnic imbalance, its members vigorously fought to maintain Yugoslavia. A 1975 program, outlined by the LCY organization within the JNA, encompassed ten points for adoption to aid in the “Socialist Self-Management in Yugoslavia.” Point 7 emphasized the need for, “equality, brotherhood and unity of nations and nationalities in our social system.”

22. Dušan Pejanović, Josip Karavanić, Mihajlo Golubović, Ernest Mezga, Boška Stojanović, Božo Šašić, and Čedo Stanković, Organizacija SKJ u JNA, vol. 2, Razvoj oružanih snaga SFRJ, 1945–1985., (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1986), p. 217. In 1963, the state did not recognize Muslims as a special group as they were in 1971, but instead many likely declared themselves as Serbs; thus, the true ethnic balance remains unknown and virtually impossible to determine in exact terms.


24. Pejanović et al., Organizacija SKJ u JNA, p. 326. “Tim programom su obuhvaćene teme: (1) Osnove marksističkog shvatanja društva; (2) Kriza svjetskog kapitalističkog sistema i razvoj socijalizma kao svjetskog procesa; (3) Socijalistička revolucija i stvaranje nove Jugoslavije; (4) Društveno-ekonomsko osnove socijalističkog samoupravljanja; (5) Samoupravljanje u osnovnim organizacijama i zajednicama;
struggle against counterrevolutionary works” acting in the name of nationalism.\textsuperscript{25} The revolution never ended according to army elites; but, while fighting on behalf of official party ideology, the army suffered from an uneven implementation of inclusive policies, such as the ethnic key. Internal contradictions within the army only mirrored that of its partners and the reality of Yugoslav ideology.

A critical aspect of why leaders assigned the army such a profound role in the affairs of the state derived from the nature of the LCY organization in the army. Describe by the Yugoslav periodical, \textit{Narodna armija} (\textit{People’s Army}), as the “leading ideological force within the army,” the role of the party sought to increase the “ideological awareness and moral and political unity,” as well work towards “perfection” of the army’s military character.\textsuperscript{26} Outside of the army, the soldiers were “duty bound to actively and systematically participate” in the ideological activity throughout civil society. Lieutenant Colonel-General Dane Petkovski, at the Third Conference of the LCY Organization of the JNA, emphasized how united and strong the army needed to be in the face of grave danger. It was the “inflexible will of every individual” Petkovski said, to repulse the enemies of “our socialist community” and that required a high level of


awareness by soldiers. 27 Apparently, Petkovski understood that a positive force in the army was the best way to counter a “psychological propaganda attack,” on the army and, by extension, on society as a whole. 28 It was because army leaders saw “fairly strong links” between “outside” enemies—including intelligence services, extremist émigré groups—and the “anti self-management forces” inside Yugoslavia, that they called forth for such stalwart action; if these enemies succeeded in infiltrating “into the army” and made their “influence felt,” the destructiveness would help annihilate Yugoslavia altogether. 29 As the protectors of the state from all enemies, army leaders naturally bound themselves to the party at all costs.

CRISIS: CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1968

Events inside the Soviet Union defied any Western attempts to predict Soviet leader’s actions and reactions throughout the world. 30 The first part of the 1960s brought the superpowers into conflict over the tenuous situation in Berlin, but events closer to America dwarfed the commotion over the skies of Germany. The Soviet Union and the United States came to the brink of war over Soviet missiles in Cuba, as part of Moscow’s larger support for the Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro and partly owing to Soviet

30. See S.I. Ploss, “The Uncertainty of Soviet Foreign Policy,” World Politics 15:3 (April, 1963), p. 455. According to Ploss, with the advent of Khruschev’s policies in the first part of the 1960s, “erraticism has often marked the Kremlin’s foreign policy behavior.”
premier Nikita Khrushchev’s desire to win a strategic victory over the young President John F. Kennedy. As the events unfolded and subsided with an American victory of sorts, Khrushchev’s power base further weakened at home in the Soviet Communist Party. Owing to this defeat by Khrushchev—who Milovan Đilas described in 1961 as “not sure of his footing”—along with the failed virgin lands program, his popularity in the Soviet Politburo continued to wane until the party finally replaced him in 1964. The new man in charge, Leonid Brezhnev, immediately attempted to regain the USSR’s position of parity with respect to the United States as well as regain the diplomatic advantage in Europe.

As a veteran of the Stalinist period and an astute political protégé of Khrushchev, Brezhnev signified a nominal return to conservative politics. The butt of many jokes about his crude personality cult or his unresponsiveness towards positive change, Brezhnev nonetheless did contribute a lasting and potentially dangerous doctrine of thought on Soviet politics. His Brezhnev Doctrine came as a formal response to actions already taken by the Soviet government and Warsaw Pact forces in quelling a nominally anti-Soviet, liberal communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Appearing in the Soviet Union’s premier daily, Pravda, on 25 September 1968, the doctrine laid out the goals and limitations of Soviet Policy: At a time “when forces that are hostile to socialism try to turn the development of some socialist country towards capitalism,” then “it becomes not only a problem of the country concerned,” but a problem common to “all

Brezhnev’s pronouncement caused great concern for Tito because this statement raised doubts about the long-term viability of the status quo and stood in violation to international law and the Charter of the United Nations, not to mention Tito’s mantra of nonalignment. The idea that the Soviets could intervene to protect members of the “socialist commonwealth” made Yugoslavs uneasy because if the Soviets determined the geographic limits, they might seek revision and act aggressively for regime change in Belgrade. Yet for some Yugoslav leaders, this renewed fear of Soviet aggression provided an opportunity to use the alarming nature of intervention to correct some domestic ills troubling Yugoslavia.

When Soviet-led forces entered Prague and reestablished order suiting the Kremlin, the world needed to evaluate what had happened and predict the ramifications of action for international politics. The Soviet crackdown had the most influence among the states in Eastern Europe, but, of course, some leaders had more reason to worry than others. For East Germans or Poles, living in areas with large garrisons of Red Army forces and important in the Northern Tier defense system, Prague was a disconcerting reminder that the Kremlin would not tolerate anti-Soviet behavior. On another level, Romania continued to drift away from Moscow even after the crackdown in Prague, but Romanian leaders recognized the need to remain formally a member of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON—the military and economic unions among Soviet satellite states. As

33. Department of State Telegram, “Under Secretary’s Talk with Pavicevic,” 22 October 1968, LBJ Library.
the only Warsaw Pact country not to have contributed to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Romanians had little to fear from the Soviets as long as a general allegiance to Moscow remained. Leaders in Bucharest understood that Romania was in no position geographically, economically, or politically to break away from the Soviets and succeed as Tito had after 1948. Prague did serve as a reminder, though, to any Romanian, Bulgarian, or Hungarian that the maintenance of socialism and the allegiance to Moscow was of paramount importance.

Yugoslavs reacted to the Soviet invasion with stunned rage. In the wake of the intervention, the “patriotic spirit” would rise, according to the LCY, alongside either the “hajduk blood in the Yugoslav man” or the “partisan blood in our struggle.”34 While Tito felt confident from earlier meetings with the Soviets that aggressive action against the Czechoslovak leadership was unnecessary, he was upset to see the sovereignty of a fellow socialist country violated, not the least because “any unilateral move may encourage” intervention “in places where” the superpowers merely “think their interests are threatened.”35 Indeed, up until this time, LCY members exhibited a general confidence in their legitimacy abroad as peacemakers and statesmen leading the Third World.36 The typical Yugoslav response to the Soviet action, though, reemphasized the accepted viewpoint of different roads to socialism and the development of individual

revolutionary movements while vigorously opposing third-party action: “the LCY has resolutely opposed the doctrine according to which the leading power, in defending the so-called higher interests of a bloc, has the right to intervene unilaterally in its ‘own zone’ for the purpose of establishing a state of affairs suitable to its wishes.”  

Privately, the Yugoslav leadership expressed profound disappointment and fear that their work over the last fifteen years was for naught—the morality of Tito’s foreign policy and the work of the Non-aligned Movement sought an end to such unilateral actions by powers if for no other reason than international disapproval. Nonetheless, the events against the Czechoslovak leadership served to embarrass and discredit Tito’s actions as a sovereign mover in international relations. The executive bureau of the party recognized that a victory for their party in such a hostile atmosphere would entail a simple reaffirmation of Yugoslavia’s separate path to socialism and the recognition of sovereignty.  

Not only did Tito and the LCY cry out against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia as wrong, but they also took note of what had happened to prompt the invasion. Generally favorable on the idea of socialism with a human face, Tito also witnessed how a Slovak nationalism took hold and how the country’s leaders moved in the field of constitutional reform to broker change. A prominent Czechoslovak reporter, Karel Jezdinsky, served as the Radio Prague reporter in Belgrade and spoke out strongly


against his regime and, as a result, won a lopsided amount of public attention in the Yugoslav press, especially after he fled to the West. As a proponent against the “greatest enemies of socialism” in Moscow, Jezdinsky saw Soviet policies at home and abroad as representative of their imperialism.\(^3^9\) He made himself a martyr for a larger cause, no doubt informing LCY leaders on the power of public opinion, despite his potentially dangerous message that noted, “internal opposition” was the “most important opposition.”\(^4^0\) Furthermore, Yugoslavs had to see how these changes had affected not only the Czechoslovak domestic scene, but also how the events had further distanced Prague from the voices tucked away inside the Kremlin.

Warsaw Pact forces, at the behest of the Soviet Union, created new tensions among the Yugoslav leadership whose members realized that relations between socialist countries had fundamentally changed in a direction “under firm socialist internationalism” that necessarily compromised the Yugoslav thesis of independence and cooperation.\(^4^1\) Debate among Yugoslav elites in 1968 questioned whether the action in Czechoslovakia would serve as a precedent for Soviet forces intervening later in Yugoslavia or in other states within the so-called Soviet orbit of influence. The reasoning behind this rested with the interpretation of what constituted a socialist state and to what lengths the Soviets would enact the Brezhnev Doctrine. The policy outlined by Brezhnev implied that the Soviet Union held the monopoly on socialist decisions and

\(^3^9\) Karel Jezdinky in UPI, 20 September 1968. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI, Czechoslovakia [CZ], cn. 104.
\(^4^0\) Jezdinsky in UPI, 20 September 1968. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI, CZ, cn. 104.
\(^4^1\) Stane Dolanc in “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog bira,” ASCG CK SKJ IV K.7 7, 1971, p. 5.
that its vague policy could be used to justify otherwise geopolitical interests, such as aggression against states in the Middle East and Central Asia. While never again used in Europe, Brezhnev did employ his logic in 1979 to reign in the turbulence in Afghanistan, and thus eventually proved the Yugoslavs’ concerns as valid.

Closer to Yugoslavia though, the invasion of Czechoslovakia had forced Tito and the leadership to reevaluate their position vis-à-vis Soviet interests and what the proper response should encompass. While Tito knew of certain plans the Soviets harbored, he felt that the Soviets had abandoned all reason in what seemed a dangerously disruptive display of force. Tito had warned the Soviets at a joint meeting in Bratislava prior to the use of force that a Soviet-led invasion would be a “catastrophe,” but the events in Prague obviously overruled him. When Tito and acting Foreign Secretary Mišo Pavičević met with Undersecretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach in October of that year, Katzenbach reported that the Yugoslavs were concerned about Soviet intentions in the Balkans and greater Mediterranean region. Tito realized that Moscow’s influence with Nasir in Egypt had, by 1968, surpassed his own, and that if the Soviets gained further momentum with respect to Bulgaria’s claims on Yugoslav Macedonia, the Balkans might once again become a “powder keg.” The idea that Yugoslavia held the key position regarding stability in the Balkans and stood at the door to the Middle East gave Yugoslav leaders an added burden of responsibility to maintain order. Keeping the status quo meant decisive

42. Stane Dolanc in “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog bira,“ ASCG CK SKJ IV K.7 7, 1971, p. 2. Dolanc said that Soviet “interes za Balkan, s obzirom na geostrateški položaj tog regiona, a pre svega u funkciji sovjetske politike i strategije na Sredozemljju i Bliskom istoku.”

43. See Nicholas Katzenbach, “My Meeting With Tito,” Department of State Telegram, (20 October, 1968).
action and strong international influence, but Tito always remained handicapped by his foreign policy based on nonintervention and coexistence. Although Soviet action in Czechoslovakia served to weaken Tito’s influence in the Non-aligned Movement, he still had enough credibility to remain involved in the complex process of European peacemaking throughout the 1970s because of his unique position between the blocs.

**TERRITORIAL DEFENSE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

In response to some of problems with the new strategy for defense in the wake of the Prague Spring, the military underwent reorganization in 1969, with the passage of the General People’s Defense (GPD) law. The law created two equal elements for defense, the Yugoslav People’s Army and the Territorial Defense Force.44 While the JNA remained a federal institution, the TDF fell under various decentralized republican, autonomous provincial, and communal oversight. This decentralization project of a significant portion of the nation’s defense forces fulfilled the goal of organizing the military along self-management principles that were already prevalent in other sectors of society.45 Such changes hindered the federal military, but cemented the role of the

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44. Article 1 of the General People’s Defense Law stated, “Every citizen who in war, in an organized way, participates with arms in the struggle against the enemy can be a member of the armed forces of Yugoslavia.” Cited in Gow, *Legitimacy*, p. 46.

45. Elites in Yugoslavia repeatedly cited the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) as being the only Yugoslav institution that was not “self-managed.” JNA leaders argued that a military could not function under self-management and thus excused. Despite this, what is interesting to note is that self-management system based on self-directing principles served as one of the justifications for the creation and strengthening of the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF); namely, the TDF allowed Yugoslav citizens to participate in the defense of the country but in an organization that was inherently opposed to self-management. For examples of the kind of verbiage about the self-managed nature of the TDF, consult the following: Colonel–General Viktor Bubanj in *Teritorijalna odbrana* (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod,
policeman and a guerrilla militiaman within official policy. Such a shift towards an emphasis on the citizen-soldier did fit within what Yugoslav theorists saw as an armed force with historic and communist-liberation roots; furthermore, the reorganization empowered the localities at the expense of the federation, but ultimately sought to strengthen the legitimacy of the state and self-management. Tito argued that relations within Yugoslavia would improve once citizens organized defense to protect themselves and their state.46 Yugoslav sources showed how the federal budget benefitted from the new organization while people across the spectrum came together under the auspices of a single institution.47 Military analysts in Yugoslavia saw this arrangement as credible, not only as a real deterrent in the face of renewed Soviet aggression, but also in light of the poor U.S. performance in Vietnam against popular liberation forces.48 Yugoslav officers repeatedly declared that the JNA–TDF arrangement represented a “comprehensive defense,” comprising armed resistance, civil defense, armament production, and military


46. See, for example, Živković, Teritorijalna obrana, pp. 7–9; Tito in Živković, Teritorijalna odbrana, p. 57. “[K]ako to Tito kaže, ‘da udruženi proizvođači i građani organizuju odbrambene snage društva kao svoje sopstvene.’”


48. Yugoslav analysts took into consideration, as did others around the world, how the United States performed in Vietnam against the Communist guerrilla forces. The success of Ho Chi Minh’s forces against the American army led many to believe that such warfare tactics were credible against modern armies.
engineering, not least of which because the Yugoslavs understood the “human factor as the essential element” in the “ability of every individual country to defend itself.”

Despite Tito’s manipulation of leaders in both East and West, the Cold War division of Europe between the Warsaw Pact, backed by the Soviet Union, and NATO, backed by the United States, left Yugoslavia vulnerable and presented unprecedented complexity for Yugoslavia’s military defense. Yugoslav military officers, recognizing their position in relation to the superpowers surrounding them, tried to adopt a credible strategy that could deter both neighboring countries such as Albania, while also deterring large powers such as the Soviet Union. Such logic served as the reasoning behind the reemergence of guerrilla forces; namely, a popular struggle that could once again protect Yugoslavia from dominance by stronger neighbors and reinvigorate the population behind Tito as World War II had done almost three decades prior.

Tito’s Partisan movement secured victory in World War II by conducting a limited, guerrilla war aimed at taxing and outlasting a highly overextended, more powerful enemy, while, at the same time, relying on other countries to fight the major battles to cripple Nazi strength. This strategy remained plausible in light of what potential battle between the United States and the Soviet Union might look like alongside the expected devastation that would befall both powers. JNA commanders felt that their role could never be to defeat decisively either superpower on an open battlefield; rather, they could delay the total capitulation of Yugoslavia for a few days or, at best, a few

weeks, by pinning down major enemy forces. Meanwhile, following this scenario, the major burden would increasingly rest on the TDF thanks to a well-planned and strategically competent guerrilla war comprised of virtually the entire able-bodied population. These two factors combined meant to convince external enemies that an invasion of Yugoslavia would present unreasonable complexities and an overtaxing burden in the event of war.

Because of all the rhetoric about self-management and decentralization that would bring all the people together in defense of the nation, this JNA–TDF arrangement had a perfect ideological foundation. With more people involved in the defense regime, the system would touch people more directly; and, moreover, bringing more people into the armed forces, even for short periods, would increase the contact with other economic, ethnic, and religious groups. Exposure to a multiethnic, diverse Yugoslavia would, army leaders hoped, foster brotherhood and unity not only during wartime but also during periods of peace. Yugoslav officers knew that they could never field a conventional army to match that of the Soviet Union and they surmised that the TDF became a necessary reality if leaders wished to claim a legitimate role in protecting the people of Yugoslavia from external enemies. In line with the politicization of the armed forces, the National Defense Law of 1969 stated that it was the right and duty of the local political leader “to organize total national defense and to command the battle directly.”50 The Territorial Defense Forces “would play a particularly significant role in fighting off all kinds of air-borne attacks” as the force “always ‘on the spot.’” Furthermore, as Milojica

Pantelić noted at the time, “among its formations, the Yugoslav People’s Army has large partisan units”—the TDF—to drain enemy resources in the event of an invasion.\(^{51}\) In order to carry out a predominantly partisan-type war, though, that force needed to be both popular and self-sustaining. This notion of popularity gave the impression that people would identify with the regime and gladly take to arms in its defense; accordingly, “The strength of our doctrine,” as Defense Secretary Bubanj boasted in 1970, “is that it is public and belongs to the people.”\(^{52}\)

Although Bubanj’s exaltation of his military’s strength seemed reasonable, it became problematic once the country faced new challenges. Indeed, the power of this system became a liability as a problem in maintaining unity. The two-tiered JNA and TDF defense strategy lessened the role of the federal government and gave more power to the republics. Under the umbrella of the armed defense of Yugoslavia, the TDF and JNA forces were legally equal as two parts of a complete defensive system.\(^{53}\) Following the 1969 reorganization, the law clearly recognized the JNA as the premier defender of the country through its ownership of “extraordinary high striking and strategic, operative, tactical and maneuvering capabilities”; but, despite this, the JNA was “not the principal factor responsible for territorial defense and territorial operations, this being the principal concern of work organizations and socio-political communities.”\(^{54}\) Such language

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52. Viktor Bubanj quoted in Gow, *Legitimacy*, p. 47.
limited the importance of the federal mechanism for defense and caused many to question the proper role of the army. *Narodna armija* directly took on such skeptics, who “from time to time” raised “very suspicious theses on questions which have been crystal clear for a long time.” Declaring superfluous those queries over whether there was an “essential difference” between the JNA and the TDF, the newspaper meted out harsh critique against the “unscientific and anti-constitutional” statements that did no more than endanger the basic nature of the armed forces.⁵⁵ LCY leaders must have taken note of the “downplaying and particularly the denial of a military threat” as a contributing factor “to a disorganization of the state and the people,” and a general mood of “universal pacifism.”⁵⁶ Vigilance against enemies would continue to underpin the state, but only so long as everyone remained tied to the Titoist project.

**REFORM AGAIN**

Against whom was the army defending? In the role of “protector of the state and people,” and as the creator of second Yugoslavia, the army needed to show that its defensive role was legitimate and necessary. Leaders placed emphasis on not only the quality of work in the JNA, but also on how well the army protected the sovereignty of the state against border incursions and domestic harassment.⁵⁷ Because the prospect of

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overwhelming invasion from the Soviet Union worried the JNA, the establishment of the Territorial Defense Force gained credibility in light of the renewed stress from the Brezhnev Doctrine and the internal pressure for the military to conform to the broader reform regime in place since the early 1950s. Once enacted, the TDF itself constantly underwent reform; its composition changed each year as the soldiers reflected changing demographics in each region or commune. As a result, the percentage of TDF soldiers from Serbia increased from 17.83 percent of the total in 1980, to 24.69 percent in 1984, while some regions like Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina saw a decrease thanks to a declining population there.\(^{58}\) Most importantly, when speaking of manpower, the TDF outnumbered the JNA, with almost 700,000 soldiers in arms by 1970, and reaching almost one million a decade later.\(^{59}\) Although the idea of dividing the defense between the JNA and the TDF showed Yugoslavia’s ability to transform to meet changing realities, this division fueled confusion as to the proper roles and responsibilities that Yugoslav leaders faced during the hectic time following the invasion of Czechoslovakia until the last days of Yugoslavia in 1991. Reform of the TDF system became necessary out of concern that too much power devolved from the central authorities and potential counterrevolutionary forces were benefiting from the local emphasis of Territorial Defense.


