

Milan Milošević
POLITICAL GUIDE TO SERBIA 2000

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Milan Milošević

POLITICAL GUIDE TO SERBIA 2000

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Foreword

Gatekeeper

So NATO dropped its smart bombs on the people of Yugoslavia. What Milan Milošević did instead was to sit down and completely rewrite his political guide through the jungle called Serbia.

He rewrote it fully for many reasons. Last but not least of these was that Milošević is among the few journalists with the kind of professional pride which would never allow them to keep on touching up their old works, almost stereotyping their own articles. So what is first and foremost here is that Milan Milošević is much more than just “your chronicler”, the title he modestly gives himself. He is a journalist with a special talent for analysing facts and assembling them into a whole which makes sense, as well as for synthesising what many see as fragments of life or, perhaps, a fragmented life.

The fact which could be labelled the NATO-Yugoslav War put the political events dealt with by Milošević in his first guide into quite a different perspective. He is far more ambitious here. His new guide is actually a rather effective attempt to see into the mind of a nation and a society which are hardly aware of how they survive, rather than a skilfully crafted sequence of stories about political parties, mass protests, elections, political bargains or the changeable positions taken by the key political players.

Because of this, I believe the first part of his *Guide*, under the title *Social and Political Background*, is most valuable, not only for people arriving in Serbia for the first time, but also to those who earn their living in this country by thinking and writing about this nation, this political system, this Slobodan Milošević, this opposition, these wars, the migrations and so on. Here, Milošević leans on wise and expert sources. He knows the right questions to ask them and how to effectively summarise their words into a political mosaic of Serbia. So this inventory of the “network of options” characteristic of this specific nation and this specific society is presented by “your chronicler” with figures as well as a list of people who know how to interpret all these phenomena and whose authentic expertise has not been marred by the media and their perpetual attempt to bring some wisdom into this chaos of our everyday life.

The section on *The Party System* won't exactly tell you all you ever wanted to know about Serbia's political parties and their leaders, but it will certainly give you all the information you need if you want your discourse on the Serbian multi-party system to make any sense. Some people may not approve of the significance or number of column-inches Milošević allots to various parties or coalitions. They may even interpret it as his personal inclination to some and resentment of others. However this cannot be ascribed to a biased interpretation of Serbia's political scene. This is because Milošević points at virtues and handicaps, giving a balanced grading to all the players in the Serbian political arena. Milošević himself justifies the detailed picture he draws

of Serbia's political parties, regardless of their real strengths, by saying "Serbian politics does not polarise along a single axis. Serbia is a multi-party society in crisis and turmoil, a complex matrix of forces". This is best illustrated by the influence of New Democracy or the Civil Alliance of Serbia which certainly exceed by far the actual strength of their body of voters.

If anyone eager to consider, write about or discuss Serbia's elections needs the first two chapters of the *Guide*, they will simply be unable to do without the last one, *The Election Labyrinth*. Voter options in Serbia cannot be understood without such detailed information which includes all election results to date.

Of course I would never claim that everything Milan Milošević has written is the only and undeniable truth. He wouldn't claim that himself. But Milan Milošević is certainly among the gatekeepers of the yard called Serbia's political life. With this *Guide* as a key, he opens a gate and lets us into his precious archives of a country in which events crucial to the destiny of a state and a nation are more frequent than thunderstorms, in a sea of controversy and curious details such as that about mighty Vojislav Šešelj's Radicals who obediently stayed in their ministerial posts because Milan Milutinović, the president of Serbia who they do not acknowledge, ordered them to do so by a legal ruse.

Dragan Bujošević

1 Social and Political Background

Over the entire decade since the Berlin Wall was torn down, your chronicler has been witness to the Sisyphean struggle of South-Eastern Europe's most unsuccessful opposition against the rule of South-Eastern Europe's most unsuccessful regime over South-east Europe's most unhappy country, in order merely to be able to record the bitter military effects of the West's "moral imperative" of the following pattern: ten years of starving Milošević, eleven weeks of bombing him and then a period of blackmailing the country's forces of democracy by honouring them with the task of overthrowing the dictator Milošević and, in return for democracy, giving them enough fuel to keep them from freezing.

Your chronicler has recorded at least five defeats of the opposition (republic and presidential elections in 1990; the federal elections known as the Žabljak elections in 1992; republic and presidential elections in 1992; federal and local government elections in 1996, and; republic and presidential elections in 1997).

There have also been six huge waves of protests with hundreds of thousands of people taking part and lasting for days (in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999); three referendums have been held (on the Constitution in 1990, on the national standard and elections in 1992, and on non-interference by foreign powers in 1998).

The analysis which follows covers the period ending on July 27, 2000, when presidential elections were

called, along with elections for representatives in the Chamber of Republics and Chamber of Citizens in the Yugoslav Parliament, representatives in the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and representatives in municipal assemblies throughout Serbia. It will attempt to throw light on the factors which most probably influenced such a poor outcome.

The analysis is based on the following sources: this journalist's ten years of experience for the weekly *Vreme*, available literature and interviews conducted by the author with experts in politics, sociology, social psychology and economics, most of them panellists in Press Club discussions at the Belgrade Media Center. This overview also leans heavily on earlier works by the author, primarily on the Media Center's "Political Guide"¹ which covers the previous cycle of elections and the book "Party Composition of Serbia in 1999", published in German in 2000². Dragoslav Grujić, the head of *Vreme's* newspaper library assisted in collecting documentary material.