JNA commanders saw the constitutional reform that culminated with the last Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 as boosting their esteem because of the legal rejection of the overt reliance on Partisan-type TDF fighting forces. The constitution reneged on the equal distribution of power between the JNA and the TDF outlined by the General People’s Defense Law of 1969 and resumed the JNA’s role as the preeminent fighting force in Yugoslavia under the federal government’s control. As the new Yugoslav national defense laws in 1974 noted, “The supreme direction and command of the armed forces ensures the unity and inseparability of the armed forces and the armed struggle.” Important for the JNA’s high command, the president of the federation stood as the “Supreme Commander of the armed forces.” Reform centralized the command structure of the JNA and concentrated the armed forces in Belgrade rather than distributing them to regional centers. Because of the profound ideological underpinnings of the Titoist system based on reform and a desire to retain a semblance of popular participation in government activities, the reorganization did not eliminate the TDF; rather, restructuring had streamlined the structure and introduced a series of small solutions to work over time. JNA officers eagerly took on the dual role of commanding the JNA and the TDF, leaving the TDF without a forceful administration of its own. Even for such simple things as obtaining rifles or ammunition for practice, TDF units

needed to obtain permission from JNA authorities. Yet, the popular notion of defense remained as constitutional designers reaffirmed total participation during wartime, because as Article 172 stated, “The defense of the country shall be the inviolable and inalienable right and the supreme duty and honor of every citizen.” Reforms to unify people behind a partisan-concept of self-defense failed, though, to address basic issues that allowed the TDF to operate as a semi-parallel military institution. The constitution clearly laid out the role of national defense, in terms of the “right and duty of the communes, autonomous provinces and the republics” to organize and direct “national defense.” While this organization of total national defense fell under the JNA’s command structure, in practice, leaders allotted the burden to the individual territorial units. Emphasizing this dilemma, the constitution noted that the federal army was the “common armed force of all the nations and nationalities and of all the working people and citizens,” but it stood alongside the “territorial defense, as the broadest form of organized total national armed resistance.” While the JNA was supreme, the necessity

61. Article 172, Ustav Socijaličke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, p. 96. “Obrana zemlje je nepovredivo i neotuđivo te najviša dužnost i čast svakog građanina.”

62. Article 239, Ustav Socijaličke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, p. 113. “Pravo i dužnost općina, autonomih pokrajina, republika odnosno drugih društveno-političkih zajednica da u skladu sa sistemom narodne obrane svaka na svojem teritoriju uređuje i organizira narodnu obranu i da rukovodi teritorijalom obranom, civilnom zaštitom te drugim pripremama za obranu zemlje, a u slučaju napada na zemlju – da organizira općenarodni otpor i njime rukovodi.”

of the TDF, according to Yugoslav theory, made it such that the reform affected broader social issues. The ability of all people to participate leveled the so-called boundaries that formerly separated so-called important and ordinary people and continued the government’s program to destroy nationalism—the army simply represented a traditional melting pot and leaders hoped for success to go beyond the army and into broader society.

Political reforms that came with the 1974 Constitution further secured the JNA a position within the LCY Central Committee. At the federal level, each republic and autonomous province had a vote in the Central Committee, but the 1974 Constitution created a ninth member—the army. Giving a greater voice to the 100,000 LCY members in the army, this move further solidified the two institutions and brought an increased military presence within the visible operations of the federal government.64 Despite increased political influence, all constitutions forbid army interference in the political life of the state by positioning it as a purely defensive organization. Nonetheless, the idea of bringing the army and the party closer together simply made sense; after all, the “high political” and “patriotic consciousness” that had grown up during World War II supposedly reinforced the unity of the people behind the tenacity of the armed forces.65

The National Defense Laws also revised an overall change in the civil-military

relationship. 66 These 1974 reforms culminated in a new basis for future army intervention in maintaining the regime and lent further legitimacy to both the LCY and the JNA. Thus, the 1974 Constitution legitimated Tito’s use of force to quell domestic opponents to the regime.

**CRISIS AGAIN: CROATIAN SPRING, 1971**

During World War II, Tito and his closest advisors contemplated what a multiethnic communist-led Yugoslavia would look like and their vision increasingly rested on a strong, meaningful legal framework. Each successive Yugoslav constitution dealt in depth with issues such as political autonomy, ethnic representation, and various cultural issues. The law clearly stood on the side of multi-ethnicity; to that end, any form of national injustice or incitement of hatred was unconstitutional and punishable under the law. 67 Having a legal outlet to punish offenders guilty of ethnic chauvinism meant that

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66. See Roberts, Nations, p. 180. “Regarding the question of who comprised the armed forces required the 1974 National Defense law writers to define combatants along the following terms: The armed forces of Yugoslavia comprise the Yugoslav People’s Army and territorial defence. Every citizen who is involved in defence against the aggressor with arms or in any other way is a member of the armed forces.” The first section came from the 1969 National Defense Law but remained, while the 1974 law strengthened the second section to the prior notation: “participates in an organized manner with arms in hand.”

67. See Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, pp. 176–77. “Citizens shall be guaranteed the right to opt for a nation or nationality and to express their national culture, and also the right to the free use of their language and alphabet. No citizen shall be obliged to state to which nation or nationality he belongs, nor to opt for any one of the nations or nationalities. Propagating or practicing national inequality, and any incitement of national, racial or religious hatred and intolerance shall be unconstitutional and punishable.” While this is from the 1974 Constitution, laws before this protected the national identity of all Yugoslavs and made ethnically charged slander or violence punishable in court.
Tito’s state fully embraced a carrot-and-stick approach to solving its perceived ethnic problem.

Despite broad legal protection, some inter-ethnic tensions remained. The largest challenge had occurred in 1971, when emotions erupted in Croatia growing out of largely cultural disputes. The leading Croatian cultural organization, Matica Hrvatska, published a manifesto in 1967, which demanded changes in the federal constitution to more forcefully protect the cultural values of individuals within Yugoslavia. Several literary scholars in Zagreb continued to emphasize that their particular version of the common Serbo–Croatian idiom needed reinforcement in the face of a more dominant Serbian dialect propagated at the federal level. The cultural organization’s demands eventually came in the form of a document entitled, “Declaration on the Name and Position of the Croatian Literary Language,” which asked for an affirmation of Croatian culture within the state’s legal framework. From 1967 until 1971, the voices on behalf of a greater Croatian voice continued to rise and finally erupted into a broad-based challenge to Tito’s system.

During the last half of 1971, this Croatian Spring represented the first potentially successful domestic challenge to Tito’s government since he had consolidated power in the wake of World War II. Despite the state’s inclusive stance and legal safeguards against the misuse of power, a sensitivity to abuse or alleged injustice pushed events into the political sphere. Demands transcended cultural lines and included economic grievances to the list of complaints because, as Croatia grew wealthier, an increasing

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number of Croats became reluctant to continue to fund economic growth in the less-developed areas of Yugoslavia, such as Macedonia and Kosovo. On many fronts, people rejected this argument as chauvinistic and selfish and recognized that it went against how Tito understood the continued economic development of Yugoslavia: Economic growth and cooperation between republics was for Tito “the logical continuation of the present policy of equality among our peoples.” In layman’s terms, Tito outlined his view that as soon as a “finger is pointed at another Republic,” issues went astray and that was “not right, and ought not to be.” To combat these separatist forces, Tito first relied upon the police to deal with individuals who spoke out against the regime. But, because of the powerful potential of a large-scale challenge, the army also took on a powerful role in this conflict. During the summer of 1971, the JNA held maneuvers in the vicinity of Zagreb—as part of one of the largest peacetime armed exercises, called “Sloboda ’71,” or Freedom ’71—and solidified an increased cooperation

69. “JNA – velika škola patriotizma,” Vjesnik, 7 October 1981. “Mi smo višenacionalna žemlja s različitim stupnjem ekonomskog razvoja, pa neprijatelj neprestano pokušava da te čmenice koristi kao nekakve ‘svoje’ dokaze kako se toboz ‘eto na račun njegove nacije razvijaju druge.’” In this passage, Fadil Hoxha, the Kosovar representative to the rotating presidency outlined some of the problems facing Yugoslavia with a focus on how the army is the institution that will uphold the sovereignty of the union. Also see Slobodan Stanković, “Regional Party Congresses in Yugoslavia,” Radio Free Europe Research: RAD Background Report/107 (3 May 1982), p. 4. “Another Kosovo Albanian leader, Nazim Mikulovci, said that “the counterrevolution did not have any influence on the majority of our Albanian workers,” although the Albanian nationalists and irredentists had done their utmost to infiltrate their ranks. Jusuf Zajnulahu said, “Albanian nationalists and irredentists have tried to use economic difficulties and Kosovo’s backwardness for their hostile demands by claiming that Kosovo has been exploited.”

70. See Tito, The Building of Socialism, p. 68.

71. Tito in “Tito’s Winding-up Speech at the LCY Presidium,” Tanjug, 3 December 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 Yugoslav Subject Files I, Croatia Opposition, container number 95.
between Tito and the top JNA leadership. The army’s visible presence made clear that officers were deadly serious in their support for Tito and foreshadowed an even greater role during their commander’s final years in office. I would emphasize too, that this overt show of force by the regime caused opponents of the regime to surface since “Sloboda ‘71” so clearly provoked and insulted the leadership in Croatia. Tito had recognized that the rhetoric in Croatia grew worse since 1967, and sought to either quell it outright or bring the forces of resistance into the open.

In an anonymous letter from Zagreb directed to the executive bureau of the LCY, a worker complained that “functionaries in this country do not speak in the name of the working class and working man” and that this “socialism is worse than capitalism in

72. See “Povezanost nesvrstane politike i obrane,” Vjesnik, 11 October 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI, Nationalism Croatia and Karin Case [NC&KC], cn. 281. In this article, Colonel–General Viktor Bubanj expressed his high praise on Yugoslavia’s readiness to face armed enemies during the exercises of “Sloboda ’71.” This came at a unique time and centered most of its weight towards the diffusion of any Croatian challenge.

73. On 22 December 1971, the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Partisans/JNA, Tito explained to the audience that, “We are fortunate that we have rescued our army and preserved it, that we have preserved it from the influence of all elements of the class enemy, so that it has remained so united with such a high level of awareness . . . In my view the organization of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in the army will need to rectify some things organizationally, but it is working well . . . There is also the question of the army’s role in preserving the achievements of our revolution . . . Its task primarily is to defend our country from external enemies, but also to defend the achievements of our revolution inside the country, should that become necessary. It cannot be otherwise. I say this though I believe that we have enough forces outside the army to be able to ensure our peaceful development . . . But if it comes to shooting, if we have to defend our achievements, the army too is here.” Cited in Adam Roberts, Nations in Arms: The Theory and Practice of Territorial Defense, (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1976), p. 202; also see Othmar Haberl, Parteioorganisation und die Nationale Frage in Jugoslawien, (Berlin: Osteuropa-Institut, 1976), p. 159. “Gleichzeitig konnte sich Tito für Extremfall auf ein Instrument der Macht unbedingt verlassen, auf die Armee.” (Simultaneously Tito could rely for extreme cases on the instrument of power that really was left on the army.)
which our workers labor three to five times harder.” A Milan Topalović from Mostar wrote to the party declaring that Croats in Hercegovina had acted unfairly and questioned everything, beginning with language, schools, the distribution of apartments, and the allocation of official positions. In addition, another letter mentioned how Serbs in Croatia were in danger from those who sing chauvinistic songs and attack Partisan veterans. To the party, it seemed as if in the late summer and early fall of 1971, all Croats were attacking the system. These complaints gave real meaning to what students had protested at several points since 1968 as they sought to make their voices heard and affect change much as in Western Europe and the United States during this same period. What set the movement in 1971 apart from other student protests was that the Zagreb students wrote in their November resolution that they would only “accept the changes in the sociopolitical system” designed to make Croatia a “sovereign, national state of the Croatian people.” Zagreb’s students also called for their acceptance into the United Nations and for a separate Croatian army. Such a call for a reevaluation of Croatia’s place within Tito’s Yugoslavia crossed the line and guaranteed a stern rebuttal by LCY

76. The Croatian Spring is the general term for all of the events that took place in Croatia during 1971, although most of the fervent protests and nationalist-inspired troubles occurred during the late summer and autumn of that year.
elites and it prompted other students in Yugoslavia—principally in Kosovo—to demand similar anti-Titoist measures.79 At the end of the Croatian Spring, party leader Vladimir Bakarić, warned the Croatian communists, “you should tell us very clearly,” whether or not “we trust you,” or that “we do not trust you.”80 Fear had grown rapidly in the party to a point of no return.

Widespread arrests in Croatia and purges from the Croatian LCY shook the foundations of the regime’s attitude towards stability and their legitimacy; as part of his search for answers and reasoning behind the protests, Tito alluded to the appearance of “foreign interference.”81 For Tito, his entire state-building project lay open for destruction at the hands of “hostile” elements active in Croatia who worked on behalf of multiple actors.82 Desire for an end to Tito’s reign also grew among Croats in the United States at this time. Ohio Senator Robert Taft, Jr. petitioned Henry Kissinger for a meeting with representatives of the National Federation of Croatian–American Republican Clubs in early 1972, because of that group’s continued “frustration” with the Nixon administration’s reactions to the Croatian Spring.83 That organization’s national


82. See “‘Politika’ on the ‘organized Challenge’ to Socialism,” Tanjug, 27 November 1971. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95. “[We are at] that decisive moment when the consciousness of responsibility should strengthen our possibilities to overcome what is imposed on us as alien and to look together for solutions for everything.”

secretary, Joseph Bosiljević, railed against Tito’s “inequitable, multinational” state with its “highly centralized power establishment and its divergent, antagonistic, and disfranchised people.” While he employed rhetoric similar to Tito’s, Bosiljević’s goal of an independent (and, most likely, enlarged) Croatian state ran counter to Tito’s multiethnic project; namely, “nations, like people,” also have a “sense of self direction, and the freedom by which to develop” a range of “creative capacities” and to “assert their cultural identities” to avoid reactionary behavior. Bosiljević’s definition of reactionary revealed the point of departure with Tito. His organization felt remorse at Tito’s actions against so-called freedom-loving Croats and desired that the U.S. government pressure Tito to alter his repressive and multiethnic course.84

Back at home in Croatia, anti-regime propaganda and illegal assembly by students had kept the police in Zagreb busy during the Croatian Spring with almost 200 arrests in just five days—criminal arrests that could lead to detention for “at least five years.”85 Police also rounded up those who were “disturbing order” and “chanting slogans” in support of anti-Titoist forces.86 Of course, the criminal charges and euphemisms such as “hostile propaganda” masked the real nature of these charges as based on nationalism. Bakarić warned in November that in Croatia “an organized nationalistic group” was not extraordinary; instead, it was “crystallizing” and “rising” with each day from the bottom


85. See “Seven Students Arrested in Zagreb Yesterday,” CMD, 17 December 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.

86. See “Six Students Reported Arrested in Croatia,” Reuter/AFP, 21 December 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.
Incidentally, the LCY hoped that Yugoslav society would develop self-management and unity with just such “initiative from below.”

The political grievances of certain Croatian politicians such as Miko Tripalo, Savka Dabčević-Kučar, and Pero Pirker brewed for some months prior to fall 1971—arguably since the Matica Hrvatska began with its critical publications in 1967. What made things different by late 1971, though, was the provocative stance the regime had taken to combat these voices of opposition. Student strikes in late November rocked Croatia, and, to an extent, gave authorities in Ljubljana and Belgrade the impetus to deter protests at institutions there. Tito had spoken out harshly against the actions in Croatia and about the leaders of Croatia, who he saw as fundamentally against “our State,” and in favor of “some other one, of the Pavelić type.” Eventually, with the power of the police and the loyal JNA, the leaders in Croatia reneged on their particularistic views. The student group at the vortex of the movement—at the University of Zagreb—met and


90. Tito in “Tito’s Winding-up Speech at the LCY Presidium,” Tanjug, 3 December 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95. Ante Pavelić was the wartime leader of Croatia, who served as the Nazi puppet and commander of local fascists, generally referred to as Ustaša. This government proceeded during the war to alienate all ethnic groups and set out on a deliberate campaign of genocide against Jews, Roma, and Serbs. For more, see Jozo Tomasevich, War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); and, Fikreta Jelić-Butić, Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941–1945, (Zagreb: Liber, 1977).
formed an initiative committee. This group reaffirmed the Titoist mantra: “any nationalism and counter-revolutionary movement is alien,” because such behavior was “incompatible with socialist aspirations.” The committee also concluded that events had gotten out of control thanks to a student body insufficiently “alert and active to suppress” anti-socialist forces.91

When, in 1971, Tito spoke out that the state had suffered because of a lack of true democracy, the LCY listened. Bakarić noted how Tito saw the events of the Croatian Spring as represented by “people” who were “fighting for something” and while the implementation of law was “very weak,” the party must turn again, to “reform” and “bring the worker from his place of work” into “political life.” This was merely the “beginning of the development of self-management and of the mobilization” of “working people in daily political life”; not, the creation of a “movement with a firm” and unrelenting leadership.92 Even with a profound challenge to the Party’s legitimacy to rule, Tito focused his efforts and believed that the right path relied upon better reforms that could continue to induce more people into believing in the system. While he would vacillate back and forth between conservative action and ongoing reform for a few years following the Croatian Spring, Tito decided on reform when he unveiled the last Yugoslav constitution in 1974. Yugoslav media outlets purported that in principle, the “most dangerous side” of anti-Yugoslavism to appear in society was nationalism. To

92. Vladimir Bakarić in “Bakarić on Tito’s Attitude to the Croatian League,” Tanjug, 7 December 1971. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.
combat this, leaders told the people that they will best learn from history “to understand brotherhood and unity as a sine qua non condition, as the key of all keys, as the solution of all solutions for our survival, as the foundation of our country” and of peace and prosperity. Tito made sure that he equated “‘our’ nationalisms” in all “their variants” with the “ideology of capitalism” as a further means to ground his solution within his Marxist worldview.

**TITO DOCTRINE**

When he confronted the Presidium of the League of Communists in December 1971, Tito stood ready to defend his revolution against all opponents. Confident in his power base but fearful of losing popular legitimacy, Tito returned to the mantra of reform. While in terms of military affairs, the civil-military relationship definitively shifted back to a more centralized character, the progression of the party vis-à-vis self-management and legal-based reform continued, though with a slight pause, unencumbered. Zagreb Radio broadcasted on 4 December 1971, that, “Yugoslavia’s unity is the common interest and responsibility of all Republics,” as a subtle reminder to World War II and the internecine fighting between the ethnic groups. Tito managed to rise above nationalism, despite the slight Serbian demographic advantage among his Partisan fighters, because he fought during the war against the foreign invaders and in the name of brotherhood and unity of

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all peoples. Memories and legacies of the wartime struggle did give Tito credibility as a fighter for all of Yugoslavia and that spirit of unity became central to any working federation. More simply, working together fit within Tito’s broader ideology and strengthened his rule—opting out of that system meant a declaration of war.95

Tito and the LCY had reacted to the Brezhnev Doctrine in the summer of 1968, when it appeared that the Soviet leaders were confident in their strength and might renew verbal attacks or open armed aggression against Yugoslavia. Neither happened, but the events in Prague and the potential precedent set gave Tito’s regime a boost towards bringing reforms closer to the people. The General People’s Defense Law served as one facet of this turn to popular support as a means to deter the Soviet Union and wave the flag for Tito and the continued success of his Yugoslav revolution. But, when the events in Croatia took a turn that called into the question the sovereignty of his state, Tito expressed frustration and dismay. He called out the regime opponents and reevaluated his stance on sovereignty. As the fundamental issue over Croatian demands, the right of sovereignty took on a new level for Tito as he declared, “every republic has its sovereignty and right to safeguard it”; but, “Yugoslavia, in relation to other countries,” has a single “sovereignty as a state, that is, Yugoslav.” This Yugoslav sovereignty consisted of the collective sovereignty of “all the republics.”96 A break from this system meant a challenge to Tito and a challenge to the political status quo. As Brezhnev had

95. See HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.
called out the leaders in Prague on the same accord, Tito had in fact, in 1971, declared his own doctrine—the Tito Doctrine.

CONCLUSION

In former Yugoslavia, the army was one of the most important organizations. The army allowed the state to exist and maintain itself, and, eventually, served as the means of Yugoslavia’s dismemberment. While the LCY had acted as a bonding agent within the post-World War II state’s framework, it also sought to tailor the JNA to the internal as well as external threats confronting the Yugoslav state. That is why the party launched the experiment with Territorial Defense and then backpedaled on its reforms. In the end, these machinations over political prowess hampered the construction of a popular legitimacy. While reform harkened an earnest desire for the army to conform to self-management through the TDF, the reality of power inside Yugoslavia made leaders think twice. Territorial Defense created the necessary deterrent against Soviet action after Czechoslovakia and served to expose more Yugoslavs to the differences latent in the country; but, though, too many people still harbored discontent with the regime and desired change antithetical to Tito’s system. In the end, once the Communist Party abandoned power in 1991, the army and the federal government together sought a new “national” basis for legitimacy, which failed and led to wars of secession. As the Serbian historian, Mile Bjelajac, has summarized: “After the collapse of the LCY, the JNA became the last standard-bearer of Tito’s brand of communism.”

the LCY, the JNA was an empty institution.

The history of Yugoslavia is more complex than any simple evolutionary model of civil-military relations would suggest, but that relationship did play a determining role in the stability and cohesion of the state. The military initially acquiesced in handing over power to Tito’s civil authority during and immediately following the World War II and stood idly by as the socio-economic sphere underwent reform vis-à-vis self-management. Army leaders cooperated in this unending transformation of Yugoslav society partly because they devoutly followed the party’s prescription for success but also because they knew that their institution, the army, was largely immune to internal reform. Leaders changed their mind, though, when Brezhnev sent forces into Czechoslovakia; the result saw how leaders not only embraced ideological reform, but also argued its unifying characteristics for the entire country. Professionalism suffered, as the military grew more and more dependent and involved in the party and state apparatuses. When the army saw the dangers of nationalism in 1971, it promptly sought a return to the status quo ante, when people were less involved in armed defense. Political leaders such as Bakarić noted such hesitation when he asked the Croatian leadership whom they trusted and if they themselves were trustworthy.