1.1 The Vicious Circle of Kosovo

Once Slobodan Milošević rose to power in the League of Communists of Serbia in 1989, a political formula for Kosovo was defined as a state defence formula based on: a) broad and hostile Albanian irredentist indoctrination in action; b) the increasingly poor posi-

¹ Milan Milošević: "Political Guide to Yugoslavia," Media Centre, Belgrade, 1997.

² Milan Milošević: "Die Parteienlandschaft Serbiens", Berlin Verlag, Arno Spity GmbH, Berlin 2000.

tion of Serbs in Kosovo; c) Albanian irredentist strongholds in Slovenia and Croatia; d) the eleventh hour for defending the Constitutional order; e) the state having the means to do so (defend the Constitutional order), but being unwilling to do so because of political disputes, and; f) the people, therefore, having no choice but to defend the Constitutional order in every way possible – statutory or non-statutory, parliamentary or unparliamentary, institutionally or non-institutionally.

Jovica Trkulja of the Belgrade University Faculty of Law reminds us that national populism was at that time supported by the major cultural institutions such as the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences³ and the Serbian Orthodox Church and a number of high-profile figures as well as by Belgrade University which in 1988 and, especially, in January 1989 played a most significant role in upholding the regime and its policy of national populism. (The fact that Mirjana Marković headed the University Committee of the League of Communists in Belgrade in 1986 significantly boosted the political career of her husband, Slobodan Milošević⁴).

Trkulja regards the prediction of Ralph Dahrendorf as having come true (Press Club, January 4). As the first pessimist against the background of general euphoria

³ For more discussion on the role of SANU, see: Olivera Milosavljević: "From Memorandum to Collective Guilt", "Serbian Elite," Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 2000, pp. 7-38

⁴ Slavoljub Djukić: "He, She and We," Belgrade, 1997. A new revised edition, covering the following two years, was published under the title "The End of the Serbian Fairy Tale," Samizdat Free B92, Belgrade, 1999.

which followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, Dahrendorf said that nothing new would come from the East after 1989 – the post-Communist countries would need six months to adopt democratic constitutions, six years to begin implementing anything deriving from the democratic provisions of these constitutions and at least six decades to establish the rule of law.

Research conducted by Nebojša Popov, the author of the study “Serbian Populism: From a Marginal to a Predominant Phenomenon”⁵, (published by *Vreme* in 1993), shows that pluralism has actually only brought about a “branching of Serbian populism,” its division into rivulets. As a panellist in the Media Center’s Press Club discussion of January 4, 1999, Popov said that some five or six years ago it seems as though Serbian populism was composed of three major and mutually opposed currents: a) the ruling party, under two names, the League of Communists of Serbia and the Socialist Party of Serbia; b) Šešelj’s circle, the Serbian Radical Party, and; c) Vuk Drašković’s circle⁶, the Serbian

⁵ Nebojša Popov: “Serbian Populism: From a Marginal to a Predominant Phenomenon,” Belgrade, 1993.

“Serbian Populism” was issued as a special supplement to the *Vreme* weekly. The text is here interpreted, rather than quoted. In Section C, entitled “Where are the People?” Popov, for example, writes: “Drašković also becomes a national leader with the aura of a celebrity treated, as a writer, side by side with Njegoš and Tolstoy, while compared, as a politician, with Ilija Garašanin. Drašković also attempts to lean on the Kosovo Serbs, but the regime decisively prevents him from carrying out his idea. He also split with the regime over the issue of the national program...”

⁶ Vuk Drašković: “The Knife,” Belgrade, 1982; “Prayer;” “The General’s Night.” Drašković’s novel “The Knife” marked the beginning of the rise in ethnic tensions.

Renewal Movement. During the latest climax of the Kosovo crisis in 1999, these three currents flowed together for a while, as Šešelj was a deputy prime minister of Serbia and Drašković vice-chairman of the federal cabinet almost to the end of the war. Once Drašković walked out of the federal government, the conflict between the Serbian Renewal Movement and the Radicals resumed.

1.1.1 Plebiscitary Authoritarianism

State propaganda is fond of saying that the regime emerged from the vote of the people, a plebiscite. Milan Podunavac, of the Faculty of Political Sciences⁷, describes the history of Milošević's rule as nothing but a series of "plebiscitary appeals" in line with Napoleon Bonaparte's maxim about the necessity of offering the French "something new". Here we have had Greater Serbia, "the same standard of living as Sweden", "high-speed trains", the notion of the decoration of National Hero awarded to the people themselves and the like.

One of the first "plebiscitary appeals" which enduringly entrenched Serbia's political institutions was the 1990 referendum. Held on July 1 and 2, 1990, the referendum submitted to the people the question of whether Serbia should first have free elections for a constituent assembly – as insisted on by the emerging democratic opposition – or first proclaim a constitution as advocated by the regime with the support of prominent

⁷ Milan Podunavac: "Power and Disorder," *Republika*, No. 220, 1999

institutions and public figures. Dobrica Ćosić was notably in support of the latter, claiming that the draft constitution guaranteed respect for human rights and civil liberty and was a solid foundation for an open and free society devoid of ideology. The “Kosovo issue” or, in fact, the aspiration for the unification of Serbia, was a powerful political justification for having so inflexible a constitution set in concrete.