Much later, military leaders, acting in place of a powerful Tito, failed to arbitrate successfully between conflicting parties when the country fell apart in 1991 thanks to bungled efforts at armed intervention.98 Additionally, the army’s role in the LCY gave it a dual role in securing the state. Laura Silber’s and Alan Little’s more recent

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interpretation posited that “After 1980, the JNA knew that, along with the League of Communists, it was the glue” that held together Tito’s state. Up to the outbreak of conflict in 1991, the authors argued that “most officers genuinely believed in the multinational union of six Socialist republics, and in ‘bratsvo i jedinstvo’”—brotherhood and unity.\textsuperscript{99} Silber and Little did correctly note this strong bond between the two institutions; overtly used as a mechanism to extinguish separatism in 1971, army officers took their newly defined constitutional role seriously after 1974 and fought hard to maintain their Yugoslavia at all costs.

As a member of the Central Committee, Dobrica Ćosić, had argued that during the 1960s, decentralization led to bureaucratic nationalism and the exaltation of the federal state above the individual Yugoslav citizen. Ćosić claimed that the developmental tendencies of nationalism remained unresolved throughout the Balkans and, if trends continued, the national question “will remain the torment and the preoccupation of generations to come.” He felt that the solution rested with the “democratic forces of socialism,” because if they did not win the final victory, then the Serbian people might seek an “old historic goal and national ideal – the unification of the Serbian people in a single state.” The repercussions of that for Ćosić were clear: “No political imagination is needed to foresee the consequences of such a process.”\textsuperscript{100} Ćosić railed against decentralization as a method towards maintaining Yugoslav legitimacy because he saw a strong state as the antidote to dismemberment and, quite possibly, as a

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\textsuperscript{100} Ćosić in Budding, “Serbian Nationalism,” p. 35.
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means to exaggerate a Serbian presence in his idea of a strong, federal state. Between his vocal stance and an underlying danger in his logic, the LCY muted his voice because it went against Tito’s idea of how to govern a transitional and multiethnic state. In November 1968, the Central Committee dropped him for what its members noted as his anti-decentralization statements and his linkage of decentralization with the bogeyman of Yugoslav politics—nationalism. By the 1970s, though, after the repercussions of the Croatian Spring set in, LCY elites still spoke of decentralization, and, in fact, solidified greater individual rights in the 1974 Constitution; but, at the same time, LCY leaders worked hard to restrain the ill effects of a decentralized state. The realignment of the TDF under the JNA command structure served as an important pillar in that delicate quest to resolve the division between rhetoric and reality, federalism and decentralized confederation. Party members went to great lengths to prove that the state was ready for decentralization and that such moves would make it stronger in the end.

101. See Tito, The Building of Socialism, p. 18. “The State is undeniably necessary to a transitional socialist society. First, it plays an important role in defending the socialist system from the internal and external enemies of socialism. Secondly, when taking over the means of production, under conditions of low capital accumulation, it plays an important role in the concentration and distribution of resources during the first period of development of the socialist economy. The role of the State in this respect is of special importance when economically less developed countries are involved. Thirdly, especially at the beginning, it has an important role in fostering the socialist elements of society and giving them guidance. But, its functions gradually diminish, as society as a whole takes them over.” For a comparison with other Eastern bloc regimes, see Sheldon Anderson, A Cold War in the Soviet Bloc: Polish-East German Relations, 1945–1962, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001), p. 222. Anderson has cited East German leader Ulbricht, in his typical Stalinist style, as having defended the SED’s (East Germany’s Communist Party) tight control over all aspects of East German society to the Polish Embassy in East Berlin in 1958: “When one has a strong police then it is possible to talk about building socialism.”

Within his mantra of reform, ideology served as the single most important foundation for Tito’s system—designed simply to supplant all other notions of individual and collective identity, including nationalism. Manipulating ideology proved dangerous, as these attempts have shown, and while often positive and proactive, elites too often delivered punishment, emphasized jealousy and mistrust, and simply reinforced thinking along ethnic lines. Actions taken during the Croatian Spring unveiled the flaws within the system, as did the failure of the ethnic key to bring about a truly equitable system. Too often, people had excuse to feel disadvantaged as ethnicity brokered promotion and reward rather than merit. While public and frequently popular, the idea of an ethnic key nonetheless brought ethnicity to the forefront of daily politics for many Yugoslavs in the civil service or armed forces at the expense of a common identity and equality. As a way to prescribe solutions to such failures, the regime sponsored symposiums and meetings, including a so-called brotherhood and unity symposium in 1985, in Ivangrad, Montenegro, chaired by former diplomat Mišo Pavićević to deal directly with the crisis of Yugoslav disintegration. Symposium organizers faced difficult questions in trying to forge a positive future for the country. Pavićević said in a summary statement of the meetings, “Switzerland is a multinational confederation, but its system functions

 društveno-politički sadržaj autonomne pokrajine kao elementa federalizma .... Lenjin je autonomiju tražio u celokupnom socijalnom i političkom kontekstu, kulturno-ideološkoj strukturi, u samom shvatanju političkih oblika socijalističke demokratije. Svojevremeno je on, ulazeći u suštini političkih odnosa, govorio da “marksisti ne brane” “pravo na autonomiju”, nego samo autonomiju kao opšti, univerzalni princip demokratske države sa šarenim nacionalnim sastavom, s oš trom razlikom geografskih i drugih uslova. Prema tome, priznavati pravo nacija na autonomiju bilo bi isto tako besmisleno kao i priznavati pravo nacija na federaciju.” This passage talks about some of the major issues involved with greater autonomy given to the constituent republics and declares that federalism is the best solution.
effectively.” But, Yugoslavia was also “multinational and is officially a federation, but this system does not function effectively.” Clearly, something needed fixing but one of the toughest roadblocks to clear was the national spirit that thrived in each of the republics and provinces. Despite trying, the regime failed miserably at solving the problem political elites they recognized as most critical—nationalism. Tito and the LCY thought the country was ready in 1968 to embrace a Yugoslav nationalism; the patriotic outbursts following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia seemed to make that dream a reality in the face of overwhelming aggression from outside the country. The creation of the TDF brought this hope alive as a mechanism to forge a common and inclusive identity but when anti-regime behavior burst forth in 1971 in Croatia, Tito feared a loss of political control, especially in the delicate international environment at the dawn of his last decade in power. As a result, the TDF experiment underwent reform and the most loyal group in Yugoslavia—the JNA officer corps—reemerged as a primary political arbiter.

Part of the problem for Tito rested on his ability to maintain a stable and prosperous system at home; after all, “the question of material resources will be a very important thing,” because with a stronger economy, the country “will get strong in every way,” including in the army. The LCY relied on bringing people into the system and making it function effectively and efficiently as a guarantee for Yugoslavia’s

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independence in the face of broader threats. Leaders saw the solution to the regime’s problems in delivering to the people the promises of prosperity and freedom that the LCY had made—after all, how else could the regime expect people to sacrifice their lives in defense of the state? Tito recognized in 1971 that, “we have promised the working class a lot, and have carried out little.” Furthermore, “we cannot separate the working class according to republics,” because “there is only one working class,” and “it is Yugoslav.”

Tito desperately needed to convince his people just such an idea—that ethnic markers clashed with his Marxist ideology and that he must prevail in order to unite Yugoslavia. All of this talk about economics served as euphemisms for what leaders poured over as the real dilemma—that is, nationality. But dissenting voices in the LCY—in journals such as Praxis—noted that the Yugoslav Communism had made a “fetish of materialism,” with the partial market base of the economy and thus “resurrected

105. See Jovan Đorđević, “The Creation of the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,” in Robert A. Goldwin and Art Kaufman, eds., Constitution Makers on Constitution Making: The Experience of Eight Nations, (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1983), p. 191. Đorđević stated that, “The Constitution of Yugoslavia devotes several provisions, more than any other constitution, to national defense and the armed forces in accordance with the principle that the defense of the country is the right and duty of all citizens and that surrender to an enemy is prohibited”; see Article 238, Ustav Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, p. 113. This article addresses the issue of surrender as tantamount to high treason: “Nitko nema pravo priznati ili potpisati kapitulaciju ni prihvatiti ili priznati okupaciju Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije ili njezina pojedinog dijela. Nitko nema pravo spriječiti građane Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije da se bore protiv neprijatelja koji je napao zemlju. Takvi su akti protuustavni i kažnjavaju se kao teško krivično djelo.” (No one shall have the right to acknowledge or sign an act of capitulation, nor to accept or recognize the occupation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or any of its individual parts. No one shall have the right to prevent citizens of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from fighting against an enemy who has attacked the country. Such acts shall be unconstitutional and punishable as high treason.)

106. Tito in “Tito’s Winding-up Speech at the LCY Presidium,” Tanjug, 3 December 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.
many of the evils of capitalism.” Because the system has failed to deliver material plenty, the party’s emphasis should shift “from production to human relations.”107 Such a damning critique put extra stress on Tito to have his system perform.

The unity and strength of Yugoslavia mattered greatly for the LCY, especially in the early 1970s, when crises seemed ready to explode into chaos and disintegration. Any real problems that might shake Yugoslavia, party members thought, would open up Yugoslavia to outside influences and destroy the entire status quo in Europe.108 “Therefore,” partly leader Nijaz Dizdarević declared, “we are always ready to defend our future,” and that stance has kept aggression at arm’s length.109 Unfortunately, for the army, the politicians tinkered with the system and tried to use international law but to no avail—the party ultimately invited aggression.


CHAPTER FOUR: TITO’S TWILIGHT AND THE FEAR OF UNRAVELING

Fear makes easy the task of diplomats. —John Foster Dulles

My analysis of the evolution of Titoist Yugoslavia focuses on the question of politics and politics in Yugoslavia can be broken down into two primary components—power and fear. Unpacking this definition leads directly to the problem that Yugoslav leaders had always faced; namely, how to reconcile those two forces into a working system that fostered legitimacy. Party leader Krste Crvenkovski knew these two concepts well; he had recognized that the LCY came to rule thanks to individuals who “raised themselves to the heights just by means of this irrational authority. In other words, power on one side and fear on the other.” Power, as Crvenkovski knew, was important because political figures seek to rule—no matter how restricted or unimpeded—over the populace under the government’s jurisdiction. Characteristics of fear remain salient because both a beginning and an end bind every regime, and leaders fear their terminal point of departure. Broken into two parts, this chapter will examine the importance of what happened when power and fear collided and argue that advanced reform of Yugoslavia’s political system—primarily by legal means and dictated by international events—

1. Parts of this chapter have appeared in “The Dynamics of Constitutionalism and Legality in Titoist Yugoslavia,” Hindsight, 1:1 (Spring, 2007), pp. 69–93.


mandated how elites in Belgrade sought to resolve the never-ending quest for legitimacy during Tito’s last decade in power.

One of the primary problems that has plagued Marxist states from the moment Vladimir Ilyich Lenin took power away from Aleksandr Kerenskij’s Provisional Government in October 1917, has been the question of legitimacy and succession; furthermore, only a few leaders—Tito most especially—have appreciated “legitimation,” or the grounding of their rule in legal and historical norms accompanied by related myths and the promise of progress, as the “central challenge” to their rule. In all fairness, the question of legitimate rule arises in nearly all polities, but the socialist states faced a peculiar combination of self-directed criticism and international disdain, especially during the Cold War. As part of a great revolutionary experiment, Marxists sought to prove the universal applicability of their message by promising the people—more precisely the working class—a good quality of life alongside stability and social justice. The promises of material plenty and equality often fell short—even in Yugoslavia—but the hope for a better time always seemed as a motivator for the working class. At the same time, though, Marxists have had to contend always with competition from capitalists in a pluralistic world. In the beginning, lukewarm condemnation followed by armed action against Lenin’s Bolshevik takeover gave way to ambivalence, and even excited anticipation as a relatively large degree of popular appeal for the Soviet

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5. See Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Intervention and the Making of Our Times*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 4. Westad’s overall argument has taken into consideration how the world was affected by the two superpowers in their quest to “prove the universal applicability” of their ideologies.
experiment enthralled observers around the world, who saw something truly novel underway and hoped that humanity would be better off as a result. World War I had only recently challenged the European Enlightenment and left millions questioning the positive aspects of that legacy, including doubting the value of free-market capitalism. Political, cultural, and economic elites around the world thought that Lenin’s Soviet regime might prove Marx right and effectively solve economic injustice and disparity between peoples.

Or, maybe not. Lenin and his successor, Josif Stalin, attempted to refashion society completely according to their interpretation of Marxist dogma, and this quest produced great success and a genuine hope for progress; but, it also exacerbated tremendous pain. We cannot forget the authentic enthusiasm with which Stakhanovite shock workers sought to over-fulfill Stalin’s first Five Year Plan. The Soviet elites were in fact “dizzy with success” by the early 1930s: Stalin’s secret police purged society of enough potential enemies to satisfy any paranoid ruler, successfully intimidating the remainder of the population into submission.\(^6\) Stalin really did have enormous control over his people, and, as a result, he wielded great power and lorded over his subjects.\(^7\)

Stalin accepted the notion of socialism in one country during the interwar period because he recognized, more so than his principal rival, Lev Trotsky, that a world revolution ending in a Soviet victory remained far off in the distance. Even after the

\(^6\) For reference, see J. Stalin “Dizzy with Success,” *Pravda*, 2 March 1930.

\(^7\) The dated, yet powerful work by Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973) has illuminated a glaring critique against the power of ideology and how any system that claims to “solve” the problems of society winds up mobilizing people to unleash death and destruction on unprecedented scales.
great advances following the Soviet victory in World War II, the essential problem that faced the Soviet leadership until its bitter demise was how to prove to the people—or make them accept—that the Soviet system was in fact the best. Stalin preferred simply to act with realistic caution and he succeeded until his death in 1953; whenever his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, tried to mimic Stalin, he typically failed, most blatantly during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1961. Khrushchev’s heir—Leonid Brezhnev—brought coolness back into Soviet diplomacy, but still struggled to find a working, universal solution to the nagging issue of legitimacy. By the 1970s, the mood among political actors in both Moscow and Washington was one of cooperation between the two enemies as a solid solution for global stability and reaffirmation of the post-World War II territorial divide. While working together meant that Brezhnev still had no solution to his other problems, he continued calmly into the future believing that maintaining the status quo was better than any revolution or dramatic alteration of policy.

Soviet diplomatic pressure to draft and sign the agreement that eventually saw fruition in the Helsinki Accords in 1975, which led to the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), personified this inherent legitimacy crisis. Yugoslav dissident and scholar Aleksa Đilas has argued that Helsinki did little to change the reality in Europe at the time and seemed redundant with respect to the mood of détente. Helsinki once again legitimized the postwar boundaries in favor of the Kremlin and solidified, for the entire world, Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe. By so doing, it necessarily reaffirmed the territorial integrity of Tito’s Yugoslavia while also advancing a line of thought familiar to Yugoslav theorists. Tito himself “solemnly declared” that he
considered sovereignty as “binding” for his country, and for all of Yugoslavia’s “neighbours in relations to the existing frontiers.”\(^8\) Đilas has contended that Helsinki grew out of the Soviet fear of internal instability throughout its empire and the results of the 1975 accords, delivered a lasting reassurance of geopolitical legitimacy in place of a real legitimacy among the Soviet and East European populations.\(^9\) I would add to Đilas’ contention that this is precisely the same phenomenon that guided Titoist elites as they realized that the construction of a popular legitimacy would take many more years to build. As a result, they used international treaties and conferences as a crutch to supplement the slow process of fostering a healthy economy and positively transforming society.

The 1970s seemed an ideal time to situate the wider implications of Marxist promises against the realities under actually existing societies. This was a time, despite global economic shocks, when consumer culture and real wealth rose dramatically in the West. Capitalism really was beating socialism by delivering more goods and a higher standard to more people despite high-energy costs. In addition, the technology gap expanded greatly from this time and the challenge facing the leaders in cities such as Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, and even Belgrade, was how to compete against such overwhelming odds and solve the “credibility gap” that plagued all of the Marxist regimes.\(^10\)

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PART I: THE DOMESTIC ARENA

As the revolutionary generation grew old and out of touch, the changes that began to take place in the standards of legitimacy throughout Eastern Europe brought about increased demands for new, quality leadership; instead of opening completely to the next generation, though, many among the ruling elite desperately hoped—perhaps even prayed—for the maintenance of the status quo. Such a scenario applied to the Yugoslavia of the 1970s. As Tito’s death became a more realistic possibility, Yugoslav elites feared that his unifying charisma and power over Yugoslav politics would disappear along with him. While politicos argued at the time that Tito’s spirit would live on and Yugoslavia would not veer from his path, they also took action just in case.11 Because Tito’s death grew nearer with each day, the quest intensified for methods to keep his spirit and state alive; much of that quest outlined by Tito himself. Reform in Yugoslavia increased to a feverish pace but the question remained—what to reform? Tremendous issues faced the country, including high unemployment, rising inflation, and increasingly vocal ethnic particularism; these all intersected with issues such as constitutional legality and increased ideological validation.

As time passed, Tito sought to further cement the state to a legalistic framework that would bind together the peoples of Yugoslavia and bridge any gaps between his

11. In 1976, a Serbian-produced movie came out, featuring what would become a semi-official song, both entitled, Our Oath To You Comrade Tito. At Tito’s memorial center in Belgrade—and at select monuments throughout former Yugoslavia—a small statue reaffirming this oath never to veer from his path stands to this day.
ideology and everyday reality by altering the constitution to once again revisit the
question of how self-management functioned in Yugoslavia and how the party and the
state served as guardians and helpmeets to success. The challenges to Tito’s system had
come and gone; each time, Tito had maneuvered appropriately and avoided a meltdown.
The 1960s ended with Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, while the 1970s began with
domestic unrest in Croatia. While the external challenge posed by the Soviet threat
brought reform to the top of the political agenda, the reforms undertaken dealt largely
with the state of civil-military relations. Soviet action prompted a reevaluation of the
Yugoslav defense sector, whose leadership feared the worst if relations soured to the
point of war. Political figures saw in the army a further vanguard against domestic
unrest; in that spirit, the burden remained on the army leadership to reshape a positive
Yugoslav image. The task of the military increased from simply defense against a Soviet
invasion to quickly educating Yugoslavs towards creating a united front against all
enemies, foreign and domestic. But, at the same time, the divisive student-led rebellions
during the Croatian Spring and their dynamic and atomized nature called into question
how involved the people should be within the defense regime. While the army
commanders and the party saw popular participation in the state as vital for a successful
future, they also worried that the people might not be trustworthy.

Were Yugoslavs, in fact sufficiently signed onto the Titoist experiment? An
affirmative answer to this question by leaders makes it clear why their reformed Marxist
rhetoric sought a more perfect realization of ideological ends using proven (and
legitimating) legal means. Yugoslav elites attempted to broker reform in the 1970s based
on legal fundamentals—principally vis-à-vis constitutional design—as both a guide and as a rational foundation towards constructing a workable, lasting socialist reality. This struggle for popularity was important for Tito at least since the 1948 Cominform critique; but the creation of a *Rechtstaat* as a primary reinforcement for the regime increased dramatically with his inevitable passing from the political scene and the tenuous international situation prior to the Helsinki Accords in 1975. Thus, an examination of the period of Tito’s twilight unveils a scramble for alternatives to his personal charisma, bullying purges, continued successful reform of the self-management system, and the pan-Yugoslav appeal of his brotherhood and unity message. Where army reform left off, constitutionalism and international law became the new vehicles for achieving legitimacy for Tito’s creation.

**THE WORKINGS OF THE EARLY CONSTITUTIONS**

Constitutional rhetoric serves as a useful gauge of how ruling elites sought to reform and preserve their system in Yugoslavia. The development of the three major constitutions intersects with the evolution of political thought among Yugoslav elites. In crafting the 1946 Constitution, Yugoslav elites drew heavily from the Soviet Union, owing to the closeness of the two countries’ ideologies and an assumed amiable post-war relationship. Chief Yugoslav ideologue Edvard Kardelj, architect of that document and

all the other constitutions and amendments, declared in 1946 that, “for us the model was
the Soviet Constitution,” because the Soviet “federation is the most positive example of
the solution of relations between peoples in the history of Mankind.””\textsuperscript{13} Such reverence to
the Soviets by Yugoslav elites was common prior to and shortly after the Tito–Stalin
split, because as the only successful communist state prior to the end of World War II, the
Soviet Union had a god-like status among communists in Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

Like its Soviet counterpart, the 1946 Constitution had two main sections: Having
dealt with the ideological principles, framers understandably entitled the first section
Fundamental Principles, while in the second, they addressed state institutions. Article 1
defined Yugoslavia as a federal people’s union, “republican in form,” comprised of a
“community of peoples equal in rights who, on the basis of the right to self-
determination, including the right of separation, have expressed their will to live
together.”\textsuperscript{14} The federal units included the People’s Republics of Serbia, Croatia,
Montenegro, Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, within the Republic of Serbia, the Autonomous Province of Vojvojdina, and the Autonomous Region of Kosovo-Metohija. The idea that certain peoples had come together and jointly desired to form a federation was nowhere clear since the broader concept of people itself was vague. It remained ambiguous as to whether this idea of the people merely represented the still tiny working class, or, rather, the inhabitants of the particular republics. Furthermore, Yugoslav elites scrutinized the issue of separation but they declared secession impossible because the constitution’s architects incorporated the idea merely in recognition of the eventual withering away of the state—they envisioned that secession would serve as the symbolic precursor to the communist paradise of stateless order.\textsuperscript{15}

After 1948, when the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia parted ways and the Yugoslav party desperately sought its own ideological identity, Tito struggled with his existence outside of the Soviet sphere. It took some time before the Yugoslavs could operate as independent Marxists, and leaders hesitated to complete the removal of the cult of Stalin from Tito’s message. In October 1948, at the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Tito still declared that Yugoslavs were worthy to carry on the great ideas of “Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.”\textsuperscript{16} Soon after, though, the witch-hunt for so-called Cominformists—supporters of Stalin—ensued inside Yugoslavia and ended with a secure

\textsuperscript{15} For the sake of comparison with the 1936 Soviet Constitution, see Aryeh L. Unger, \textit{Constitutional Development in the USSR}, (New York: Pica Press, 1982), pp. 140–158. The relevant Articles include 13 and 22–29.

\textsuperscript{16} „Ћетврти Конгрес СКОЈ-a, 12–14 Октобра, 1948, (Београд, 1948), p. 9. “Орденом Народног хероја својим дјелима у редовима народне омладине потврди још једанпут да је достојна великог повјерења наших народа, да је достојна и даље носити идеје Марска, Енгелса, Лењина и Стаљина.”
and pliant base for Tito. He succeeded in distancing himself from the Soviet leader, and, by the early 1950s, changes to the Soviet-inspired constitution had taken place. The Constitutional Laws of 1953 sought to redefine Yugoslavia as a Marxist state more in line with what Yugoslav elites by then regarded as true Marxism based on a self-managing reality. Ruminations of Yugoslav ideologues about self-management and workers owning the means the production had already taken shape and soon extended into the international arena with nonalignment. Initial reform helped build a new legitimacy for Tito to replace the discredited Soviet one, based upon his clever use of patriotism and successful foreign policy—that is, credits and aid from the West coupled with a potential for expansion as leaders in the emerging Third World. Later, at the dawn of the 1960s, it was clear that the 1946 Constitution, in service but much amended by the laws of 1953, needed complete refashioning in order to keep pace with the widespread reforms.

The development of a new constitution both reflected the many critiques against the Soviet system and Soviet critiques of Yugoslavia. In 1948, the Soviet Union lashed out against Tito’s state as riddled with rampant nationalism alongside a lack of democracy within the Communist Party (LCY)—two things antithetic to communism. Soviet criticisms included describing the Yugoslav police and bureaucracy as arbitrary, and lacking true credibility. Shocked, the Yugoslavs responded by remarking in numerous essays, speeches, and party conferences that the Soviet system based itself on bureaucratic centralism, an argument that would remain in force for the following decades. Yugoslavs argued that the Soviet bureaucracy made the eventual withering

away of the state impossible and thus maintained the dictatorship of the vanguard in perpetuity. Stalin had perversely corrupted the Soviet Union and strengthened rather than weakened the interests of the state. Tito declared much the same when he noted that the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, the secret police (NKVD, later KGB), and the militia had no resemblance to “state machinery which is withering away.” Kardelj went on to emphasize that a great cleavage existed between Soviet rhetoric and reality—a gap that he saw rectified within Yugoslav Marxism. Because his emphasis pointed out the lack of democracy and the huge bureaucratic regime run from the Kremlin, the result for Kardelj and Tito meant that Yugoslavia needed a system structured on many levels with an adequate voice for individuals to reform the system. The most local form of popular representation came at the commune—village or town council—level, where all citizens could share their opinions about government. As leaders highlighted their move towards local politics as profoundly democratic, LCY elites saw this question of political control as “one of the key questions” regarding the socio-political system in Yugoslavia. While few in the party doubted that they would not command authority at the local level, most believed that reaching out to Yugoslavs on a grassroots level would yield a boon to the never-ending reform movement.

Because the initial Yugoslav constitution and state apparatuses mirrored the Soviet example, the criticisms raised by Yugoslav elites such as Kardelj forced LCY

leaders to refashion completely their own system. Self-management triggered the federal state into undertaking significant decentralization and realizing a broad-based mechanism for making the Yugoslav system work long into the future. The party hierarchy retained great power, but virtually the entire society could theoretically respond to local issues according to local norms. Prior to these early reforms, the state was highly centralized and ruled in strict accordance under the principles of the Communist Party. All this began to change when the government ratified the Constitution Laws in 1953, making self-management a fundamental principle of Yugoslav socialism as a means towards distinctive Yugoslav goals that operated under the guidance of the LCY. Self-management did not discard the party—it still reined supreme—but decision-making dispersed and control from the center necessarily weakened. Before such change could take place, further developments regarding self-management needed reinforcement.

In the introduction to the 1963 Constitution, Kardelj noted the “right of every people to self-determination, including the right to secession,” based upon the tremendous “common struggle” during World War II—a significant marker since the war was the foundation of Tito’s legitimacy; he owed his power to his own movement’s success, not to anyone else. Moreover, the constitution clarified that the unification of Yugoslavia was in accord with the people’s “historical aspirations, aware that the further consolidation of their brotherhood and unity” in the “common interest,” and would lead to a realization of the desires “of each people and of all of them together.”

democratic community based on the powers of the working people and on self-government.”

This description tied together Tito’s wartime exploits with the idea that everybody in Yugoslavia was better off united and working together than separated into competing nation-states. While self-management took center stage in the unrelenting constitutional reform initiatives, the intention to downplay nationalism was clear. A working class with communist aspirations became the de facto center point of Yugoslav politics that represented the ideal Yugoslav identity because Tito’s worldview should take precedence over all other notions among the people. The leveling of peoples, in the ethnic sense, to a “community of working people” in a broader sense, was also a deliberate tool used by the regime because according to the constitution, the working people commanded greater authority and transcended ethnic boundaries to help build the Yugoslav nation. Yugoslav theorists also felt that in making the party more in touch with the people, internal issues drifted to the margins. Despite this, even a progressive idea such as self-management, which gave people the right to direct their working environment and positively affect change, was subject to the whims of the party after

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23. The text of exactly what constituted self-management is important in understanding this concept and is in Article 9 of the 1963 Constitution. See *Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, pp. 13–14. “Self-management in the working organization shall include in particular the right and duty of the working people … In attaining self-government, the working people in the social-political communities shall decide on the course of economic and social development, on the distribution of the social product, and on the matters of common concern … Any act violating the right to self-management of the working people is unconstitutional.”
they decided to “recognize when to discuss” change and when to issue “polemics” to reform the system.  

In 1963, Kardelj had once again clarified for the Yugoslav community that the main point of reform and progress rested with socialist self-management. The basics of self-management laid out in 1953 meant that people would work to satisfy both the personal and common needs. The role of the party was to invigorate people into this work and this meant continued development of socio-political relations. As the prime mover and ideological guide inside Yugoslavia, the party retained great importance and operated not as dogmatic police but as a yardstick of progress, though, oftentimes, important people who strayed too far faced removal or prison sentences.  

Veljko Vlahović, a member of the committee for socio-political relations, knew that “reform and reorganization of the League of Communists” was crucial to the proper development of self-management.  

Vlahović confidently went further to note just how the party could achieve such results; they rested upon the “material situation” of people, which had a “significant meaning” because without development in that direction—for the “entire society”—the LCY would be at a grave disadvantage and probably lean towards bureaucratization and centralization as instruments of necessary repression.  


25. For example, Sabrina Ramet has noted in her latest work that the events of the Croatian Spring caused “Tito’s response” to fire “liberal party leaders,” and that others removed in 1972, like Nikezić, “was one of most fateful errors committed by Tito.” Ramet, Three Yugoslavias, p. 5.  


emphasized this path to prosperity as a goal and the Yugoslav economy had grown relatively fast since the 1950s. But the rhetoric needed to keep in line with reality and that, leaders feared, was not happening rapidly enough.

**CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN THE 1970S**

Leaders continued to discuss how the party could best reach people’s needs and make Yugoslavia a more stable and prosperous place. While self-management commanded primary value in 1963, the complementary policy of decentralization of the state apparatuses continued. The host of amendments that sprang forth in the later 1960s, and early 1970s, expressed the desire of the regime to refashion the functioning and role of the state. In 1971, deliberations began about writing a new constitution that would better clarify issues of governance specific to the Yugoslav self-managing system and give even more power to local and regional elites. Most importantly, this last Yugoslav constitution served to establish how a post-Tito system would function. Based on Tito’s conceptions of community, the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 evolved into a system where socialism and social progress were ostensibly inseparable from equality, freedom, and a real promise of material satisfaction. Yugoslav politicians recognized the kind of state needed to govern that community required “multinational, equal, self-managing, and cooperative federalism”—no other framework would suffice.\(^28\) Some scholars have acknowledged this constitution of 1974 as pivotal because it foreshadowed the

dissolution of the federation. While logic for dissolution seems to have strong roots in decentralized and 1974, the tragedy of war in 1991 was avoidable. What is important, though, is to recognize that each constitution adapted to a different way of thinking as time progressed, and served to continue the reformist mindset that set the Titoist regime apart from other Marxist states. The quest for popularity within Marxist-led regimes posed special problems in part because none satisfied the materials demands of the people—including Tito’s regime. Yugoslav party leaders vied for this popularity in other ways, as we have seen with the granting to people a voice in their local affairs, with a broad-based and successful foreign policy, and with a more inclusive role for the armed forces. When each failed to produce lasting results, they turned again to reforming their internal self-managing system and as a way to move past empty rhetoric, they looked to constitutional law as a better way to delineate the relationship between society and the withering away of the state. Political elites in Yugoslavia felt an especially urgent need to appeal to society thanks to the convergence of their isolated position within the Cold War world—particularly as nonalignment’s appeal decreased by the early 1970s—and Tito’s reliance on his popular anti-fascist resistance movement rather than through a Soviet-inspired or directed regime change.

29. See Robert Hayden, *The Beginning of the End of Federal Yugoslavia*, pp. 3–4. Here Hayden claimed that the ‘‘Slovenian amendment crisis’’ of 1989 [w]as the critical step in the disintegration of federal Yugoslavia” (3). Basing this failure on the 1974 Constitution, Hayden declared, “While the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 was certainly unique, the issues of federal structure raised by the failure of this constitutional order are general” (4); also see Robert Hayden, *Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
Having begun the process of catering to the people with programs such as self-management, Yugoslav elites thought that they needed to refashion constantly in response to the changes in society. 30 Even after challenges to the regime from inside, as in 1971 with the Croatian Spring, Tito eventually sided with further reforms. Marko Nikezić believed that the evils of 1971 represented the “consequences of a long-lasting monopoly of the top party and state leadership,” that, when placed with the overall “conservatism,” combined as a prescription for the country unable to fulfill its needs. Instead, he noted that the new policy must be in line with and “approved by the masses of the people” in order to really affect change.31 Just when some in the party thought decentralization and reform had gone too far, leaders like Nikezić reemphasized it as a working policy because the Yugoslav experiment never seemed complete. Tito dismissed Nikezić, though, and sided in the immediate term with party leader Stane Dolanc, who attempted to refocus the debate onto bringing more people into line because it was, for Dolanc, the unruly liberalism that had opened the regime to hostility. The task for the Yugoslav elites, according to Dolanc, was to bring the people into line first and only then proceed down the line of what Nikezić wanted.32 While this flexibility might

30. See Valerie Bunce, in State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945–1992, eds. Melissa K. Bokovoy, Jill A. Irvine, and Carol S. Lilly, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), p. 347. Bunce argued that such popular support explains one reason why Yugoslavia died in the violent manner that it did. While it is logical to assume that popular support would afford the regime freedom of movement, just the opposite was true because the state had to cater to its relatively politicized populace for fear of constantly losing support and creating mini-Titos—republican leaders who could wield local support and affect change. The need to maintain not only a popular regime, but a popular federal government was the utmost priority of the Yugoslav elites.


32. See Zimmerman, Open Borders, p. 47.
have hampered Yugoslavia’s overall survivability, the continued quest, explained by Franc Hočevar of the committee for the question of socio-political relations, as a question of “what must be changed” to improve Yugoslav society—most especially, of course, the regime’s status and ability to govern with the people, not against them.33

When deliberations for the new 1974 Constitution occurred, Yugoslavs emphasized the continued development of their government.34 As deliberations occurred in the years prior about how best to realign the system according to what the people wanted, the issue of openness arose. If the parliament was open, Velimir Stojnić argued along with Hočevar, transparency will spread “across the socio-political organizations” of Yugoslavia and bring about positive change.35 Committee chair Lazar Koliševski reaffirmed this lucidity as real in Yugoslavia when he proudly boasted, “no longer do we have secrets in this country, everyone knows that.”36 While contested views about just what to reform drove the LCY since the late 1960s, it was in the 1970s when these


34. For example see Stipe Šuvar in Othmar Haberl, Parteiorganisation und die Nationale Frage in Jugoslawien, (Berlin: Osteuropa-Institut, 1976), p. 145. “Wenn wir den Fonds unserer Erkenntnisse ... betrachten, müssen wir zum Schluss kommen, dass auch das 1958 verabschiedete Programm des Bundes der Kommunisten Jugoslawiens veraltet ist. Unsere kommunistische Bewegung wird daher möglichst bald ein neues Programm verabschieden müssen, um die Konzeption eines Selbstverwaltungssozialismus bis zum Ende zu entwickeln.” (If we possess the appropriate knowledge ... to look at, we must in the end come, that also in 1958 we said farewell to the program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. Our communist movement will as soon as possible adopt a new program in the spirit of a self-managing socialism until the end of development.)


processes were becoming reality. Elites significantly reorganized the electoral system in response to their desire to draw closer to the people of Yugoslavia and ally them to the regime. Vladimir Mitkov argued that the electoral system needed reform because it represented the “compromises” that the party had made regarding the structure of society at the social, national, and public levels. Instead, Mitkov lobbied for solutions but not all people welcomed a change despite the system’s limitations. Vladimir Bakarić argued that electoral reform was not only unnecessary but also dangerous to the functioning of the state until the people were ready. In anticipation of that time, any further moves that emphasized decentralization might reawaken nationalist feelings according to Bakarić and his supporters. The committee charged with undertaking reform disagreed on principle with Bakarić. While some members agreed that incorrect reform—or “radical reform”—would cause harm to the system, all agreed on the urgency of reform nonetheless. After all, proponents of reform still pointed to continued evolution as the paramount feature of the system and, therefore, could really “compliment and be a component” of the mechanism of socialist self-management and help resolve any conflicts between Yugoslavia’s peoples.

One of the primary pieces of reform that the party functionaries examined and discussed was how a multiparty system might operate in Yugoslavia while retaining the guiding character of the LCY. Some members, such as Lazar Koliševski, thought such a system workable because they could not foresee how any non-LCY policies would be feasible. For Koliševski, “if an enemy, if an opponent with a demagogic position appeared, the LCY would stand opposed and in struggle against demagoguery,” proving that not only could the LCY implement positive reform programs and bring democracy—including the principle of “rotation”—to the people, but, that at every stage of development, the LCY was a self-fixing institution.  

Recognizing that leaders saw an infallibility in the party is critical to understanding the direction that reform took, yet also shows a unshakable confidence in the legitimacy of their rule in Yugoslavia. All that mattered after that was convincing ordinary Yugoslavs to understand the same truth.

When the 1974 Constitution finally came into being after more than two years of deliberation among party members, it affected society in several key areas, including: Socio-economic relations and the system of self-management; the communal and assembly systems; the functions of the federation; the participation and direct responsibility of the republics and autonomous provinces in the exercise of federal functions; and, finally, with respect to the judiciary and constitutional courts.


Constitution-makers sought to clearly outline the realities of self-management, including the importance of abolishing “any kind of monopoly—either private-capitalist or state—of the means of production.” Much as the prior constitution had solidified the role of the worker, the 1974 Constitution claimed outright that, “the socialist social system” of Yugoslavia relied on the “power of the working class and all working people and on relations among people as free and equal producers and creators whose labour serves exclusively for the satisfaction of their personal and common needs.” The League of Communists retained its status as the prime mover through its guiding ideological and political action in order to safeguard and further develop the socialist revolution and its results, but the emphasis on self-management again secured a voice for the ordinary.

Naturally, while democracy became a watchword for elites, the LCY was the only recognized ideological leader and political party. Regarding the important question of nationalism, the 1974 Constitution was clear in Article 170, which stated that any form of national injustice or incitement of hatred was unconstitutional and punishable by law—a pronouncement that only further exacerbated tensions during the 1980s.

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“Citizens shall be guaranteed the right to opt for a nation or nationality and to express their national culture, and also the right to the free use of their language and alphabet. No citizen shall be obliged to state to which nation or nationality he belongs, nor to opt for any one of the nations or nationalities. Propagating or practicing national inequality, and any incitement of national, racial or religious hatred and intolerance shall be unconstitutional and punishable.”
Having clarified issues regarding the entities comprising Yugoslavia, the 1974 Constitution renovated the political landscape by raising the status of Kosovo to that of an autonomous province, giving the increasingly Albanian leadership in Priština a louder voice in the federal system; with that, the unification of peoples seemed complete and catered to both the dominant nations and the biggest nationality groups. Each republic guaranteed its minorities—Serbs in Croatia for instance—the same rights that they would enjoy if they were in the majority. Including Kosovo fit within scheme—on the one hand helping to protect the province’s Serbian minority, while on the other, giving a voice to the Albanian majority at the federal level—and was a major step that worked towards strengthening Tito’s legitimacy among all peoples, no matter how they constructed their national identity. Language in the constitution also coincided with the general movement of state power away from the center to elites on the local and republican levels as part of the broader effort to bring government to the lowest levels and secure a faith and support in the regime as a result.

A rotating presidency was the last significant issue raised by the 1974 Constitution. While Tito already ruled as president for life, the 1970s brought about the urgency of a post-Tito scenario. Language in the 1974 Constitution outlined Tito’s idea of a rotating presidency to include eight members who alternated and shared power among themselves. Within this framework, issues affecting the federation required consensus among all members and thus supposedly guaranteed conflict resolution and reinforced cooperation between peoples, because each republic or province possessed

representation at the presidency. So long as Tito lived, he would preside over the group and manage it according to his vision; but with his death, the rotating system would ease the transition and perpetuate a system whereby nobody could wield total control at the expense of others and repress any group according to individual prerogative.

**AN IMPETUS FOR CHANGE: THE VILLAGE OF KARIN DONJI IN 1971**

It is easy to see the Croatian Spring in broad terms and make equally broad conclusions about its causes and effects, including the movement towards broader reform as outlined in the 1974 Constitution. With that in mind, a closer look at the tensions present in Croatia in 1971 reveals a great deal about the nature of the Yugoslav system that leaders set out to repair. The picturesque and tourist-friendly region of Dalmatia in Croatia has been home to ethnic Serbs for hundreds of years; as a result, Serbian symbols such as monasteries and Orthodox churches dotted the landscape alongside Catholic and typically Croatian monuments. While the Croatian Spring was so powerful that it required Tito’s threat of military force to suppress large-scale anti-regime feelings, local solutions were required to fight specific threats. Events in Zagreb preoccupied intellectuals and elites, and, therefore, took center stage; meanwhile events in villages stole the attention of common folk and represented a far more systematic threat to Tito’s state.

The small village of Karin Donji fell under the jurisdiction of the Zadar-Benkovac-Obravac opština, or administrative region, and a mixed constituency of Serbs and Croats called the area home; but, on 2 August 1971, tension there reached a level of violence. Reports of the incident described a small group of ethnic Croatian villagers
from nearby Pridraga, but led by a student from Zagreb named Branko Perica, walking down the village road singing “chauvinist songs,” thus potentially inflaming tensions between the peoples in the mixed community. The songs no doubt referred to Croatia’s greatness or harkened back to the Ustaša state of World War II, or likewise defiled the Serbian national heritage. Such actions—the use of sensitive national markers—drew criticism from Tito’s regime since the beginning; as a result, the government had in place a series of bans against such action. Tito understood well that to focus attention on his state-building project, he needed the undivided attention of everyone in Yugoslavia and thus created legal barriers to inter-ethnic baiting and hostility. The singing from Pridraga to Karin seems not to have aroused local Serbs to respond and seek vengeance, though—no inter-village fighting or even name-calling took place. Violence only occurred when four members of the local police stationed in nearby Benkovac and Obravac happened by and overheard what was certainly alcohol-induced rancor. The police officers—comprised of several Serbs—ordered that the drunken revel cease but the villagers answered with ill words and a flying beer bottle.48

In response to the provocation of the singing Croats and the use of force to resist the police order, the officers employed their clubs and succeeded in tracking down and detaining the drunken men, taking them afterwards to the nearest police facility in Benkovac. When the dust settled, the authorities charged the villagers with “arousing national intolerance, hatred and dissent, obstructing official persons in carrying out their

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official duties, and causing bodily injury” to three officers. In all, some nineteen people were targets of what would become almost an eight-month-long investigation. News of the incident spread fast despite a desire by the police not to have the situation reach popular consumption only to be misunderstood and therefore foster more unrest. As a result, in addition to the arrest and trial of the Croatian villagers, several of the Serbian policemen—they themselves objects of the initial harassment—became subjects of inquiry for misconduct and undue use of physical force. In the end, following a thorough criminal investigation with dozens of interrogations and interviews, four men faced criminal sentences to varying degrees. That process ended a year later and with it came an ease among politicians who had shelved these problems knowing that they had stepped up efforts of party activism to thwart any particularism—from Croats and Serbs alike—by realigning people with the regime and acting as an honest broker between both sides.

The confrontation between the ethnic Croats and the police reveals four critical aspects regarding the national question in Yugoslavia in 1971. First, it is noteworthy that the state authorities had banned the use of national symbols that caused tensions with other groups. This banning encompassed the artistic sphere affecting music, paintings, poems, as well as slogans and demonstrations. Time and again, the publication or public announcement of a potentially infuriating song raised the level of awareness for people in Yugoslavia. Such was the case when the Serbian folk song, “Tamo daleko,”—meaning “Over there,” as an ode to the survivors of the Serbian army and government who

escaped to the island of Crete during World War I—was published in the highly respected Yugoslav weekly, *NIN*, in 1966. An editorial later appeared in the Communist daily, *Borba*, and called the publication of the song infuriating, especially at a sensitive time when Serbian folk music could offend Albanians in Kosovo, not to mention other non-Serbs, who distrusted Serbian territorial aggrandizement. Likewise, telling ethnically biased jokes making fun of other Yugoslavs could land a person in trouble or even in jail just as telling a joke about Tito or the Communist Party. The Titoist regime not only looked poorly upon issues that would raise the ethnic awareness of Yugoslavia’s people, but also used its own set of guidelines and principles as a way to frame the case. After all, party functionaries described the “basic duty of the federation” as to diffuse conflict in a “democratic spirit ““while keeping the line of progress and in the interest of the whole community.” Politicians reduced their fears of resurgent nationalism by conflating it with anti-socialist propaganda by people potentially hostile to the regime. Adherence to exclusive nationalism not only likely drove a wedge between Yugoslavia’s peoples but also directly challenged the state and its ideals. The Titoist worldview tolerated no real competition and if Croats somehow embraced an exclusive Croatian

50. Dobrivoje Radosavljević in *Borba*, 12 October 1966, p. 6. HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI, Nationality 1966–69 [N 66–69], cn. 283. The concerned writer claimed that the “transfer of a song from different times and other condition into the present conditions and the fact that it is made topical mean nothing else but a challenge against the equality of Shiptars [Albanians] in Kosovo;” and, furthermore, that “this publication is objectively an attempt at encouraging the nationalistic and chauvinist tendencies in our society.”