Kosta Čavoški of the Belgrade Faculty of Law argues, however, that the referendum bolstered up the practice of plebiscitary authoritarianism, while the new Constitution actually bestowed the authority of a dictator on the president of the Republic, giving the right to impose or lift a state of emergency (with no constraint on duration).

On the other hand, as another eminent legal expert, Pavle Nikolić, put it in his book “From Dissolution to Despair and Hope⁸”, in his capacity of Serbia’s president, Slobodan Milošević never directly used the overarching power given to him. Not once did he proclaim a state of war or, under such circumstances, pass bills in the jurisdiction of the legislature; nor did he pass any bills whose strength was equal to that of the Constitution itself; he passed no laws restricting the rights and freedoms of citizens, as well he might have. His untouchable power derived from plebiscitary support, while the key state institutions behaved as he wanted them to. In this way he could enjoy the luxury of behaving as a legalist.

⁸ Pavle Nikolić: “From Dissolution to Despair and Hope,” Filip Višnjić, Belgrade, 1997.

Trkulja, however, believes that populism is only the tip of an iceberg composed of the crucial issues of democratisation, the parliamentary system and the crisis of the state. The key roles were played by the issues behind the scenes: the unequal position of Serbia and the Serbian people and the huge wave of discontent from the desperate masses devoid of hope and rights in 1987.

This diagnosis is supported by the fact that Serbia's position within the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia had become a problem back in 1975, thirteen years before the crisis erupted, at the time when a group of legal experts from Belgrade compiled what was known as "The Blue Book"⁹ on the constitutional problems faced by Serbia. A debate on the position of Kosovo Serbs had been launched in 1981, after Albanians staged rallies in Kosovo to demand that the province be given the status of a republic.

The rulers sensed, as Trkulja put it, that the legitimacy of the regime was trickling away like sand in an hourglass, leading the Serbian political oligarchy to make a predictable move to channel the justified discontent and fury of the people into the national arena. The Serbian elite, says Trkulja, paraphrasing a local tale,

⁹ "The Blue Book" by Najdan Pašić, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences, Radoslav Ratković et al. A paper entitled "The Blue Book Has Not Been Published" was written for the political establishment and circulated as a classified document. According to some sources, Edvard Kardelj, then a senior party official, wrote a note of approval on the paper's margin. After it began inciting political tensions, "The Blue Book" was withdrawn even from internal circulation. For more discussion on the issue, see Mirko Djekić: "The Use of Serbia," Beseda, Belgrade, 1990.

joined the elites of the other republics in dismantling the hoops of the barrel housing the evil spirit of nationalism: hand in hand they loosed the demon.

This disturbed the balance of power in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and awoke at least six nationalist and secessionist movements (Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Serbian and Kosovo Albanian). All the ethnic communities in Yugoslavia, their ethnic markings resembling the fur of a leopard, arose in secessionist frenzy. This resulted in four wars (Slovenia in 1991, Croatia in 1991-2, Bosnia in 1992-5 and Kosovo in 1999).

A ten-year war, as bloody as that between India and Pakistan of August 17, 1947, was waged for internal separation. It is with the utmost sadness that this author recalls what he wrote for the first issue of weekly *Vreme* back in October of the still-peaceful year of 1990. One possible outcome of the dissolution of Yugoslavia which he predicted in the article came true: as in the case of India and Pakistan, bloodshed, deaths, expulsions and hardship accompanied by the dissolution of the country. This, however, is another and a more complex story, now buried under scores of crimes, prejudices, echo-effects, demonisation, war propaganda and defensive stands, self-conceited ideologies, and criminal carelessness in underestimating risk on all sides. Some moderate political options have been blown away by the storm, while the people who were right ten years ago can hardly prove it today.

What is crucial to this analysis is that the Kosovo conflict has influenced the political crystallisation of

Serbia in a more dramatic and lasting way than the rest of the conflicts occurring during the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Now, at the close of the decade, with Kosovo under the control of international forces which are more or less in attendance for the expulsion of Serbs from the province, one topic appears to have been struck from the agenda. However this will perhaps only enliven and invigorate the theory of Serbs as victims of a conspiracy and restore the myth of Kosovo to the form it took in the second half of the nineteenth century: a myth of a lost and stolen Kosovo.

1.1.1.1 Four Pillars

Political expert Jovica Trkulja¹⁰ likens the regime of Slobodan Milošević to the visible part of an oil platform resisting mighty waves thanks to its strong pillars. In the case of Milošević these pillars are national populism, state, party and ideological apparatus, the army and police and his personal power. Dušan Pavlović, a fellow of the Institute for European studies, adds one more pillar to the list: the opposition! According to Trkulja, all these pillars have deep foundations, having buttressed the regime against all past crises and terrible defeats and they may be able to help it withstand any future crisis. The only pillar of the regime which appears to giving way is the fourth, Milošević himself as a leader: a considerable part of his charisma has drained away.

¹⁰ Jovica Trkulja: "Facing Despair," Čigoja, Belgrade, 1998.

1.1.2 Fear of Losing the State

One phenomenon which until recently has been overlooked may throw more light on the political mobilisation which has thrown up a populist leader and a most difficult political situation in Serbia.

In his article "The Technology of Political Power," published in a collection of papers under the title "A Labyrinth of Crisis Prerequisites to a Democratic Transformation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia"¹¹, Dragan Lakićević, a fellow of the Institute for European Studies, explains the phenomenon with a Middle Ages notion which has shocked many: *horror vacui*, nature's abhorrence of a vacuum.

Lakićević posits this phrase as a metaphor for the kind of existential feeling characteristic of Serbs: fear of the dissolution of a state of their own. Complex symbolism deriving from an extinct Middle Ages state which, along with an identity preserved by Serbian Eastern Orthodoxy and the painful establishment of state sovereignty in the course of the nineteenth century, accompanied by numerous wars and a constant threat to the existence of the nation, have shaped an almost instinctive need to have a powerful state and to be able basically to trust it. This is largely how the unquestioned link between autocratic rulers, militaristic

¹¹ Dragan Lakićević: "Technology of Power," published in "A Labyrinth of Crisis: Prerequisite for the Democratic Transformation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," Institute for European Studies, Belgrade, 1998, pp. 173-191.

orders and the population's intense fear of outside foes has been established.

The regime in such a state is primarily expected to secure protection from foreign aggressors. The legitimacy of the regime is hardly ever questioned and its whims tolerated as long as there is a general belief that the regime is capable of preserving the painfully acquired state sovereignty.

Slobodan Milošević secures general plebiscitary support for his activities firstly by projecting the possible dissolution of the state then identifying the advocates of this dissolution and finally by announcing imperatives for preventing the dissolution at all costs. Frustrated by such a possibility, the Serbs as a collective are forced to side with their "only natural protector" although that protector has fuelled rather than prevented the dissolution by following the maxim that his will (standing for that of the Serbs) should be respected and acknowledged by all or else there would be no Yugoslavia.

1.1.2.1 The "Anti-Serb Conspiracy"

The regime has cleverly camouflaged its delusions and errors with a strong campaign ostensibly proving that the global centres of power have joined forces against a single nation. A poll conducted by the Institute for Political Studies in 1993 showed that 52.2 per cent of Serbia's population completely agreed with and another 23.7 agreed to some extent with the notion of "a large, well-organised conspiracy against Serbia

which included a number of states". In the summer of 1999 the same attitude was almost palpable. The regime, its finger on the pulse of public opinion, systematically demonised the activities of the opposition in 1999 by labelling them treacherous fifth-columnists. Political sociologist Jovo Bakić of the Belgrade University Faculty of Philosophy says (Media Center Press Club, February 21, 2000) that such demonisation of the opposition follows an old pattern. Bakić labels the phenomenon a "political culture of liberation". "In this kind of political culture, the political arena is polarised into 'patriots' and 'traitors'. Unfortunately this polarisation is a permanent feature of modern Serbian history. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the Progressives were denouncing the Radicals as "branch offices of Russian interests," while the Radicals referred to the Progressives as "Austrian mercenaries". When the Radicals came to power, "Serbia was liberated from Austrian occupation (via the Progressives), the Progressives' rallies were broken up and physical show-downs took place. After World War I the allegations were constant, either on a national basis, or denouncing the Croats (the whole nation) as traitors to Yugoslavia or just claiming that Stjepan Radić was a traitor (he was imprisoned). Puniša Račić then shot Radić dead in the Parliament as an act of the "political culture of liberation" which meant that "liberation" had been transferred to the Parliament. After World War II, allegations were made against the bourgeoisie and Chetniks were labelled "traitors" and "collaborationists" and were persecuted and jailed.

“Supporters of the Russian Information Bureau were nothing but agents of Stalin and traitors.

“And finally you have a regime consisting of the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Yugoslav United Left and the Serbian Radical Party, and now it is they who are the only true interpreters of national interests, leaving no room for others. It is they who determine who is to be regarded as a patriot and who as a traitor.

“From that point of view, all ideological differences, all economic and social problems are put on the back burner. After all, why should you explain your economic program to a known traitor? Such a person should be jailed or put to death. In this sense, Slobodan Milošević and his regime are just the newest twigs on the branch of the ‘political culture of liberation’ and, unfortunately, rather malignant ones,” says Bakić.

1.1.2.2 “Alternative Serbia”

One somewhat impotent group whose activities were based on a commitment to moral principles stood up against the crisis threatening to tear the state apart. The intellectuals of the Belgrade Circle, meeting in a tone of pacifism¹², wrote about their endeavours in a book entitled “Alternative Serbia”. The Belgrade Circle was a gathering point for critical, humanist and civil society oriented intellectuals such as Miladin Životić, Radomir Konstantinović, Obrad Savić and Bogdan Bogdanović. An attractive project deriving from the

¹² “The Serbian Side of the War: Trauma and Catharsis in Historical Memory” by Nebojša Popov et al., Republika, Belgrade, 1996.

group's activities was the Center for Cultural Decontamination, headed by dramaturge Borka Pavićević. The Center focused on cultural events such as theatre or dance performances as well as on cultivating critical discourse through its round tables. A wide range of performances in Cinema Rex in 1997 and 1998, part of the Radio B92 organisation, represented a similar project.