51. The author has heard first-hand from at least one former citizen of Yugoslavia that after telling a joke that portrayed Tito as a humorous character to a colleague, an investigation followed and ended with a six-month jail sentence.

identity—to use Benedict Anderson’s terminology, if they imagined themselves as a larger community of simply Croats and not Croats in Yugoslavia—the state and Tito’s worldview suffered. As a result, news reports and quotes from officials at the time often classified the incident in Karin Donji in terms of anti-socialist behavior, concluding resolutely “a conflict between members of the Croatian and Serbian nationalities is not involved.”

The second critical aspect of this event is that local Croats physically prevented the police with carrying out their official duties. When the officers asked the men to stop their singing, they refused and proceeded to resist arrest. Several of the citizens then fled the scene and the police tracked down the perpetrators; as part of that search, other Croats became involved and “physically obstructed” the officers in their attempts to “obtain information” about the whereabouts of the organizers of the incident. From the perspective of political elites, the fact that no clashes between Croats and Serbs occurred outside of these incidents with the police must have been pivotal in assessing a formal response to the day’s events. Importantly, the Croatian villagers unleashed their hostility against the regime—vis-à-vis the police—and not local Serbs living in the area.

Third, it should be pointed out that while the incident began with drunken rabble-rousing on the part of Croats, Serbs also faced investigation and punishment. As with the aftershocks of the Croatian Spring, when thousands of Croatian communists found

themselves outside of the party, Tito used the events to crack down on what he saw as threats from a faction in the Serbian branch of the party eager to recentralize the state and reinforce Serbian goals at the expense of other national groups. Consequently, both sides suffered criticism and faced penalties. The charges against the police officers of Serbian ethnicity centered on abuse of authority that regional officials no doubt used as a means to alleviate any claim by Croats of unfair penalization. The court investigated three of the four police officers involved, based upon “justified suspicion” that their resort to physical force in detaining the troublemakers had drifted into unprofessional and criminal offenses of “maltreatment and misuse of official function and powers.”

This complex tit-for-tat system attempted to quell anger but also affected people’s attitudes towards the regime, as when a teacher scolds all the children in the yard, but, in fact, only a few deserved reprimanding. We know from the documents of the Karin case that the local authorities investigated and charged Serbs too and that this might have been a result of a larger Croatian demonstration in nearby Zadar, which called on city officials to recognize the need for “protection in their own homeland” of Croats in the face of brutality by Serbs. Such calls for aid by Croats in Zadar emphasized the regime’s sensitivity to ethnic injustice and further justified leaders who meted out punishment to all sides. Tito’s system in fact legitimized a zero-sum mentality when nationalism was involved, and reinforced it—and highlighted and perpetuated it—among Yugoslavia’s ethnic


groups. Tito solidified this sort of thinking but also tried to couch his terms in political rhetoric that equated interethnic mistrust and tension with a “great deal of ideological confusion,” that exists everywhere, and a “lot of it at that.” Tito’s elaborate system of equality only furthered the level of uncertainty when faced with challenges.

The fourth important aspect of this incident shows how young people were at the heart of anti-regime activity; the trial concluded with the mastermind, Zagreb University student Branko Perica, sentenced to six months of imprisonment based on his actions of organizing the singing and then having caused bodily injury to officer Frane Pajić. This sentence was the most severe; the only other Croat from the group sentenced was Dušan Viduka, who faced one year of probation on a suspended sentence of four months imprisonment for “preventing militiamen from doing their duty.” Regarding the police officers, just Dušan Drača faced a suspended sentence equal to that of Viduka for abuse of power; the judges found the other three not guilty. Likewise, the prosecutor dropped the charges against the other men involved in the singing; rather than focus on the nationalist rhetoric, he had chosen to ground his case on abuses of authority or the physical prevention of official duty—easily proven criminal charges—rather than on exclusivist behavior witnessed by no one but those involved. At the same time, though,

58. Tito in “Tito’s Winding-up Speech at the LCY Presidium,” Tanjug, 3 December 1971, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI CO, cn. 95.
as the events in Karin Donji unfolded, other student groups were under severe criticism by state authorities. In nearby Biograd na moru, the regional committee of the League of Communists censured the presidium of students of Croatia, especially the University of Zadar, because of the large number of students from Biograd “studying in that city.”

The committee declared publicly, “communists from Biograd” had “taken a course contrary to that of the League of Communists and the strivings of the Croatian people.”

As a result, the Biograd committee decided to convene a meeting with all students from the area to “thrash out possibly vague questions concerning topical political trends,” as part of a larger effort to destroy localized opposition to the regime.

While confined acts such as in Karin Donji or Biograd na Moru pressured the regime to respond with care but also with severity, proceedings at the national level saw to it that the regime regained the momentum. After having made a series of constitutional amendments ever since 1968, Tito set forth with vigor after the Croatian Spring to construct the final constitution that would terminate forever any of the problems that might further trouble his rule and the rule of his successor. Ironically, many of the more reasonable demands made during the Croatian Spring saw realization in this last Yugoslav constitution.


The repression of nationalist tendencies in favor of a more statist society was an integral, successful feature of Tito’s Yugoslavia. In contrast, many Croatian elites in the LCY advocated decentralization and a continued move towards “market socialism,” or an increased alignment with Western economies. Institutions such as the army overwhelmed and repressed ethnically based challenges but the real goal of Titoist elites rested on the natural development of Yugoslav society that would overcome nationalism. Vladimir Bakarić, chairman of the Croatian League of Communists from 1948–69, pronounced in early 1966 that tension between nationalities was the second most important question in Yugoslavia, surpassed only by economic reforms, but, ominously, “if the battle for the reform and against bureaucratic centralism was not won, it could become question number one. Great tension could lead some republics to think of secession.”64 Such a scenario rested on nationalism, in fact, as the primary opponent to the regime and Tito needed to address the problem with positive action.

In 1971, the Yugoslav Defense Ministry polled officers about what problems they considered as the greatest threat to the army and, by logical extension, Yugoslavia. Rather than expected notions of foreign aggression, respondents cited divisive nationalism and chauvinism as the supreme dangers facing the army. Enemies from within apparently worried the officer corps and forced them to insist on measures that would bring together the various ethnic groups throughout the country—hence the enthusiasm for the use of the army as a vehicle to build unity between peoples, but only under their strict control. Despite the timing of this particular poll at the height of the

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Croatian Spring, its results spoke to a general attitude prevalent among Yugoslav elites during the entire life of Yugoslavia. Broken down by the rank of the respondent, the poll’s results showed how perceptions of nationalism changed across the grades: fifty-four percent of high-ranking officers (major and above), forty percent of low-ranking officers, and forty-seven percent of non-commissioned officers saw nationalism as the greatest danger; only 13.5 percent, ten percent, and 11.7 percent respectively, saw foreign aggression as the greatest danger facing Yugoslavia.65 Fear of domestic upheaval as represented by the Croatian Spring had superseded the potent Soviet threat following the invasion of Czechoslovakia a mere three years prior. The question remained, though, what the regime would, or could, do about that.

WHAT LEGAL REFORM MEANT FOR YUGOSLAVIA

The Yugoslav case is unique among the communist regimes of the time, because a clear movement toward legality and rights built upon a constitutional rhetoric already in place rather than a system of ignoring the law and perpetuating arbitrary and unpopular rule. The early break with the Soviet Union triggered the Yugoslav development of a Rechtstaat, though this process itself was a slow evolution; early constitutions fortified public law as the basis for a popular socialist commonwealth and with successive reform

65. Roberts, Nations, p. 200. Also see A. Ross Johnson, The Role of the Military in Communist Yugoslavia: An Historical Sketch, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1978), pp. 11–12. Johnson has added that, “Seventy-two percent of the “higher officers” thought the national question had been overemphasized in the public discussion of the Constitutional Amendments of 1971.” This is indicative of the kind of downplaying that higher officers wished on the entire issue of nationalism in Yugoslavia. Such public discussion could only but worsen problems in their eyes.
of self-management, the foundation of law in Yugoslavia came closer to reality. This process further severed ties with the Soviet Union and Soviet-dominated states whose leaders sought roughly a long continuance of a dictatorship of the proletariat, administrative rule by the party and its apparatuses, and the maintenance of a strong-state system in place of a popular legitimacy.66 Titoist elites repeatedly compared themselves to the Soviets and they recognized that the Soviet parties “no longer represented the political organization of workers.”67 In contrast, Yugoslavia underwent many changes that freed the judiciary, made the party’s role more in tune with changing ideological realities (adapted as the reform process moved forward), and succeeded in making issues of law more than just rhetoric. Because Yugoslav leaders favored an incremental approach to change, the path towards decentralization, rule of law, and self-management occurred alongside intricate debate and experimentation.

What sets each constitution apart in this respect was the manner in which successive laws sought to decentralize and increase the power of local institutions. Looking at these constitutions shows how legal theory evolved from something that at first sought to separate Tito’s state from Stalin’s in the wake of 1948, to a system whose leaders developed it in earnest as a way to secure their own legitimacy and recognition. Decentralization continually tried to bring the power of the state onto the most local and direct levels to affect change there in line with self-management and a desire for more

67. “Razlika između statute KPJ i statuta SKP (b),” ACSG IX 119, I K.2 45–90, folder 90.
popular representation at each place in government. The federal apparatus, especially after 1974, was to be the glue that kept the union together while allowing the regional units—republics, provinces, and communes respectively—to operate where they best serviced the people.\textsuperscript{68} But, this move was not without controversy. Some members of the central committee argued that the state was not yet strong enough to allow for any thoroughgoing restructuring.

Deliberate rhetoric to downplay troubles and acclaim communist accomplishments existed throughout the Communist world—including in Yugoslavia. Tito’s reliance on the famous brotherhood and unity slogan personified this rhetorical method to avoid answers with abstract concepts. While overused by the regime, the idea of brotherhood and unity was part of a more serious attempt to rein in any dominance by one group over another; almost exclusively, Yugoslavs feared a Serbian predominance in Yugoslavia and tried to avoid such a situation, resulting in what became a divisive nationalism policy.\textsuperscript{69} The experience in Karin Donji in 1971 showed how the regime dealt with nationalism—it avoided recognition of inter-ethnic tensions and instead pushed the idea of anti-regime forces coupled with punishments meted out to all ethnic groups involved as a way to quiet any potential opposition. Nonetheless, while the results may

\textsuperscript{68} See Vladimir Bakarić in \textit{Ustavna Reforma: Saopćenja sa kolokvija na pravnom fakultetu u Zagrebu}, (Zagreb: Centar za aktualni politički studij, 1971), p. 8. Here Bakarić explained the functions of the federation and how it relates to other questions like those of economics.

\textsuperscript{69} See Hondius, \textit{The Yugoslav Community of Nations}, p. 149. He noted that Serbia covered thirty-four percent of all territory while the Serbian population was forty-three percent of the total population (presumably, that figure also counts Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina).
have actually provoked inter-ethnic distrust among Yugoslavs, governing elites understood the benefits of showing impartiality among all groups.

True ethnic equality also stands out as one of the major differences between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia—Russians dominated the USSR and, at times, followed deliberate polices of Russification whereas the Yugoslavs sought to realize a more realistic balance between ethnic groups. Only towards the end of Yugoslavia, and, especially after its demise, did a virulent Serbian cause manifest itself, but in a profoundly exclusivist manner and in a shrunken political entity. Any attempt by a group to control or alter the identity of another group could not happen in Tito’s Yugoslavia, according to the guarantees of the constitution and the precedent of reform that centered on securing a viable and constructive legitimacy for the system. No one mentioned Serbs as a special group; moreover, Tito splintered the Serbian republic into a rump state with two autonomous provinces. As a result, all peoples supposedly shared the same rights and freedoms in Yugoslavia—even non-Slavs such as the Albanian, Hungarian, Italian, and Romanian minorities.

Finally, the role of the party in this movement towards the legal notion of legitimacy demands mention. State leaders had tried ever since the break with Stalin to show how rooted their system was in the peculiar Yugoslav experience. The focus on stalwart independence in the face of a dominant foreign oppressor did not begin with Tito’s resistance after 1948. Serbian folklore emphasizing the Battle of Kosovo where Tsar Lazar chose the heavenly kingdom—death and honor—instead of an earthly

kingdom marked by servitude and prostration to the Ottoman sultan. More modern notions of Slavic resistance to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum in summer 1914 inspired Yugoslavs of all stripes, despite the potential victimization that might result. Showing an earnest desire for unity in purpose—in Tito’s case, the construction of Marxism—furthered along ideas of the real and imagined bonds between the Yugoslav peoples and added to his claim of power.

Tito’s emphasis on self-management also compelled him to make the rule of law in Yugoslav another pillar holding up his system. Even with decentralization, the LCY’s role increased with an eye towards emphasizing commonality and inclusiveness rather than competition and hatred.71 While the communists lost power at the federal level, thanks to decentralization, they retained the monopoly over ideological issues and maintained prominence in creating and shaping foreign policy. As the party devolved power to the republic-based parties where political elites had widespread support, it became clear by the 1970s that a regional party position was more important than a federal one and a regional career yielded greater influence. The introduction of the 1963 Constitution provides a good summary of the party’s important socio-political role

71. See Program Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije: Usvojen na sednom kongresu saveza komunista Jugoslavije, (Beograd: Komunist, 1962), pp. 201–202. “Savez komunista Jugoslavije je organizovana politička snaga radničke klase i radnog naroda Jugoslavije….Savez komunista Jugoslavije se u svojoj delatnosti rukovodi teorijom naučnog socijalizma….Za sprovođenje u život svoje linije Savez komunista se bori političkom i idejnom aktivnošću u svim oblastima društveno-političkog života u svim društvenim organizavijama, organima i ustanovama.” (The League of Communists of Yugoslavia is the organization of political force of the working classes and the working people of Yugoslavia … The League of the Communists of Yugoslavia is with her own activities operating the scientific theory of socialism … For the conveyance in life of our own line, the League of Communists works towards political and ideological activities in our regions of social-political life and in social organizations, organs, and institutions.)
throughout the entire Titoist period. “Under the conditions of the socialist democracy and social self-government,” it was the job of the LCY, because of “its guiding ideological and political work,” to work to “protect and to promote the achievements of the Socialist Revolution and socialist social relations, and especially, to strengthen the socialist social and democratic consciousness of the people.” Framers who designed the system to guide thought that with greater decentralization, the more people would see the benefits of the system and appreciate the intimacy of Yugoslav governance.

As the so-called prime movers in Yugoslav politics, members of the League of Communists desired that all citizens understand and work for the system, but they had a fundamental problem in trying to control people and make them understand the nature of the correct path towards communism. The LCY recognized this intense pressure and tried to emphasize its message among new generations of Yugoslavs. As early as 1958, Yugoslav leaders recognized a lack of enthusiasm among the youth compared with those communists and non-communists alike who survived the brutality of World War II. During 1971, Yugoslavs noted how the “young people” had begun to feel “cheated” and experienced a “complete loss of confidence” in the ruling elite. Milovan Đilas confided to a source for the CIA in 1961 that he felt that Yugoslavia was beset by “real political stagnation,” and that “the young generation doesn’t care about slogans, the party or doctrine.” Young people wanted more “economic development” because “the Americans

are the real hope of the world.” With the worsening of economic issues, a significant strain on the leaders’ self-confidence also hampered progress and emphasized the kind of political stagnation that Đilas had mentioned at the dawn of the 1960s. Nonetheless, top Yugoslav political thinkers such as Edvard Kardelj continued to refashion communism as a working ideology in Yugoslavia to meet new realities, but the most pressing reality was this disappointment in the party at combating economic hardship. Yugoslav leaders noted in a meeting from 1968 that it was imperative for the young people to mobilize alongside members of the LCY because, “every house, every family in Yugoslavia must return to political thought and political sense.”

Towards reforming the state through the party, leaders established several commissions to work out solutions to their most critical problems. One such committee chairman, Albreht Roman of the Committee for Socio-Political System and International Relations, verified the power of the constitution as one of the fundamental cells of the entire political system and government. To buttress the constitutional works, the various LCY committees worked to form “new institutions” that would aid in the functioning of the federation and “profoundly influence” the socio-political system. The committee deliberated over what influence it might exert and if there was a challenge

77. Albreht Roman in “Magnetofonske beleške na sednici Komisije za društveno-politički sistem i međunarodne odnose, 10 February 1975,” ASCG CK SKJ XXIII E K.1 1, p. 4.
78. Mugbil Bejzat in “Magnetofonske beleške na sednici Komisije za društveno-politički sistem i međunarodne odnose, 10 February 1975,” ASCG CK SKJ XXIII E K.1 1, p. 18.
to the regime. National identity took precedence in relation to “our political interest”; Fuad Muhić declared that it was a “problem of togetherness which in some interpretations” pointed to “one multinational structure,” the creation of which could yield a more united populace willing to follow the LCY.\(^79\) Creating that single multiethnic unit was fraught with danger, though.

Foreign observers noticed how young people clung to the latest trends and styles popular in the West, and how—particularly at universities—“the slogans and speeches” praising communism fell on deaf ears.\(^80\) As the late 1960s and early 1970s again brought challenges for Tito’s project in both the domestic and international arenas, the LCY looked with renewed vigor at fixing itself because its leaders feared collapse. The logical result was that the party looked to where it was most successful and influential—the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA).

As the Yugoslav state decentralized with each successive constitution in line with its ideology of communism, the most important state organ was recentralizing. Because of fears following the Brezhnev Doctrine and an aggressive Soviet position, the army succumbed to the reality of squaring off against the Red Army and accepted the de facto predominance of the regionally based Territorial Defense Forces (TDF). But, after 1971, the army leadership managed to gain ground and recentralize because it argued that the people were not yet ready to accept the full responsibilities of national defense. This drive by army elites also neglected the mantra of Yugoslav politics—that is, self-

\(^{79}\) Fuad Muhić in “Magnetofonske beleške na sednici Komisije za društveno-politički sistem i međunacionalne odnose, 10 February 1975,” ASCG CK SKJ XXIII E K.1 1, p. 32.

management. Recentralization continued as a trend until the final months of
Yugoslavia’s existence, when the army even took it upon itself to prepare cautiously for
inter-republic fighting. In the 1980s, the army high command had begun a series of
reorganization plans named Jedinstvo or unity. These operations re-allocated military
forces to the re-drawn districts to the disadvantage of Slovenia and Croatia—republics
that many Yugoslav political elites feared would attempt to find leverage for more
autonomy within—or, outside of—the state’s framework. The army’s own ethnic
imbalance might have played a role in this phenomenon having fit within the greater
trend of a Serbian dominance of the armed forces and the mistrust of potential
separatists. Army leaders sought to reign in the TDF and ensure the hegemony of the
JNA within the federal state, according to the strict rules of and in the name of the
LCY—the same LCY that operated towards decentralization and self-management in
civil society. As the final opportunity under Tito’s guiding hand to clarify the state and
its communist goals for society, though, his system—as laid out in 1974—ultimately
rested on the situation outside of Yugoslavia and the relations between the superpower
blocs.

PART II: SECURITY IN THE POST-1968 WORLD

Long before Chancellor Willy Brandt of Germany unveiled his Ostpolitik—engagement

81. For more see Davor Marijan, “‘Jedinstvo’—posljednji ustroj JNA,”
82. See Robert Niebuhr, “Death of the Yugoslav People’s Army and the Wars of Succession,”
with the Soviets and East Germans as part of an Eastern Policy—in the 1960s, and before a mood of détente in the early 1970s brought about the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Soviets, like the Yugoslavs, strove for international recognition. Soviet actions against Czechoslovakia in 1968 questioned the legitimacy emanating from the Kremlin and placed the Soviet Union in a delicate international position. The repression of the Prague Spring brought criticism from the nearby Yugoslavs and made the Chinese increasingly wary of their northern neighbor even more than before, fueling even greater hostility against Moscow.83 Taking advantage of this rift, the shrewd politics of Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon forced the hand of the Soviets in foreign policy and reignited fears of isolation and war. With a new China policy, Nixon took advantage of this rift within the communist world and brought the Soviets back onto the defensive despite their impressive gains in nuclear weapons and growing presence throughout the world. A renewal of Realpolitik between the two superpowers—or three, keeping in mind the power of the Chinese—served to alter dramatically the mood in international relations.

The Soviets asked as early as 1954 for an international conference that would solidify the borders of Europe and finalize the division of Europe into the two zones of authority.84 Kremlin leaders saw such an affirmation of their rule as necessary in light of the internal unrest in many of the Eastern bloc countries. But, neither the United States


84. For more, see Janie Leatherman, From Cold War to Democratic Peace: Third Parties, Peaceful Change, and the OSCE, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), p. 50.
nor its Western partners, took the Soviet overtures at face value and distrusted the intentions of securing the Soviets a guarantee of authority from East Germany to Bulgaria. That these Soviet intentions came to fruition much later appropriately falls under the scheme of linkage among American leaders. With a slow American withdrawal from Vietnam, Kissinger sought to normalize relations with China and then approach the Soviets about disarmament, détente, and press them for concessions as part of the later CSCE agreement. Kissinger’s policies took time, but by the 1972–3, the pressure was significant enough to press for a European agreement. Emphasizing the peaceful settlement of disputes, nonintervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights, and fundamental freedoms—laid out by the Americans as freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief—coupled with self-determination, the CSCE had a fundamental impact for both states and individuals. While Kissinger brought the Soviets into dialogue thanks to events in Asia, what moved forward as détente gave the leaders in Moscow comfort in knowing that the Americans were recognizing their rights in Europe. The key to Europe, though, waited in Berlin.