Any discussion of valuable attempts to put the ruling ideology into a critical perspective or, more precisely, to question the predominant nationalistic discourse cannot ignore a research project under the title "The Serbian Side of the War". A group of authors including Nebojša Popov, Vesna Pešić, Olivera Milosavljević, Latinka Perović, Srdjan Bogosavljević, Ljubomir Madžar, Olga Zirojević, Marina Blagojević, Radmila Radić, Drinka Gojković, Mirko Djordjević, Ivan Čolović, Vojin Dimitrijević, Marija Obradović, Dubravka Stojanović, Bojana Šušak, Aleksandar Nenadović, Rade Veljanovski and Snježana Milivojević have analysed the circumstances leading to the dissolution of the state, the emergence of new states on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and phenomena such as the retreat from modernisation, the sense of uneasiness of people in large towns, the hotly debated issue of "economic exploitation", the connection between the Church and the "Serbian question", the misuse of science, literature based on traumatic experiences which never end in catharsis, media warfare and so on.

In a country falling apart in bloodshed and drowning in internal ethnic conflicts, in all that chaos of dra-

matic events and mounting intolerance, the waves of opposition protest against the regime (1991, 1992, 1993 and 1996-7) were either followed or preceded by the awakening of the civil society and trade unions. Anti-war actions were particularly in the limelight in 1991 and 1992. At that time, some pacifist rallies such as the “Black Ribbon” in 1992 drew up to 100,000 people.

A number of peace organisations such as the Center for Anti-War Action, or “Most” (Bridge) have attempted to re-establish broken ties on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and tackle the issue of reconciliation. The Appeal 50 association emerged during the war in Kosovo: a group of intellectuals expressing their concern over ethnic cleansing, war crimes, the stranglehold on political opponents and the NATO intervention. The Humanitarian Law Center, headed by Nataša Kandić has energetically investigated war crimes. (For this organisation’s reduced room to manoeuvre, see Section 1.2.3, The Crisis of Pro-West Policy).

Some parts of this structure are redolent with “Yugo-nostalgia”. This is further demonstrated by the very existence of the Web site “Cyber Yugoslavia” which attracts people who have been deprived of a homeland by the developments of the past.

1.2 Three Deadlocks

In the summer of 1999 three key options of Serbian politics seemed to be facing a major crisis. These were the “Gazimestan” national policy launched at the Gazimestan rally of June 28, 1999, attended by over a million people, the “Eastern” policy of expecting Russia

to come to the rescue and to the pro-West policy of integration into Europe and the West. The regime and one section of the opposition exploited the first two options while another part of the opposition based its tactics on the third¹³.

The limitations of all existing political doctrines were clearly manifest but through the complex process of action and reaction, all political factions appeared to still be in the game in Serbia once the NATO air raids ended in 1999. In 2000 the regime has stuck to its civil war of words, attempting to redefine its policy as a mixture of patriotic isolationism and the “struggle against the New World Order”.

1.2.1 The Gazimestan National Policy in Crisis

In just ten years the country has been reduced in size, starved and demonised by five wars (the ten-day Yugoslav-Slovenian war in 1991, the Serb-Croat war in 1991-2, the Serb-Croat-Muslim war in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995, the Serb-Albanian war in Kosovo in 1998-9 and the war waged by NATO against Serbia in 1999). People in Belgrade are given to saying that over the course of this decade, Serbia has lost all its liberation wars of this century (1912, 1913, 1914 and 1941). An inventory of the policy’s strategic losses includes the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia (providing a suitable framework for the Serbian national question), the

¹³ Desimir Tošić: “Reality versus Delusion: The Serbian National Question,” edited by Aleksa Djilas, Studio Structure, Belgrade, 1997.

very survival of Yugoslavia brought under threat, the loss of Kosovo, and thousands of refugees and economic misery.

On the other hand, the number of Serbs who have remained in the vast area of Krajina in Croatia, in Western Herzegovina and Central Bosnia is now almost insignificant while the number of Serbs in Kosovo has been halved. Serbian cultural monuments dating back to the thirteenth century have been destroyed in some parts of these territories. More than 170,000 refugees fled from Krajina in the summer of 1995. That was followed by another wave of refugees from Kosovo. Today about 600,000 Serbs have the status of refugees in Serbia. A UN agency (the World Food Program) estimated in early autumn 1999 that about 360,000 refugees from Bosnia and Croatia and about 140,000 refugees from Kosovo needed assistance in the form of food just to be able to survive.

This enormous political, emotional and social burden, including a sense of isolation, self-conceited defensive attitudes and a variety of resentments, poured into a Serbia itself plagued by economic misery and unable to cope with such a huge social problem. This, however, does not mean that politicians will not attempt to exploit it. This complex of problems provides the opposition with a motif with which to criticise the regime for a spectacular failure but also gives the regime an opportunity to present itself as a factor dedicated to the reconstruction of the country and to salvaging whatever can be saved under extremely difficult circumstances: a factor of order and stability. At the end of the

“resolution” decade, the Serbian national question is still open and the need to resolve it could lead again to the revival of nationalist ideologies and movements, perhaps even more destructive than those which exist at present.

From another point of view, we are witness to the way in which the crisis has prolonged the life of economic populism. Nebojša Savić of the Economics Institute (also a Press Club panellist) says that from 1998 onwards the state’s control over the economy has been on a constantly upward curve. Thus the state’s interventionism is increasing. However this is no emancipated interventionism but the overt control of resources and the traffic of goods and money. Import is blocked while the mechanism for the issue of import licences is subject to severe political influence. Wartime destruction and post-war reconstruction have fuelled this inefficient dirigisme. Without actually saying so, most international players and institutions regard Serbs as the collective culprits for war and war crimes (isolation, war campaigns and blackmail) which makes the majority of the population see the internal control as a necessity of collective survival.