As soon as Brandt expressed his notion of Ostpolitik, he effectively opened up dialogue between the Germanies and dangled the idea of rapprochement in a larger sense because his policies worked to solve the German problem, recognized by most Europeans and understood by scholar John Freeman as the “focus of incipient East-West military

conflict.” A solution to the German problem came true with Helsinki on the larger state level but it opened up new avenues for discord on a lower level.

When it came time to reassess progress of the Helsinki Accords in 1977, then U.S. national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, saw the broader process of détente as “inevitably challenging Soviet control of Eastern Europe”; as such, any move that drove apart East Europeans from the Soviet Union worked to benefit the United States. What seems to have worked at influencing this—as well as tying directly into the German problem—was the force of nationalism in this process. Why else would East German ruler Erich Honecker have sought to curb interaction between East and West Germans “envisioned in the Basic Treaty,” of the Helsinki Accords? It was clear that the artificial divide of Germany—a divide that separated peoples within other East European countries as well—drew the scorn of average folks; in 1963, lines of West Germans, 730,00 of them, formed for a Christmas pass to visit relatives and friends in East Germany and showed that interaction was paramount in solving the two-state dilemma. Ostpolitik, as engendered by Brandt, had served to normalize the relations and paved the way for Helsinki, but Brandt’s policies always pointed importantly to the “emigration

88. Leatherman, From Cold War, p. 173; See also Mitrovich, Undermining the Kremlin.
Emigration rights had the clear potential to disrupt the entire Eastern bloc and prove the illegitimacy of all the regimes there as people voted with their feet.

While Yugoslav leaders influenced little in this larger peace process, they did have a lot at stake regarding the outcomes. One of the most important aspects of Yugoslavia’s foreign policy for leaders in Belgrade was that they considered the unity of their country to be a key element in European security. The Cold War system had made a European conflict—any conflict—potentially earth shattering and Yugoslavs knew that no matter what side they chose, if any, they would suffer invasion. Tito told Khrushchev in 1955 that he believed “the question of resolving the German question is closely bound with the question of European security at the same time.” \(^\text{92}\) While Tito, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev all recognized the centrality of solving the status of Germany in order to achieve a lasting peace, they also knew that more was at stake. Party leaders understood their limitations but still acted with caution regarding the enforcement of the Brezhnev Doctrine; LCY executive bureau member Stane Dolanc stressed that “the whole world would see it in a positive light if Brezhnev won’t enforce his doctrine on Yugoslavia.” Soviet intentions on the German problem were quite serious and Dolanc saw Brezhnev’s 1971 visit to Yugoslavia as part of the larger European security problem. \(^\text{93}\) The Yugoslav

relationship with the two German states made any compromise difficult. While recognition of East Germany came late after intense prodding by Khrushchev, Tito owed a considerable debt to the West German economic miracle. Not only were the West Germans able to pay reparations, but hordes of Yugoslav workers took part in rebuilding West Germany and, as a result, sent home prodigious amounts of hard currency and alleviated unemployment problems inside Yugoslavia. In the larger sense, Tito’s particular dilemma recognizing both German states while the superpowers haggled over some sort of finality of the German problem paralleled his larger foreign policy dilemma as it dealt with nonalignment.  

By the early 1970s, the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia had stirred Europe and given a renewed sense of urgency to Tito for a strong security regime against external threats. This was part of the realization not just of the vulnerabilities of mounting an adequate defense against the Soviets, but moreover, part of an understanding of the critical strategic position of Yugoslavia. The 1970s opened the way for increased intervention in the Third World by the Soviet Union, the United States, and China. Chinese influence made its presence known throughout Asia, in far-away Africa, and among Tito’s estranged Albanian neighbors. Because of the delicate situation in the nearby Middle East thanks to hostility against the existence and practices of the Israeli state, combined with the global realization of oil as a strategic commodity, the Cold War superpowers assigned the region great importance. Nijaz Dizdarović expressed his understanding of the heightened Soviet interest in the Balkans as a product of the “geo-

94 See “Tito Between Two Germanies,” 19 January 1957. HU OSA 300–8–3 RRFE/RLRI, cn. 121.
strategic position of the region” and any dramatic change in Yugoslavia, in particular, was an invitation for Soviet aggression. Dizdarević understood that during the events of the Croatian Spring in 1971, the Soviets looked at how best they could benefit by a weakened Yugoslavia; after all, “they have their own interests in our internal situation.”

For the members of the party hierarchy, Yugoslavia represented a pillar of resistance against Soviet designs on the Middle East. While Stane Dolanc and the rest of the executive bureau of the LCY’s Presidium debated the official language to use to describe Brezhnev’s impending visit to Belgrade in 1971, in the end, they pointed out, “Brezhnev’s visit was part of an intensive foreign-policy activity on the part of the USSR, which Brezhnev characterized as an executive ‘program for peace.’” This program of peace, though, came at a sensitive time for the Yugoslavs. With external pressure still visible after Czechoslovakia among certain army and party elites combined with the student protests at major Yugoslav universities, and nationalist-driven riots in Croatia, the LCY decided that it must reinforce the idea that “the existence of Socialist Yugoslavia is in the interests” of all of Europe, because, “as the key to the Balkans” and as part of the European peace process, Yugoslavia must remain strong and intact. Dizdarević stressed that the talks during the visit gave a critical opportunity to emphasize how stability in the Balkans represented an “integral part of the course” shaping the

eventual settlement of security and peace in Europe.⁹⁸ Stevan Doronjski added, “in this process, Yugoslavia serves to stabilize relations in the Balkans”; Dizdarević returned promptly by reaffirming his fear of upsetting the “status quo of Europe.”⁹⁹

Part of Brezhnev’s 1971 visit meant that a new round of talks occurred regarding the questions of Yugoslavia’s place in Europe and the future development of Soviet–Yugoslav relations. While relations between the two countries naturally suffered after Czechoslovakia, the Yugoslavs clearly wanted another vindication of sovereignty and the notion of separate paths. For these reasons, the executive bureau had worked hard to figure out what the proper course for the meetings should take. Buda Šoškić argued, “we would have success if they affirm the position of socialist Yugoslavia as an independent, nonaligned country on a unique path towards building socialism.”¹⁰⁰ Brezhnev essentially made little news to stir up relations and in fact had prompted too much worrisome behavior on the part of Yugoslav leaders, they themselves craving support as events in Croatia had reached crisis level. The recognition of nonalignment as a primary mover in this process also gave the party elites a chance to reflect on the differences between the two systems. Dizdarević returned to the issue of Yugoslavia’s internal stability and delineated how the two systems are different: “we have our system and they have their own system.” What set Yugoslavia apart was that the LCY proceeded from

the “people’s nonalignment” and, therefore, acted in a more democratic way—
supposedly always resting on transparency and openness.101 Speaking more broadly,
Dizdarević confirmed the non-bloc component of the LCY’s view towards security in
Europe and saw that role as critical to acting as a sort of honest broker between all
sides.102 Brezhnev, though, cared little for Yugoslavia’s role as an honest broker and had
a greater international goal in mind with his visit. Even the New York Times reporter
Alfred Friendly, Jr., present in Belgrade during the meetings, noted, “behind the Soviet
smiles,” the Yugoslavs see “only Moscow’s tactics in pursuing its policy of détente with
the West.”103 Détente with the West, of course, became a priority for the Kremlin as
continued problems with Chinese leaders set the stage for a potential American–Chinese
rapprochement. Brezhnev in 1971 was grateful for external recognition and positive
publicity—especially from Tito, the heretic—in the wake of his crackdown against
Czechoslovakia.

IN THE MIDDLE

What kept Tito and his comrades edgy and fearful, even worrying about Brezhnev’s
intentions in 1971, was their perception of internal disruptions. Despite all of the rhetoric
and the real progress from reforms, people still voiced displeasure and opposition to the
regime; this was clear during the Croatian Spring on both the broader level and in

101. Nijaz Dizdarević in “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog bira,” ASCG CK
102. Nijaz Dizdarević in “Magnetofonske beleške i materijal sastanka Izvršnog bira,” ASCG CK
September, 1971, p. 16.
villages like Karin Donji. Tito made it his first priority to continue forward with reform of the constitution to better the roles and rights of citizens and the government; importantly, he also took the opportunity to use the police to quiet adversaries.

The Yugoslav security service (UDB-a) ensured that political enemies of all sorts were kept under control, but repression by Tito’s forces generally was intermittent because it generally reacted to threats both in and outside the LCY. A crisis would arise because of a problematic publication, a dangerous protest, or series of riots prompting Tito to respond by ordering the removal of these people from the spotlight. Such vicissitudes symbolized Tito’s tenure as Yugoslavia’s leader—whether it was relations with the United States or the Soviet Union, treatment (negative or positive) of ethnic groups, or with real or imagined opponents—Tito’s state alternated between carrot and stick methods. During the first half of the 1970s, Tito and Brezhnev enjoyed amicable relations, but the second turned problematic. Tito lashed out rather irrationally with infuriated rage when the Soviets celebrated thirty years of peace after World War II and ignored the Yugoslav theater of operations. While no more than symbolic, the outrage shown by Tito represents how even minor issues potentially worried Yugoslav leaders, as they feared a discredited legitimacy. Tito mocked the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe as a series of “too heavy interferences in the communist countries” that, “can no longer be considered as ‘liberating.’”¹⁰⁴ As a result, the Soviets officially apologized and the issue subsided.

Merely a year later after the Soviet apology, Brezhnev again visited Yugoslavia and the results of this encounter epitomized Tito’s characteristic shifting. Brezhnev had requested a Soviet naval base on the Adriatic but Tito vehemently denied the Soviets access to Yugoslav ports. Meanwhile, Tito ordered UDB-a officers to track down and arrest or harass people associated with fringe groups who might possibly ally with Moscow in any fight against Tito; namely, Cominformists, Croatian nationalists, Serbian army officers, and Macedonian irredentists.¹⁰⁵

Despite such whimsical and irrational use of police power, Tito’s state did try to emphasize positive ideal. The number of incarcerated dissidents or political enemies fluctuated during the entirety of Titoist Yugoslavia, but when the focus on human rights came to Belgrade in 1977—in a scheduled analysis of the Helsinki Accords—Tito surrendered to pressure and released over 200 prisoners in a general amnesty.¹⁰⁶ But this fact did not discolor his standing either at home or abroad; Tito in fact, remained “very popular” in Europe because of his independent position between NATO and the Warsaw Pact and his stance on nonalignment.¹⁰⁷ Popularity among statesmen abroad naturally buoyed his position internally and countered any small to moderate level of police persecution. While the 1960s were the heyday of Tito’s role in making nonalignment a global phenomenon, the unique international position marked by the Non-aligned Movement’s drift into distinctly local, African, and Asian territory failed to curb the

LCY’s enthusiasm for nonalignment; nor did it lessen any interest shown by the United States. American diplomats hoped to set “higher standards” for human rights and take the lead at the Belgrade Conference in 1977 through cooperation with the nonaligned countries.108 Yugoslavs continued to cherish the foreign-policy spectacle: Borba, the Yugoslav daily, unjustifiably argued in 1971, partly because of the recent Croatian Spring, that because of Yugoslavia’s “great international prestige,” through nonalignment, diplomats safeguarded independence. Nonalignment, even after it had largely moved beyond Tito’s goals, still represented for the Yugoslav press a tangible international legitimacy that remained an attractive means to support the regime.109

One thing, though, that emerged from nonalignment’s rhetoric and carried over to larger international venues such as the Helsinki Conference was the issue of sovereignty. When Brezhnev spearheaded the Warsaw Pact’s intervention in Czechoslovakia, he meddled in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation, a nation recognized by both East and West. Yugoslavs everywhere cried that the invasion “raised onto the level of a doctrine governing the relations among socialist countries” and threatened world peace. Proof no sooner came when NATO met in November 1968, and issued explicit warnings, determined to undertake certain military measures to enhance readiness among its members. Večernje Novosti, a Yugoslav daily, mocked the surprise of Warsaw Pact countries at the post-Czechoslovak invasion by insisting that it would have been


“unbelievable” for the “authors of the military occupation of Czechoslovakia” to have had any illusions that their actions of 1968 would not heighten tensions in Europe. While the Yugoslavs feared the destabilizing aspects of Soviet intervention, both blocs also recognized that it was in everyone’s interest to reaffirm the forces of stability. Hinting at where this logic would follow, Secretary of State Dean Rusk had commented in 1968, that “it is impossible for us not to be concerned about what happens to the national independence and sovereignty and integrity” of all European countries. Cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States soon emerged as the path to restore confidence in peace and cooperation. While the Yugoslavs emphasized respect for the Charter of the United Nations (UN), including independence and sovereignty of all countries and the banishment of force in international relations, the superpowers also had such ideals on their front burners.

When the United States and Soviet Union agreed on the terms for a European summit to ease tensions and reaffirm the territorial status quo, the Western negotiators—chief among them Secretary of State Henry Kissinger—successfully lobbied for a so-called third basket consisting of human rights and a freedom of movement for all people. The subsequent meeting in Helsinki outlined a broad plan that gave the Soviets the commitment by the West to uphold in international law the contentious borders created

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111. Secretary of State Dean Rusk in “NATO Commitment Does Not Cover Rumania, Yugoslavia,” UPI, 1 December 1968, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI NATO 67–72, cn. 283.
following Nazi Germany’s defeat in 1945. Furthermore, the summit attempted to ease
tense relations and succeeded in reinforcing the prevailing mood of détente. Such an
international situation drew support from European political leaders because no revisions
could be made to existing borders and, with that, ideas of sovereignty and the call for
non-intervention were solidified as universal—no longer the exclusive domain of
nonalignment. Issues of human rights remained less important for all parties concerned
at Helsinki, but with a relative success in the first two arenas, human rights violations
became the focus of the Belgrade Conference in 1977.

The Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 had dramatically upset the
mood in Belgrade and reawakened a fear of conflict. With a history of both positive and
sour relations between Moscow and Belgrade, people during the 1960s increasingly saw
Tito as a constructive force. The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, though, had
reaffirmed that a grave threat existed in the East, and while Tito never asked for the
support of the West in case the Soviets made designs on Yugoslavia, his middle stance
came under scrutiny as the possibility of war loomed. NATO planners feared that the
Soviets would follow up their intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 with an open threat
to pressure Romanian leaders to admit Soviet troops into that country to participate in
“joint maneuvers” and generally move closer to their Moscow ally.113 Military planners
recognized that pressing Romania and bringing in Soviet troops was a negative blow for
the situation in Europe during 1968, but what NATO—and most certainly Tito—feared
most was the Soviet use of Romania as a launching-pad for an operation against

300–10–2 YSFI NATO 67–72, cn. 283.
Yugoslavia. Austria’s defense ministry issued statements in August 1968 that questioned the extent of Warsaw Pact movements. Without direct intelligence, the Austrians still drew conclusions about an invasion of Romania likely to encounter “no opposition,” from neither the Romanian armed forces nor the West, the latter because they considered Bucharest “within Soviet’s sphere of influence.” The ministry concluded that with Romania under occupation, there was a “strong probability that Yugoslavia would then be taken over.”

Tito made his concerns clear with the statements that emerged from official sources that drew largely on the ideological outlook held by Yugoslav party elites since 1948, including the foreign policy shaped by the principles of nonalignment. Radio Zagreb announced that the Soviet actions as well as NATO’s reaction were “directly touching on the security of Yugoslavia,” partly because the Soviets slapped Tito’s legacy squarely in the face by arguing that he owed his existence to Moscow’s own “existence and strength.” Soviet elites put down Tito when they argued that Yugoslavs would have to “abandon” their independence if not for the Warsaw Pact.

Any doctrine by one of the superpowers that threatened the peace was inherently destabilizing and outright dangerous. Borba reiterated that with the shift in Soviet policy from “member-equality to a thesis of limited sovereignty for all socialist countries,” world leaders needed to find a new balance. The new balance could only come, as

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Yugoslavs saw it, with a determination to respect sovereignty and the integrity of individual states. Tito’s nonalignment mantra—non-intervention in another country’s domestic affairs—took center stage in the wake of the Soviet involvement in Czechoslovakia for international relations in general and for Yugoslav leaders more specifically, who recognized that NATO assurances against further action in Europe “were certainly useful and have the de facto meaning of guarantees” of sovereignty.  

**HELSINKI AND BEYOND**

With the policy of détente, relations normalized between East and West, especially after the global ramifications of America’s new China policy; as a result, both sides benefited from a renewed call for peace. Tito could also breathe easier as the heightened Soviet threat since 1968 seemed over with the agreement at Helsinki. While European leaders could relax and enjoy moments of calm, an issue of contention born at Helsinki increasingly grew important. Admittedly, not a critical priority at the Helsinki meetings, issues of human rights and the free movement of people became talking points for the American and West European negotiating team. Nationalism dominated the logic behind this entire issue; whether people in Eastern Europe desired a unique approach—such as “socialism with a human face” in Czechoslovakia—or how the West envisioned the free movement of peoples. Part of this rhetoric that inspired Western diplomats to seek

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freedom for people to travel rested with the German problem. In an artificially divided nation after World War II, many German families remained stranded from kin networks without the opportunity for reunion. The onus mainly rested on Germans in the Democratic Republic of Germany (DDR) because not only did the Federal Republic (BRD) consider all Germans as BRD citizens, but also because the DDR could not trust that its people would return home. This also applied to ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union who wished to emigrate to the BRD. Moreover, Western views held that Jews from the Soviet Union should have permission to emigrate to Israel or the United States, but other problematic issues over ethnic identity could have potentially upset the peace. Hungarians living mainly in the Slovakia and in Romania, and Germans in Romania, all complicated the issue of where people belonged and thereby directly threatened the working logic of communism—as the ideology that stated a resolution for all ethnic problems. Tito outlined the importance of nationalism with regard to the Helsinki Accords: “national minorities must not be misused for disturbing good-neighbourly relations”; moreover, Tito saw the dangers inherent with the Third Basket, because, “any idea of forcibly moving state frontiers for the purpose of settling minority questions” was alien to his country’s ideology. A logic that involved the movement of peoples could only further aggravate nationalism in Yugoslavia if minorities such as Hungarians voiced demands for union with Hungary and compromised cooperation with their neighboring Croats and Serbs.

At Helsinki, the Soviet Union accepted this idea of human rights as encompassing the freedom to choose a place of residence, but, by 1977, the leaders in Eastern Europe argued that human rights, as emphasized in the Helsinki Accords, contradicted the ban—as laid out in the same document—on interference in the internal affairs of any other nation. A communiqué following a meeting in Sofia, in 1977 leveled criticism against the “imperialist circles” in the West who were merely using human rights as a vehicle to undermine the regimes and systems in Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union followed up soon after, by defining what “human rights” really meant and determined that the right to work, free medical care, free education, and old-age pensions were critical. None of these existed in the capitalist West, where a “tiny clique” supposedly reaped “huge profits” and wielded “enormous power” as part of the larger “inferno for the working class.”

Western leaders naturally disagreed. Belgrade, though, once again became a center for international activity, as the Helsinki Accords underwent review in 1977, by a multinational delegation in the Yugoslav capital. This would be Yugoslavia’s last major international event until 1980, when Tito died and funeral services drew hundreds of world leaders for mourning. When Secretary of State Cyrus Vance placed enormous emphasis on the issue of human rights and argued that “the freer flow of people and ideas” was critical “to long-term security and cooperation,” he put pressure on the Soviets. Vance argued that Warsaw Pact countries needed to understand that travel or emigration to the West was not a “privilege to be granted or refused by the state rather

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than as a matter of personal choice.”123 The Yugoslav government had accepted travel as a necessary tool in obtaining foreign currency—vis-à-vis foreign tourists or remittances from Yugoslav workers abroad—but it also felt strained by the repercussions of migration; might Yugoslavia lose more talented people to the West or would opponents of the regime join forces with diasporas and thwart Yugoslav policy overseas?

Furthermore, part of a freer flow of people meant a freedom of the press that naturally stood in opposition to the closed regimes of the Soviet bloc. American senator Claiborne Pell assumed that the Soviets would take the chance to avoid questions of “basket three” and instead, “move into other things, such as general conference, of a broad and unspecific nature.”124 Brezhnev did indeed take that tack, having focused his attention on the “continuing process of détente,” that he saw as more important than human rights, especially considering the West’s viewpoint and the recognized danger that this clause had in terms of the internal stability throughout Eastern Europe.125 This led to a mixed attitude regarding the Belgrade Conference, one where the West was confident for progress, but leery that “a great many things have not” yet been done.126

When the Belgrade Conference got underway, the Western delegation made a point of assuring that human rights would be the main issue because people in the West


were “thoroughly tired of having their hopes raised and then shattered by empty words and unfulfilled pledges.”127 One aspect of this hopeful Western attitude manifested itself with a delegation of fifteen visitors who lobbied on behalf of Soviet Jews; the result for those fifteen was ironic—arrest, ostensibly because they abused their visas for Yugoslavia.128 Such treatment to contain opposition groups or other troublemakers kept the focus on the abuses of the Tito government and undermined his other positive attempts of reform, which included increasing freedom for the press and for freer speech. As the host nation of an event that sought to improve human rights, the negative publicity that began for the Yugoslav government remained as a number of political prisoners remained in captivity even after the conference began amid rumors of a general amnesty. One such case included a Yugoslav judge, Franc Miklavčić, arrested in his own courtroom in late 1976, after UDB-a officers read his diary and concluded that he had “expressed a belief in political pluralism rather than Communism.”129 Sentenced to six years in prison for his apparent opposition to Tito’s reform regime, Miklavčić joined over 500 comrades awaiting the end of their terms in prison. Yugoslav leaders eventually pardoned 200 political prisoners in 1977, but the issue of how a supposedly legitimate regime functioned alongside hundreds, if not thousands, of political victims remained a poignant reminder of how true popular support eluded Tito’s Marxist system.

In the end, Helsinki’s third basket, which dealt with human rights, was both a conservative and a radical document.\textsuperscript{130} Conservative in its reaffirmation of basic principles from the UN Charter including sovereign equality, no threat or use of force between nations, inviolability of frontiers, peaceful settlement of disputes, and nonintervention in the internal affairs of another state.\textsuperscript{131} The settlement put to rest any claims for revenge or hopes for territorial aggrandizement in Europe; but it also raised the specter of doubt over what intervention in another state meant.\textsuperscript{132} President Gerald Ford acknowledged that when he signed the final act at Helsinki, he declared, “our peoples will be watching and measuring our progress,” because it was critical that these “noble sentiments” became reality. To that end, Ford saw the OSCE as the vehicle to measure the gains of freedom, but also stated that it was not his purpose to “interfere in the domestic affairs of others.”\textsuperscript{133} The behavior of a government against its own citizens—

\textsuperscript{130} See Candis Agnone, “Helsinki Accord Important to U.S. Policy, Fascell Says,” USIS, 9 December 1976, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI ESH, cn. 148.  Agnone quoted Congressman Fascell as noting the significance of the third basket of the Helsinki Accords: “he has ‘no doubt’ that human rights, or those questions contained in basket three of the accord, ‘have achieved a level of discussion and legitimacy in international politics that heretofore did not exist.’”  This legitimizing of human rights would fundamentally change international relations as the conservative aspects of Helsinki’s first and second baskets of sovereignty and non-intervention could slowly erode away. The Soviets argued just this case; I argue the issue of Kosovo’s final status and the recognition of unilateral independence (as of 2008) occurred thanks to this blurring of the conservative and radical.  For more also see, “Excerpts of White House Report on Helsinki Cooperation in Europe,” 9 December 1976, HU OSA 300–10–2 YSFI ESH, cn. 148.  This report noted, “the final act is not a legal document but rather an expression of political will. Nonetheless, we do not accept the argument of some Eastern states that implementation can only occur if there are supplementary legal undertakings.  Nor can we accept that behavior contrary to the act’s undertakings is acceptable, even in the absence of such legal undertakings.”


whether freedom of speech, religion, or movement—though, suddenly became a legitimate international concern and stood poised to upset the delicate and unfinished national question active east of Winston Churchill’s Iron Curtain. This opened up a line of thought that both reassured and scared Tito. After all, the problems facing Yugoslavia not only included the fear of a foreign invasion, but most importantly, a domestic challenge that would overturn the regime. It was with this notion that Tito hoped the international situation after the Belgrade Conference would help his state transition peacefully after he died. This same anxiety made the standing policy apt: “After Tito—Tito.”

CONCLUSION: AFTER TITO—TITO

The final decade of Tito’s rule called into question how the post-Tito system would function. As Tito aged, he recognized the need to ensure his successors would inherit a legitimate and well-functioning political system. Two things guided Yugoslavia during the 1970s: Internal constitutional reform and the external focus on upholding ideas Tito had championed since the early 1950s. Yugoslav political reform took the events of the 1960s and early 1970s, and tried to home in on the legal means to make the regime unbreakable following Tito’s death. Drafters emphasized self-management and decentralization of the federal system and set up a rotating presidency as part of a larger

134. This slogan emerged at the time of Tito’s death to symbolize that the country would not veer from his directives. For more, see Rajko Muršić, “The Yugoslav Dark Side of Humanity: A View from a Slovene Blind Spot,” in Neighbors at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity, Joel Halpern and David A. Kideckel, eds., (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), pp. 56–81.
power-sharing method to maintain equality between all ethnic groups and regional political entities. Kosovo’s status grew from autonomous region to autonomous province and thus the Kosovar leaders gained a voice in the federal decision-making process. Likewise, the federal system brought the army closer—this in response to both the external threat by the Soviets after 1968, and a renewed spurt of nationalist tensions in Croatia in 1971.

The general mood in the international environment also brought great hope for Yugoslavia’s future. No major international conflicts arose to trouble Tito during his last years in power; in contrast, the Soviet Union and the United States met in 1975, in Helsinki, and reaffirmed the territorial borders, the sovereignty of states, solidified the mood of détente, and finally repeated the importance of human rights as outlined in the UN Charter. While the human rights aspect drew Yugoslavia back into the spotlight with the hosting of the review of Helsinki’s progress until 1977, the other consequences of Helsinki encouraged Yugoslav leaders. With territorial integrity and sovereignty restated and the status quo upheld by both blocs, Yugoslav leaders relaxed knowing that neither side would recognize external designs and that any moves for secession from Yugoslav republics would be disregarded. Reemphasizing this commitment to Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity in early January 1980, as Tito’s failing health brought about a profound concern for the future of Yugoslavia, Stephen Larrabee noted in a National

Security Council memorandum that the United States government should treat Yugoslavia as a special case and be prepared to “aid Yugoslavia in case of a crisis.”\textsuperscript{136} A telegram from the American Embassy in Belgrade to the secretary of state called on the president for a “further public restatement” of his position to “make certain that the Soviets are aware that” the United States “will react to any Soviet move.”\textsuperscript{137} As a result, in a private letter to Brezhnev, President Jimmy Carter confirmed the view first established by Harry S. Truman that “we and our allies attach the highest importance to the independence, unity and territorial integrity of non-aligned Yugoslavia.”

Furthermore, sensing Tito’s death, Carter wished to confirm to the Yugoslavs “under whatever leadership” that they must be free to choose their own course.\textsuperscript{138} This chapter has shown that while the Yugoslavs used the 1970s to fix what they saw as any final flaws in their internal workings before Tito died, they also tried to manipulate the external situation to their benefit and largely succeeded. Reacting to the dynamic of the time, the Yugoslavs sealed any differences between their system and the other socialist system in Eastern Europe. Proud of their reinforcement of legality in the 1974 constitution, leaders felt confident that the system would function smoothly without Tito, especially after they considered the progress of détente to have upheld the territorial integrity of European states at Helsinki. With both superpowers therefore committed to upholding the current state of affairs, and consistent with rhetoric made popular by

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Yugoslav politicians and theorists since the early 1950s, Tito’s legacy seemingly could live on indefinitely. But, fear still gripped the Yugoslav leadership in anticipation of Tito’s death; Secretary of Defense General Ljubičić, exclaimed that Yugoslavia sat in a “complicated position” between both domestic and international troubles.139 All they could hope for was that the brotherhood and unity of all nations and nationalities in Yugoslavia seemed guaranteed so long as a Titoist ideology supplied it.

CONCLUSIONS: YUGOSLAVIA AND THE LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR

Not a single one of our republics would mean anything if we were not all together. Socialist history of Yugoslavia united also in the future.1
—Josip Broz Tito

To understand the historical significance of how leaders attempted to build legitimacy in Titoist Yugoslavia, the process needs to be situated in the broader history of the twentieth-century. As the century of ideology, the competition over legitimate worldviews defined how leaders both shaped their state’s identities and outlined the nature of alliances. The century began with a profound hope that Enlightenment values would persist indefinitely into the future and that human progress was destined to achieve all things imaginable. World War I brutally called into question this positive outlook on progress and challenged the core values held by people not only in the West, but also throughout the world. The tremendous devastation from the war laid the groundwork for an ideological battle that took on awesome proportions for the remainder of the century. When war raised its ugly head again at the end of the 1930s, thanks primarily to Hitler’s aggression, the provocative power of ideology took on a radical new dimension. The warring parties drew boundaries that were more concrete over what separated “us” versus “them” and made the struggle for survival larger than life. For each side, the world’s freedom was at stake and everything fell into its own intellectual compartment. Fascism’s defeat in 1945 meant that the world was down to two: Democratic market-

capitalism and Marxism. For the wealth of leaders who harnessed political control across the globe for the first time and attempted to fill the political vacuum that followed fascism’s defeat, they all found state building in the post-1945 world unfeasible absent one of the compelling worldviews.

State building in an era of tension shaped the nature of how the governors could govern. Fear over nuclear devastation—especially once the Soviet Union got the bomb—helped form not only government policy in both East and West, but also reinforced popular movements such as the student rebellions of 1968 and the Green Revolution. But the two superpowers eventually worked out a system whereby conflict would be controlled and localized; nuclear holocaust remained in the background while proxy wars in the Third World prevailed over direct confrontation. Nonetheless, the Cold War brought fear to a new height. For Tito, his fragile creation stood on the frontier between East and West; its own divided legacy—torn between the Hapsburgs, the Ottoman Sultans, and, to an extent, the Romanovs—made the Cold War dilemma even greater for him and the people of Yugoslavia. Where would their allegiances fall if World War III set into motion the fateful clash between the superpowers? What hope did Yugoslavs have for a peaceful future and prosperity in a stable environment? Finally, what goals could the regime have pointed to as paramount in their attempt to control the direction of change?

My look at Tito and his creation of Yugoslavia focuses on how power, legitimacy, and ideology intersected to instruct the course of events. Change over time unveils a state wrapped up with modes of dynamism yet forever stuck as a static replica of the
ideologically driven past with the resiliency of a one-party system. The Partisan legacy from the early years of fighting for control of the country during World War II, and then the fateful blow by Stalin when he called into question Tito’s Marxist credentials, instilled profound fear into the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (LCY). Territories that Tito and his comrades fought so hard for became the subject of political dispute after 1948 and the Soviets branded the LCY as falsifiers of Marx and imperialist lackeys, thereby dramatically calling into question the sincerity of Marxism in Yugoslavia and pushing the regime into an ideological abyss. Yugoslav communists had none of that.

Banished from the Soviet camp yet unable and unwilling to abandon their Marxist principles, the Yugoslav elite set about creating something new; but, from the beginning, they recognized that this new system required a legitimate foundation to replace Soviet power from both external and internal sources. That the Yugoslavs found support from the West should come as no surprise given geostrategic realities in Europe; that they desperately clung to Marxism in light of the Cold War’s progression might not be so easy to dismiss. The struggles within the party over the correct direction that it should take brought almost every dilemma into the spotlight for its potentially destabilizing effects, but most crises had little probability of actually affecting change. The fight against divisive nationalism, the continued success and popularity of the party, the educating and inclusive role of the army, and a quest for outside approval together decided the fate of the party and its state. Fear of internal dissension, world war, or a localized European war drove the party down a path of reform that tried to fix every problem and guarantee prosperity and stability for everyone according to tenets of Karl Marx.
Documents show that Tito’s initial problem between the two blocs grew into a profound and serious agent of change in its own right. Yugoslav elites gave birth to a unique ideology and sought to make their interpretation of Marxism genuine and lasting. Constant reform of the party’s role in society and the important nature of civil-military relations helped to guide Tito’s state down the path towards reaching its goals. Manipulating the external situation and using foreign-policy victories to offset domestic troubles, the LCY leadership showed itself as shrewd and pliable. While internal matters troubled the party, members remained confident that their stance would eventually solve all the problems. Domestically, the path to this solution rested, so they thought, on legality and guarantees from the state and seemed to compliment well the legitimacy earned by the regime abroad. Various speeches and conversations by LCY members showed a consensus on these issues as it effected them and their system. Burdened with the hapless job of succeeding in an environment of immense pressure and multi-faceted conflicts, the LCY members who spoke out at committee meetings, in the newspapers, and to other agents, did so with an earnest desire to succeed in the struggle for political mastery, which, for them, also meant socio-economic transformation driven by the messianic desire to convert all Yugoslavs—in brotherhood and unity—to their cause. Scholarship has mistakenly viewed this history as one fraught with unsolvable and age-old ethnic hatreds or as led by men who were inept when it came to political machinations. But the ethnic differences were neither unsolvable nor ancient and the politicians displayed a firm handle on matters and displayed a cognizance and shrewdness that equaled their fellow Cold Warriors. The sources show that the
Yugoslavs failed because of their over-reliance on Marxism and in their misunderstanding over reform in a one-party state; without serious competition, reform cannot hope to prevail no matter how sober the intentions.

Conflicts have historically bound together allegiances and created a unity so that coalitions slowly transformed into permanent groups. Reformers in the top echelons of power in Yugoslavia manipulated conflict and fear to prolong the rule of the LCY. They thought that the unification against a common enemy would permanently glue together Yugoslav society but, such unity, according to sociologist Lewis Coser, “tends to remain on the level of temporary association when it is limited to instrumental ends and temporary, limited purposes.”² This temporal aspect of Yugoslav politics meant that the direction or emphasis constantly changed; reform for the LCY was a spastic effort to reach out in all directions without concretely solving anything. Fear of the common foe was the glue that bound the regime together but it was an adhesive that failed to hold because the definition of what was Yugoslav and what was not constantly eluded the *people of Yugoslavia*. The LCY remained in the hands of World War II-era elites, men who changed reluctantly after 1948, but who nonetheless recognized that change—at least the rhetoric of change—was the only thing possible to prolong their political survival. While the leadership remained conservative, desperate attempts to find progressive solutions to the country’s dilemmas riddled the political landscape. The two forces never reconciled to build a lasting legitimacy.

An aspect of similarity among all twentieth century ideologies was the insistence that nationalism was dead. In the case of fascism, exclusionary rhetoric emphasized the nationalism of one group—Italians or Germans, for example—so much so that no other group mattered. Elaborate racial hierarchies explained the future march of history and with Hitler’s victory, all semblance of difference would disappear as the Untermenschen themselves would wither into oblivion. For Marxists, they understood a history of conflict that would cease because Marx’s system would end all antagonisms between people. The last antagonism to disappear would be class, but Marx was confident from his look at history that while each national group needed to organize to realize their own revolutions, animosity between nationalities would cease as more and more workers united. Finally, it is worth mentioning that American or Western ideology, based on capitalism and opportunity also has contended to solve divisive nationalism. The American dream unites all people, so it goes, gradually tearing off the accoutrements of ethnic identity. While it seems that in the American case, violent nationalism indeed seems far from the political spectrum, the twenty-first century might present unforeseeable challenges that could shake the foundation of America’s ideology much as what befell Marxism in the 1980s and 1990s. What seems ironic is that despite Marx’s insistence on having abolished nationalism in a socialist society, the loss of political control in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia by the communists meant that politics degraded into the ethnic. In the end, many of Yugoslavia’s problems were not ethnic in origin, but the political system never really moved past ethnicity as an identifying

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3. See, for example, Samuel P. Huntington, *Who are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*, (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2005).
marker—indeed, it often emphasized ethnicity and, by the 1980s, politicians seeking an easy path to power ethnicized problems. The image that arose to explain this movement towards ethnicity as one of primordial hatreds rests on shaky foundations; rather, we must recognize that “particular identities (such as ethnic or religious ones) are significant one day and insignificant the next,” depending on the larger economic, historical, political, and other circumstances.⁴

Conflict largely has disappeared from the embattled Yugoslav arena despite the continued debacle over Kosovo’s final status as the last successor state to Tito’s failed creation. Local issues may persist but in the place of wide-scale violence, the European Union (EU), with its inclusive foundations and great wealth, has stumbled into its new role as the primary arbiter in European diplomacy. A united Europe inherited this role as soon as the Soviet Union crumbled, but, at the time, Yugoslavia’s leaders, whether too shortsighted, selfish, or simply indignant of the rapidly changing realities at the end of the Cold War, retreated into a more destructive manipulation of fear instead embracing European institutions. Within each republic, leaders looked inward and played on nationalism to win votes and attain political power with little regard for worldviews or global trends. Politicians argued that multiethnic societies preyed on the weaker or smaller group; therefore, Croats were inherently unsafe in a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia, Serbs were unsafe in an independent Croatia, neither Croats nor Serbs were safe in a Muslim Bosnia-Hercegovina, and so the trend continued. Neighbors turned on each other despite years of peaceful and friendly coexistence because leaders exaggerated

diversity to delineate the exceedingly small differences that really existed between all
groups. The massive evidence of what unfolded during the resulting wars of
dismemberment elucidates not the dangerously provocative attraction of selfish,
exclusive nationalism, but, rather, how fear and emptiness can drive people to extremes.5

After Tito’s death, official Yugoslav channels declared that Tito still ruled—his
spirit would provide the new governing elite with the necessary inspiration. The major
problem that the post-Tito elites could not foresee included the rapid pace of change as
the Cold War ended. But once Mikhail Gorbachev began real reform in the Soviet Union
and backed away from the Brezhnev Doctrine, especially with respect to the East
European satellites, all the accomplishments of détente and the strengthening of the state
vanished as foreign-policy tools for the ruling elite of Yugoslavia. The external
legitimacy they so needed disappeared and the entire Cold War world—including the
nonaligned—came under fire. While Yugoslav elites desperately sought to make their
reform program work and perpetuate their rule, they found out that reforming Marxism
could not solve the inherent dilemmas latent within the ideology. Reform—no matter
how earnest or conscientious the desire—failed, just as socialism more broadly did. In
the end, despite their status outside of the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslav leaders had tied their
fate to a form of Marxism and once Boris Yeltsin outmaneuvered Gorbachev and the

5. The idea of Sigmund Freud’s so-called “narcissism of minor differences” serves as an
interesting point of departure for analyzing relations—before, during, and after the wars of
dismemberment—between Bosnians (Bosniaks, Bosnian-Croats, and Bosnian-Serbs), Croats, and Serbs.
largest Marxist state—the Soviet Union—disintegrated, empty rhetoric governed Yugoslavia until violence filled the void and destroyed the country.⁶

⁶. See Marlise Simons, “Yugoslavia on the Brink,” New York Times, 24 January 1990, p. A11. Simons has quoted Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković, who said, that the “process of disassociating of the two [party and state] has begun. If parties have a real chance to take part in free elections, then everything else is rhetoric.” He was correct.
EPILOGUE: THE TRIUMPH OF FEAR AND LOSS OF LEGITIMACY

However much each of us loves the land of socialism, the USSR, he can in no case love his own country less.¹

—Josip Broz Tito

The national question in Yugoslavia has provoked a great deal of scholarly interest, especially since the devastatingly violent dismemberment of that country during the 1990s. Yugoslav elites had attempted to encourage ethnic inclusiveness, and, in response, instituted legal and social norms for the treatment and rights of the constituent national groups within their federalist, socialist state model. “Brotherhood and unity”—the popular and inclusive slogan defined as “tolerance, solidarity, and a consciousness of unity”—epitomized Tito’s system; that is, a system that actively fostered interethnic cooperation and harmony as part of its broader ideological outlook.² But, after the brutal ethnic wars of the 1990s, scholars have forgotten about Tito’s successes and portrayed Yugoslavia as a problem of nationalism or as part of the larger, “unfinished business of 1918–1921.”³ Not surprisingly, discussions of nationalism in Yugoslavia have centered largely on a negative understanding: That is, scholars either have primarily based their

assumptions on primordialist “ancient hatreds” or have utilized a constructivist model, using a modern mapping of nationalism.  

To too often, the violent death of Yugoslavia has hindered scholars from taking Tito’s failed state seriously and examining just how political elites sought to foster connections between peoples to achieve unity behind the party. In the end, the problems in Yugoslavia between nationalities were not latent within the peoples of Yugoslavia but rather within the ideology that governed them.

**NATIONALISM AND THE WARS OF DISSOLUTION**

Returning to the issue of nationalism in Yugoslavia, we can see how the often profound difference between a nation and a state becomes painfully apparent when states—or institutions that govern based upon founding myths, ideological underpinnings, or bureaucratic systems—break down and leave their citizens scrambling for new guiding principles. Political theorist Miroslav Hroch has argued that this process leaves the nation as the “ultimate guarantee” for citizens who align themselves accordingly in a political vacuum.

In former socialist Eastern Europe, states suffered from, among other things, the “economy of shortage” in which, “ethnicity, like kinship, and other networks of potential reciprocity or patronage” already existed by the 1990s, because the respective

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4. Primordialism, according to Dovile Budryte, has interpreted nationalism as “‘an ideological movement for the attaining and maintaining identity, unity and autonomy on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation.’ In other words, nationalism is a social movement, but it is also an instrument of transmission of the myths, traditions, language, and historical memory that constitute and help maintain the ‘feelings of oneness,’ or national identity.” *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States*, (London: Ashgate, 1995), p. 16.

states failed to circumvent nationality as a salient force—or, in Tito’s case, tried at every turn to emphasize the non-emphasis on nationalism.⁶ In addition, Tito’s political system attempted at one point to move past particular ethnic identities and create a single Yugoslav identity for all. The malfunctioning of this nationality policy helped to exacerbate a situation that already undermined the power of the united Yugoslav state so long as it existed, and became outright dangerous once Titoist elites surrendered power.

One of the central questions then facing politicians following the dramatic realignment of peoples and ideologies following World War II, was could nationalism be controlled or used potentially to bolster the legitimacy of new states. American political scientist Jack Snyder has written that two types of nationalisms—civic and ethnic—arise under different circumstances and naturally, have different consequences. Civic nationalism—oftentimes seen as benign—“normally appears in well-institutionalized democracies, whereas ethnic nationalism depends on culture for support and therefore fosters group identification.” Furthermore, in line with Hroch, Synder has determined that ethnic nationalism “predominates when institutions collapse,” because those institutions fail at “fulfilling people’s basic needs” without other satisfactory alternatives readily available.⁷

Having admitted that his argument might be too pessimistic, Snyder has qualified his point to emphasize the “turbulent transition to democracy” in a state lacking foundational institutions; this supports my contention that within strong states—or those

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with confident leaders such as Tito—a lack of institutional guarantees can be substituted with merely the promise of hope and the backing of arms, but such illegitimate systems cannot last forever.8 Snyder’s theory works best when analyzing a state that is in political upheaval and thus apt to accentuate tensions while insufficiently equipped to contain them. Scholar Adrian Jones’ theory of nationalism agrees fundamentally and he has recognized the root of the problem in what he has called “political culture.” Having compared the transitioning states of the former Soviet bloc with the United States, Japan, and parts of Western Europe—states whose modern existence encourages stability and relatively prosperity—Jones has pointed to the trait common to all transitioning states as “turmoil at the centre,” which allows peripheral groups to advance their agenda.9 But does state failure or far-reaching political refashioning necessarily lead to ethnic conflict?