1.2.2 The Crisis of the Eastern Policy

Serbian public opinion is certainly increasingly unconvinced that it is realistic to expect a helping hand from Russia. Vladimir Vereš, a fellow of the Center for Strategic Studies takes the position (Media Center Press Club of September 6, 1999) that “this country’s foreign policy has for years been based on an attempt to have

Russia driven into a conflict and confrontation with the West. As Russia has never entered such a conflict, many political circles and, it must be said, a considerable part of the population have been somewhat disillusioned and hardly able to accept that such a scenario has never unfolded.

In June 1999, the leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Vojislav Šešelj, said that his heart was heavy whenever he thought of Russia.

Dušan Lazić, a former Yugoslav diplomat in Moscow and a member of the Forum for International Relations, says (Media Center Press Club, September 6, 1999) that Russia has clearly distanced itself politically from the policies pursued by the Belgrade regime. While constantly confronting the West, this regime has never stopped asking for Russia's assistance and support, political, economic and military, but at the same time criticised its official policy and supported forces opposing the Moscow government's reforms. (The regime has also hosted Russian nationalist, Communists, Zhirinovski and so on).

To all appearances, the idea of uniting Serbia with Russia and Belarus, launched during the 1999 war, has no significant political prospects. However, when it comes to the Serbian political setting, ties with the East will be important for historical, national and, above all, economic reasons. Ljubomir Prvulović, a fellow of the Institute for International Politics and Economy, says that Serbia used to have extensive economic cooperation with the former Soviet Union which was based on the complementary nature of the two economies.

Serbia's imports from Russia (which accounted for eighty per cent of the former Soviet Union's foreign trade) included energy and other raw materials while it exported all manner of saleable items. Apart from the countries included in the Soviet bloc, Serbia was Russia's major trading partner, ahead of many developed Western states. While the actual trade is now a tenth of the former level, Russia is still Serbia's major foreign trade partner. In the autumn of 1999, a deal for the import of Russian gas was of considerable assistance to Serbia as it faced the traumas of the first post-war winter. Time will tell whether the retirement of the powerful Victor Chernomyrdin, who also controlled the powerful Russian fuel company Gasprom, in the spring of 2000 had anything to do with the changed rules of the game of economic cooperation between Serbia and Russia.

When Vladimir Putin was elected president of Russia and the ruling Russian political structure changed, there was a dilemma of whether Russia would modify its Balkan policy within the framework of its retouched policy on the West, firmer and more predictable than before but certainly not a policy of confrontation. The Okinawa meeting of the Group 8 powers in July 2000, and Putin's foreign policy platform which was publicised before it made two things clear: Russia will keep insisting on Yugoslavia's territorial integrity (opposing the secession of Kosovo and Montenegro) but will not act as the advocate of the Belgrade regime. A visit to Moscow by Vuk Drašković, Zoran Djindjić and Vojislav Koštunica in late May, 2000,

signalled that the Serbian opposition wanted all and sundry to know that relations with Russia were no longer confined to the regime's exclusive club. The regime has also banked heavily on its economic and political ties with China.

1.2.3 The Crisis of the Pro-West Policy

Bora Kuzmanović, a social psychologist at the Belgrade University's Faculty of Philosophy, says (Press Club, July 1999) that there is no doubt that Serbian public opinion's trust in the international community has undergone a crisis because of the character of the NATO-Yugoslavia war. The crisis is not merely an outcome of the state-controlled media's hate propaganda against the international community, but also the spontaneous reaction of the people to what they actually lived through. (See Section 1.6.1, Technically Destroyed State-run Media).

“Those who believed that the international community was just, a community standing by democratic standards and the rule of law, are now faced with a war that killed civilians and destroyed civilian facilities, a war where the notion of legitimate targets became lost in extremely loose interpretations, a war not backed by any legitimacy or legality whatsoever, a war which the citizens perceived as being at the same time a crisis in the United Nations.

“Most people saw it not only as a war waged against a regime but also as an attack on a state and a nation,” says Kuzmanović (See Sections 1.1.2, Fear of Losing the State; 1.2.1, The Crisis of the Gazimestan

National Policy; 1.1.2, The Crisis of the Eastern Policy; 1.8 The Network of NGOs; 2.3, The Opposition Bloc, and; 2.3.2.1, The Alliance for Change).

“Most people began to feel strong patriotism which had nothing to do with the regime. We are constantly having to discuss this issue with certain figures from abroad who either are unwilling, unable or unprepared to understand it,” he says.