It seems that only under the right circumstances—in dispersed ethnic communities or perceived unequal multiethnic societies—can nationalism turn into conflict in states experiencing fundamental (i.e., ideological) transition.10 In a similar vein, the historian Benedict Anderson has called for us to recognize that the “gauge and emblem” of national freedom is the “sovereign state” and it seems, Yugoslavia was no exception.11 Furthermore, that nation “is always conceived as a deep, horizontal

10. In a similar way, ethnic war is no different from any other war, whereby the latter has been hypothesized as arising from a power disparity; indeed, “a lopsided balance of power will promote war is probably the most popular theory of international relations,” in Geoffrey Blainey, The Causes of War, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), p. 109.
comradeship,” which makes this cultural bond so important for people “not so much to kill,” according to Anderson, but “as willingly to die” for what he has termed “such limited imaginings”—or the modern nation-state.12

The answers to questions about the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, as Anderson has elucidated, center on nationalism itself. People die so that their ethnic kin might live together in a sovereign state, as Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina died trying to maintain political unity with a Serbian regime in Belgrade.13 In reality, that may be one of the right answers, but it speaks to a limited question. The broader question should focus the debate on the circumstances whereby these nationalisms rose to the forefront of politics. Should we automatically identify nationalism as the root causes of ethnic conflict when such conflicts might “revolve around issues of resource control, political power, the manipulations of the political elite, and the inability of the central state to address the needs of the periphery”?14 Anderson may be right in having recognized that the relationship between ethnic kin trump all others as people attach the greatest importance to one of the most imaginary aspects of identity, but other scholars have written that we need to attribute the profound triumph of nationalism and its manifestation in inter-ethnic violence in Yugoslavia to the security dilemma.


The security dilemma arises, according to political scientist Barry Posen, when “proximate groups of people suddenly find themselves newly responsible for their own security,” prompting these groups to ask questions of their neighbors, such as “‘do you threaten me, and if so how?’”15 When answers to these questions are ambiguous, chances of war increase. Especially in a period of transition, the power of states or emerging states to trace clearly their limits and intents remain difficult. Taking former Yugoslavia as an example, we can see that during the 1980s, when the federal government suffered setbacks in solving economic problems, the constituent republics looked to their own accounting and well-being. Leaders of poor republics, such as Macedonia, wanted to receive more federal aid for their local economies, while the wealthy Slovenes and Croats watched their earnings drawn away to support the seemingly hopeless, poverty-stricken south. Yugoslavia’s overall economy struggled with inflation and unemployment and leaders fought hard to improve or even maintain stability; meanwhile, selfish politics proliferated at the local level. Due to the weak central government structures set up in the final years of Tito’s administration, federal policymakers possessed few options to compel cooperation among the divergent views. In fact, as A. Ross Johnson persuasively suggested, non-Serbs would interpret any effort on the part of the federal government to recentralize in order to combat internal economic and political problems as a move towards Serbian hegemonialism.16 As the decade proceeded, selfishness won out, and


16. See A. Ross Johnson Impressions of Post-Tito Yugoslavia: A Trip Report, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1982), p. 15. “Said one Croat official, ‘If there were recentralization, Yugoslavia would fall apart.’ … At the turn of the 1970s, Yugoslavia underwent an irreversible decentralization; under
nobody knew where to stop nor did elites have the wherewithal to act with strong resolve.

Within the security dilemma’s framework, the ratcheting up of ethnic conflict emerges when actions taken by one group threaten another, despite potentially benign or defensive intentions. Moreover, if ethnic groups are dispersed and form “ethnic islands,” political geography “frequently create[s] an ‘offense-dominant world.’”17 In other words, if an ethnic group feels threatened because of its geographic dispersal, then the incentives for that group to take the initiative to expand its territorial base is great.18 In the case in former Yugoslavia, Serbs stranded in hostile territory such as an independent Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina, struck out on the offensive (or defensive) to unite their territory, and used ethnic cleansing to achieve a complete polity of loyal folk. But, what was it about Tito’s state that had kept all of this under control?

**A YUGOSLAV SUPRANATIONALITY**

Maybe the combination of ideology and nationalism was supposed to keep things under control. In any case, policymakers attempted to create a Yugoslav supranationality as a way to replace the traditional labels in the hope that such a marker would combat any

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18. See Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” p. 32. “Isolated ethnic groups – ethnic islands – can produce incentives for preventative war. Theorists argue that perceived offensive advantages make preventative war more attractive: if one side has an advantage that will not be present later and if security can best be achieved by offensive military action in any case, then leaders will be inclined to attack during this ‘window of opportunity.’”
antagonisms between ethnic groups. While the regime struggled to realize significant increases in the number of these self-identified Yugoslavs, the most successful period of growth occurred between 1971 and 1981, when the respective censuses from those years measured a four-fold increase to almost 1.25 million. Yet this was still a tiny fraction of the overall population, which had reached above 20 million. Leaders clung to this idea of strengthening this “Yugoslav socialist patriotism” as a bridge between ethnic divides and enhance the sense of a Yugoslav community—especially for young people who grew up surrounded by and “continuously educated in the atmosphere” of Yugoslav socialism, which included the development of a self-managed socialist society and the “realization of common and equal condition for life and work.”

Being “a good Slovene or Croat, a good Serb or Macedonian” and so forth, meant, “by that very virtue one becomes equally also a good Yugoslav.” Communist rhetoric desired that people “get over nations as barriers and be—to put it so—the vanguard of society.” But communist ideology also

19. See Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991*, (Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 57. 237,077 people identified themselves as Yugoslavs in the 1971 census, a fourteen percent increase over 1961. Ten years later the figure increased to 1,216,463. Also see Robert Hayden, *The Beginning of the End of Federal Yugoslavia: The Slovenian Amendment Crisis of 1989*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1992), p. 2. Hayden explained the diversity in Yugoslavia and discussed the Yugoslav phenomenon. For example, he attributed mixed marriages to the identification of Yugoslav as opposed to Serb or Slovene, while also having cited that the fourfold increase in those self-identified as Yugoslav between 1971 and 1981 included young people, “as the result of increased interethnic contact and education.”


spoke to a time when ethnic differences would wither away along with the state. Srđa Pavlović has argued that in this sense, the communist elite in Yugoslavia possessed just as much nationalistic spirit as their predecessors, but “the manifestations of their nationalism had acquired new ideological frameworks,” which had created this Yugoslav supranationality.

An overarching Yugoslav nationality naturally created great controversy. Vlado Beznik, secretary of the Republican Conference of the Socialist Alliance of Working People (SAWP) of Slovenia, the popular organ of the League of Communists, argued that, “Yugoslavism as a nationality is not only inappropriate” but implied also the “existence of some sort of supernation.” As Beznik pointed out, policymakers imposed the “overcoming of nationality” and relied upon the creation of “yet another artificial nation” as the vehicle to achieve this equality. Despite the criticism, the notion of a pan-Yugoslav ethnic identity served the regime with a broader-based legitimizing notion that could advance the goals of communism. LCY leaders focused on brotherhood and unity and saw a common identity as a method to achieve harmony among all people and solicit legitimacy for their party-run state. The Marxist expression, “national in form, socialist in content,” allowed the state to express socialist patriotism in terms of a

23. See Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism, p. 50. “No doubt in the ripeness of time national differences would wither away—a prerequisite for the withering away of either federalism or the state.”
Yugoslav ethnic identity; yet, this idea only helped to exacerbate problems because the party continued to answer the wrong question, as when the Serbian politician, Mihailo Marković, termed the greatest problem facing Yugoslavia as “not a crisis of ideology,” but, rather, it was a “national identity crisis.”

THE END OF BROTHERHOOD AND UNITY

During the 1980s, when the Soviet Union underwent restructuring under Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, tensions mounted in the outlying areas of Soviet control—both within the USSR itself and among its satellites and ideological neighbors. In certain respects, what happened in the Soviet Union mirrored a similar process of change taking place in Yugoslavia. In the end, dramatic political failure brought forth remarkable changes that made nationalism a “beneficiary of these developments but not, in any serious sense, an important factor in bringing them about.” In the Yugoslav case in particular, Robert Hayden has written that, “it is tempting to see the breakdown of federal Yugoslavia as the inevitable result of those national tensions, once the overarching structure of the one-party state” disappeared; but to “stress only those nationalisms is to distort the reality of


28. Naturally, an alternative argument exists in the form of Soviet policy as rooted in the economic turbulence of the 1970s. Specifically, the two oil shocks of that decade created an atmosphere whereby the Soviet Union found a more lucrative market for its raw materials in the West and in effect abandoned Eastern Europe to its own devices. Once East European satellites looked to the expensive Western market for raw and finished goods (oil from the Middle East, for example) they were neither economically viable as individual states nor beneficial for Moscow’s economic policies. Gorbachev merely realized this economic imbalance in trying to balance his accounts and espoused a political policy to the working economic reality with Glastnost and Perestroika.

political, social, and economic life in Yugoslavia in the critical years of 1989–91.”

I would add to Hayden’s assertion that to stress only nationalism misrepresents not just the “critical years” of the civil wars but discounts the relative success achieved during Tito’s tenure.

During World War II, the Nazis deliberately ripped apart and carved up Yugoslavia along competing ethnic lines vis-à-vis annexations and support for one of the most fanatical Croatian politicians, Ante Pavelić, who sought to refashion his Independent State of Croatia (NDH) as a homogenous nation-state. In response to the Nazi–NDH alliance, Tito and his communist cadres fought Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, the NDH, and the Četniks (primarily Serbian royalists representing the Yugoslav government-in-exile), while advocating for an inclusive and multiethnic state after the war. Historian Carol Lilly has termed this vicious fighting among Yugoslavs during World War II, as having given rise to a “legacy of hatred,” which “was perhaps the greatest challenge that Yugoslavia’s postwar Communist Party would face.”

I agree, but emphasize that the LCY’s overall approach to conflict resolution failed. Yes, the country developed and progressed and living standards rose, leaving people better off than their immediate neighbors in the East and North, but Tito promised a lot and admitted a lackluster performance in delivering. As a result, the regime tried to win international prestige with the Non-aligned Movement, scare people into worrying about a crisis between nationalities, and perpetuate other negative features in order to bind

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people to the regime.\textsuperscript{32} By 1960, Tito had declared success because Yugoslavia was no longer fraught with “internal national strifes and antagonisms,” or exploited by “domestic and foreign capitalists.”\textsuperscript{33} For Tito, the functioning of his socialist state simply meant, “we have solved the national question in the best possible way, according to Marxist principles;” nationalism was an outgrowth of capitalism and imperialism and Tito had supposedly eliminated both factors within Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{34} But despite such positive rhetoric and the “construction of hope,” leaders had to keep repeating the same fear of nationalist tension because they never really achieved the kind of economic success that

\textsuperscript{32} For a similar approach to this idea, see Esad Zgodić, \textit{Titova Nacionalna Politika: Temeljni pojmovi, načela i vrijednosti}, (Sarajevo, Kantonalni odbor SDP BiH, 2000), p. 164. He has noted that Tito believed that brotherhood between peoples had helped him beat the common foe—the fascists—and that a continued emphasis on brotherhood in post-war Yugoslavia would logically continue, especially as long as a common threat remained.

\textsuperscript{33} See Josip Broz Tito, \textit{The Building of Socialism and the Role and Tasks of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia}, Report to the Fifth Congress of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia, (Beograd: Publishing House Jugoslavija, 1960), p. 37; also see Tito, \textit{The Building of Socialism}, p. 36. “But, both for the young people and for the whole of our socialist community, the most important thing is that the youth should during these work drives strengthen the brotherhood and unity of our peoples and, discarding obsolete national prejudices and chauvinistic tendencies, should forge a new, more monolithic, socialist social community – Yugoslavia.”

\textsuperscript{34} See Zgodić, \textit{Titova}, pp. 93–100. “Mi smo u svojoj zemlji riješili nacionalno pitanje na najbolji mogući način, u skladu sa marksističkim principima.” Also see Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” \textit{Slavic Review} 53:2 (Summer 1994), p. 420. Slezkine has quoted a Civil-war era theorist who argued, “Many of these peoples have nothing in common except the fact that before they were all parts of the Russian Empire and now they have all been liberated by the revolution, but there are no internal connections among them.” Furthermore, Lenin believed that the surest way to unity in content was diversity in form: “By fostering national cultures and creating national autonomies, national schools, national languages and national cadres, the Bolsheviks would overcome national distrust and reach national audiences. ‘We are going to help you develop your Buriat, Votiak, etc. language and culture, because in this way you will join the universal culture, revolution and communism sooner.’”
they said they wanted. More importantly, the economic and social development in Yugoslavia was unequal.

THE 1980S: THE BEST AND WORST OF TIMES

In 1986, Dušan Bilandžić, a professor in Croatia, stated clearly, “we abandoned the Eastern model because it did not suit us.” Overall, for him, Marxism had “failed,” because it was “born in the nineteenth century,” but “cannot be applied in the modern world without some amendment.” What Yugoslav leaders searched for, especially in times of crisis, was the proper reform that could reverse the negative situation facing the country.35

Socialism was not dead yet. As a worldview based on the “fundamental principles” of “social equality” and “freedom and democracy,” it still had enough support inside Yugoslavia in comparison to the tiny minority of people who wanted to impose “a heavy hand” to restore stability and prosperity to the country.36 In 1967, a poll showed that ninety-two percent of Yugoslavs were “satisfied with the political situation in Yugoslavia.” Two decades later, that same question garnered a less-than enthusiastic fifty-five percent with twenty-seven percent of the respondents having expressed “fear” alongside twenty-three percent believing in “hope” for a better future.37 The fear of

37. See “SFRY: Results Published of Zagreb Opinion Poll,” Borba, 23 November 1987, p. 5. HU OSA, 300–10–2, YSFI POP88, cn. 354.
foreign invasion subsided, but the fear of being able to secure employment and raise a family took over. Nearly two-thirds of all Yugoslav households expected to live worse in 1988 than in 1987, while only seven percent had “hope” for a better quality of life. Such statistics illuminated what a dire situation the people faced. All this grew worse with the general agreement in stagnation and worsening in all fields of life such as social differences and conflict as well as the political status of the country. With ninety-two percent inflation in January of 1987, the people indeed had a great deal to fear. Unlike the general state of the economy, though, inflation did not stagnate—it grew worse. By August of the same year, inflation was marked at 110 percent and represented a tremendous challenge to the regime because it directly called into question the legitimacy of Tito’s worldview from a material standpoint—something a Marxist should have fixed long ago.

Yugoslav elites fretted over what they saw as a generation gap and a general disenchantment with the regime among young people. After all, the economic problems hit young people—a large contingent of the population by the 1980s—the hardest and facilitated the replacement of hope in the future with a profound fear of what lay ahead. The plethora of polls conducted during the 1980s unveiled a lot about the situation inside of Yugoslavia. One such poll asked young people where they would like to live if no Yugoslavia existed; they largely chose Western countries—33.6 percent for the United

States and another 15.8 percent for Australia—compared to a miniscule .9 percent having chosen the Soviet Union as their ideal society. Young people clearly vied for Western liberalism—or, at least, Western goods, as their goal; moreover, Yugoslavs felt that the benefits of the Western system were possible if led by a progressive LCY vis-à-vis socialist self-management and an increased move to greater democracy, complete with multiple candidates.\(^{40}\) In stark contrasts to the situation at home, young Yugoslavs expressed their wish to achieve the economic prosperity Tito had promised long ago. University of Split professor Boris Vušković agreed, in 1984, “the main source of all problems is the economic crisis.”\(^{41}\) This corresponded to the absolute dire status that faced many Yugoslav families. NIN—the weekly newsmagazine—determined that the “worsening living standards, unemployment, housing shortage,” and the “moral crisis,” combined to make 1984 a terrible year.\(^{42}\) What more proof of that than the overwhelming vote for Ronald Reagan as the personality of 1984.\(^{43}\)

While Yugoslavs largely expressed frustration and called for a change on the micro-level, some party elites still saw the problem in a state-driven system. One member of the presidency of the federal Socialist Alliance of Yugoslavia, Jovan


Dejanović, argued in 1986, that it was “illusory to expect that that institutional changes and constitutional amendments” would alone solve the problems of Yugoslavia. He admitted such in response to what he termed the control of “socially-controlled income” by “strongholds of mighty groupings”—in other words, leaders could not trust the people to rise to the occasion and defend a united Yugoslavia. But, what is more telling in Dejanović’s statements was that he had essentially given up on the hallmark of Tito’s system—reform no longer matter, it was the state itself that had rotted beyond repair.44

Most importantly, Dejanović was not alone.

CONCLUSION

The brutal dismemberment of Yugoslavia during the 1990s directed the world’s attention away from peace and joyous celebration in the wake of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union’s retreat from competing in the Cold War and subsequent disappearance. But, it is a mistake to assume that the Yugoslav leaders acted as cynics. They were dedicated communists with their own ideology that coalesced over more than forty years. As soon as Stalin waved his little finger as part of his effort to remove Tito from power after ejecting Yugoslavia from the Cominform, Yugoslav ideology changed and kept on changing.45 Reaching out to the various ethnic groups under a state’s control


45. See A. Ross. Johnson, The Transformation of Communist Ideology: The Yugoslav Case, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), p. 242. “After 1953 Yugoslav Communist ideology developed a more integral, codified conception of socialist self-management, with its own philosophical assumptions, analytical categories, and terminology—much of which must often have seemed as unfamiliar to Soviet or Chinese Communist theorists as to Western non-Marxists. After 1953, the philosophical component of the
was vital and sought to equalize the peoples in question and thus solidify the regime by removing political opposition and competing ideologies. A sort of democratization within the LCY also allowed, as the Yugoslavs eventually put into practice, the decentralization of the state and facilitated the path towards its eventual disappearance. Theorists argued that by including more people in a system “where there are communists who are active and united in activity,” positive results would appear. Furthermore, with a sound system in place in Yugoslavia, the LCY would emerge—according to Yugoslav theorists—as the model for communism around the world, having “opened the way for a genuine socialist democracy.” Nevertheless, who could imagine any such worldview as credible in 1990 as all of Eastern Europe and Eurasia seemingly clamored for change from a socio-economic system that had failed to deliver?

The decentralization of the state, while fitting into Tito’s worldview, served as a mechanism for both containing and emphasizing nationalist tensions because on the one hand, Tito fought against particularism, but on the other, his reforms brought power away

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ideology underwent a major transformation matching the doctrinal transformation examined in this study. Stalinist dialectical materialism and historical materialism were revised as Yugoslav philosophers drew increasingly on the non-Marxist philosophical tradition. But, by 1966, when the most recent stage of political and economic reform in Yugoslavia was initiated, it was perhaps questionable whether a Yugoslav Communist ideology still existed at all … Self-management itself became a term of self-legitimization for a number of contending groups within the LCY.”

46. See Ivo Banac, National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 413. “Since [interwar] Yugoslavia’s national question was, more than anything, an expression of mutually exclusive national ideologies, the chances for its internal stability were not very good.”


from a strong center and into the hands of local elites. Because decentralization enabled local folks to engage in decision-making, the ethnic character of the local party organizations necessarily stood in opposition to federal or other competing regional units. The ethnic key provided the federal government with a diverse foundation, but the reality within the regions—such as the Zadar region in Croatia—oftentimes resisted the manifestation of the ethnic key and only exacerbated tensions. Moreover, the Yugoslav identity remained insignificant and when economic troubles reached a boiling point during the 1980s, people lost hope and confided their fears to local elites. The full effects of this move showed themselves once “six million” Yugoslavs lived “on the edge or below the minimum subsistence” standards.49 Finally, elites in the JNA feared that the Territorial Defense Force (TDF)—the system arranged to complement the federal army with units drawn from the constituent republics—would not respond to the central government because of similar selfish interests. Time proved those viewers correct because in the 1990s, not only did the TDF not respond to calls by the federal government for loyalty, but they also in fact formed the bases for new armies in the secessionist republics. Nationalism did take the place of communism and filled the political vacuum that accompanied the confusion behind the end of the Cold War; unfortunately, for several East European and Eurasian states, the power of nationalism—or at least aspects of it—still reigns supreme in the twenty-first century.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF KEY LCY OFFICIALS, 1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Joined LCY</th>
<th>Federal Position</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kardelj, Edvard</td>
<td>Slovene</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ranković, Aleksandar</td>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gošnjak, Ivan</td>
<td>Croat</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vukmanović, Svetozar</td>
<td>Montenegrin</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leskosek, Franc</td>
<td>Slovene</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stambolić, Petar</td>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Pres. Federal National Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pučar, Duro</td>
<td>Bosnian-Serb</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Koliševski, Lazar</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1935</td>
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<td>Bakarić, Vladimir</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<td>1924</td>
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<td>Vešelinov, Jovan</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Begović, Vlajko</td>
<td>Bosnian-Serb</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1930</td>
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<td>Popivoda, Krsto</td>
<td>Montenegrin</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<td>Popović, Koca</td>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>State Sec. Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>Žeković, Veljko</td>
<td>Montenegrin</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1934</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>1929</td>
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<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>Karabegović, Osman</td>
<td>Muslim, Serb</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arsov, Ljupčo</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crvenkovski, Krste</td>
<td>Macedonian</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1940</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX B: ETHNICITY IN THE JNA, 1963

![Graph showing percentage of total population and officers in the Army for different ethnic groups.]
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