It appears that patriotic feelings have grown with time. In 1991 about 40,000 soldiers deserted. This was not the case during the NATO bombing in 1999, despite the fact that everyone was aware that the enemy was up to sixty times stronger. In some way, Serbian author Isidora Sekulić was right when she wrote: “Everything about Belgrade, including its residents, has a kind of wilful inclination to vulnerability, to going out to fight”. Serbs appeared to take the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as civil wars, but saw the NATO war as something perhaps best illustrated by the Russian term “Motherland War”. There were frequent comparisons between the NATO air raids in April 1999 and the German bombing of Belgrade in April 1941¹⁴. In the months that ensued, the regime did its utmost to prove that the war was being continued by different means, through the extension of sanctions¹⁵ and actions taken by its pro-West opponent which made these less acceptable to citizens who had displayed their loyalty to

¹⁴ Ranko Petković: “Yugoslavia and the World in the Post-Cold War Era,” Official Gazette, Belgrade, 1998

¹⁵ Miroslav Prokopijević and Jovan Teokarević: “The UN’s Economic Sanctions,” Institute for European Studies, Belgrade, 1998.

the state during the war. (See Section 2.3.2.1, The Alliance for Change).

1.3 The Techniques of Rule

It appears to be fairly common knowledge that the ruling regime has hindered the consolidation of the opposition by usurping property (assets of the former League of Communists of Serbia and state assets), deployment of police, seizing public property, inciting internal conflicts, setting up phantom parties, preventing or dispersing rallies, demonisation and election fraud and so on. However the basic issue here is that major political institutions have been destroyed. (See Sections 2.2.1, The Socialist Party of Serbia; 2.2.2, The Yugoslav United Left; 3.2.1, Opposition Coalitions).

1.3.1 Constitutional Blockade

In his article “Power and Disorder”, carried in issue 220/1999 of *Republika* magazine, political expert Milan Podunavac wrote that in the last decade of the twentieth century Serbia’s ruling structure was able to make its destructive demagogy effective because it took “a state of disorder” or “a state of nonexistent state, nonexistent law and anarchy” as a starting point. “Serbia today is a state where institutions have been destroyed and the society paralysed, law has been suspended, justice is derogated, institutions lack power and authority, the Army has been deprived of its apanages and the police of their reputation while the ruler himself cannot find a welcome with any other European ruler. The par-

adox is that the regime has been able to put this situation to good use in its political struggle. (See Section 1.1.2, Fear of Losing the State).

Yugoslavia's constitutional crisis is evident in the functioning of the federal state which is not recognised by the legally elected Montenegrin government. The state's sovereignty in a considerable part of its territory is utterly questionable; state borders in the territory of Kosovo are unprotected while the status of Kosovo itself is unclear. Zorica Radović regards a state of war as actually being in force in the territory of one of the two republics (Serbia) but not in the other (Montenegro). (Press Club, August 1999). The Federal Constitution is, technically speaking, relatively easily amended (requiring only ratification by the legislatures of both republics) while the Serbian Constitution belongs to the category known as hard constitutions. Amendments to the Constitution require a majority vote in the legislature and is then subject to a referendum. In terms of jurisdiction, however, the Federal Constitution has the upper hand. But here one has to bear in mind that the Serbian Constitution has not been brought into line with the Federal Constitution for nine years while the Montenegrin government proposed a change in the Federal Constitution completely ignoring the procedure stipulated by the Constitution itself. After its attempt to amend the Federal Constitution to allow the president to be elected by direct vote failed in 1997, the ruling coalition (the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Yugoslav United Left, the Serbian Radical Party, the Socialist People's Party and a faction of the People's Party) turned

to a summary procedure and carried out their plan overnight in a conspiratorial manner. MPs learned of it only one day prior to the event but were not provided with complete texts of the amendments they were supposed to decide on. All they received was a text of the initiative launched by a group of deputies. The newly-amended Constitution calls for a direct vote for deputies in the Yugoslav Parliament's Chamber of the Republics and for the president of the Federation as well. Kosta Čavoški describes such unparalleled amendments to the Constitution, with no preceding public debate or expert analysis, as best illustrating how Slobodan Milošević, as an autocrat, advocates legal nihilism (Press Club, July 10, 2000). His interpretation of the Constitution is similar to that of Pakistani dictator Zia Ul-Haq who used to say that a constitution was nothing but a booklet he could tear up at any time.

The dispute over amendments to the Constitution dates back to 1997, while that dealing with the composition of the Chamber of the Republics has waged virtually unabated since Montenegro's parliamentary elections in 1998, after which Montenegro denied the legitimacy of the federal cabinet. Under the former constitution, as well as the usual protection of its interests guaranteed in the Chamber of the Republics, the smaller federal unit was assigned what was known as a positive discriminatory quota. This meant that at least thirty representatives were elected to represent Montenegro in the Chamber of Citizens, whereas one-man-one-vote representation would entitle it to only seven. Because Belgrade ignored the outcome of the Montenegrin elec-

tions, the whole constitutional arrangement had to be changed. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was proclaimed in 1992, Kosta Čavoški reminds us, after the Federal Chamber of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, elected back in 1986 and with no mandate, voted in the so-called Žabljak Constitution with just one third (74) of the total MPs sitting in the Federal Chamber. Montenegro accepted this arrangement and endorsed it by a referendum. At the same time the Serbian opposition insisted that the state be constituted in a proper way, after calling elections for a constituent assembly, but was turned down in a similarly hasty debate which took place in the Serbian legislature in 1992.

1.3.1.1 Milo Djukanović: The Most Appropriate Opponent

Montenegrin President Milo Djukanović is the toughest opponent Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević has to deal with. At the same time he is the most appropriate. He is the toughest because Milošević obviously has no way of removing him, and the most appropriate because he personifies the conflict between the two republics and the crisis of the federal state, thus providing Milošević with an opportunity of presenting himself as the sole protector of the state's unity.

Because Djukanović met with officials of NATO countries during the Alliance's bombing of Yugoslavia, the Federal Cabinet, on May 28, 1999, accused him of breaching Yugoslav foreign policy and assisting the

aggressors. The cabinet asked state bodies to take all constitutional and legal measures possible against Djukanović. This was nothing but empty rhetoric.

In the meantime, relations between Belgrade and Podgorica have further deteriorated. On May 30, the Montenegrin cabinet proposed a “Draft Project for the New Arrangement of Relations between Montenegro and Serbia”. There was an accompanying announcement of discussion on the draft with representatives of Serbia’s ruling parties in the summer. Belgrade responded with an intensified campaign against Djukanović and turned down the draft as separatist and in breach of the Federal Constitution. Montenegro introduced a dual currency system, with the Deutschmark as legal tender. The Montenegrin government became ever more distanced and independent from the federal. Thus the crisis of the unfinished state continues. It is difficult to predict whether the crisis will escalate or whether the “coexistence of intolerance” will carry on. It seems that the Montenegrin public is divided in three: one part supports the status quo, the second claims to be neutral and the third is for a more autonomous or fully independent Montenegro.

1.3.2 Obstacles to the Work of the Parliament

Professor Pavle Nikolić notes that, under the Federal Constitution, the Federal Parliament is required to hold regular sessions over eight months (more than 240 days) of the year. However the Chamber of Citizens has sat on an average 24 days in a year while sessions of the Chamber of the Republics average ten days per year. For

the sake of comparison, the French National Assembly sits between 121 and 168 days per year. By hindering any serious parliamentary debate and preventing the opposition from using the instrument of parliamentary obstruction as a legal mode of political struggle (opposition members of parliament have been literally expelled), the Socialists have demonstrated their typical power-based arrogance and have driven the opposition into passivity. The leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Vojislav Šešelj, has been most enthusiastic in destroying the parliamentary atmosphere.

Political expert Milan Podunavac describes Serbia as characterised by a quasi-legitimate rule – the kind of rule which veils force, the fear and insecurity of the people and unstable institutions with illusory freedom, illusory institutions and illusory legitimacy. “Speaking about ourselves we could easily quote Quintillion: “There is no republic, there is no Senate, there is no dignity in any of us,”” says Podunavac.

1.3.3 The Elimination of Decency

Along with the war propaganda and the rhetoric of pogrom another technique has been used to hinder fair political competition. This is the elimination of decency from public discourse. Šešelj’s Radicals have given enormous assistance to the Socialists. Šešelj has slandered all and sundry: opposition leaders, journalists, students, academics and even senior Church officials. By cultivating “cave anti-communism”, “verbal prosecution” and the “Red Gang” and, overwhelmed with the rhetoric of street orators, the opposition has also contributed to the

elimination of decency from public discourse. Common sense virtues such as the duty of care and conscientious work, personal values and education no longer matter. The “values” accompanying resignation have taken the upper hand and resignation itself has become an excuse for diminishing ambitions.

The outcome of this has been the lost reputation of public institutions, the destruction of public opinion, the suppression of public figures while charlatans, jugglers and warmongers, both domestic and foreign, have reaped the benefits while time went by.

1.3.4 Changes in Election Rules in Election Year

Election rules have often been changed in an election year, because the election laws themselves have been adopted as last political resorts. In her essay “The Election System in Serbia¹⁶”, Marijana Pajvančić quotes the example of frequent changes in the election law before the first elections in 1990: almost every issue of the Official Gazette carried a new election rule. The 1990 elections were held in mid-December, with the last election rule adopted in November after the opposition began threatening a boycott. The same thing occurred in the summer of 2000 (on July 6 and 24): the Constitution was amended and election laws prescribing elections for the president of the republic and representatives in the Chamber of the Republics were

¹⁶ Marijana Pajvančić: “The Electoral System in Serbia,” *Republika* No. 158; Marijana Pajvančić: “Election Law,” *Graphica Academica*, Novi Sad, 1999, pp. 54-57.

adopted in a pre-election year. (See Sections 2.2.1.1.1, Slobodan Milošević; 1.3.1, Constitutional Blockade; 1.1.2, Fear of Losing the State, and; 3.3.1.7 The Endless Unification of the Opposition in 2000)

1.3.5 Growing Confusion

The Socialist Party of Serbia has always had many more activists on the ground than all the opposition parties combined. According to some surveys, the Socialist Party, when campaigning, assigns activists at the level of one to a large apartment building. Election scrutinising necessitates about 60,000 party activists, a number that opposition parties have never been able to afford. The regime has incited division among the opposition parties and appears to have backed a variety of “cottage parties” which blur the cognitive map and confuse a high percentage of voters. On several occasions^{17,18} up to 500,000 votes have been squandered on scores of small parties.

¹⁷ Vladimir Goati, Zoran Slavujević & Ognjen Pribičević: “Electoral Competitions in Yugoslavia, 1990-1992,” Radnička štampa, Belgrade, 1993, p. 75

¹⁸ In June 2000, The Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID) issued a CD containing an overview and analysis of election results in Serbia in the period December 1990 – December 1997. The overview presents “squandered” votes in each election year. For example: presidential election in 1992 – 344,556; republic elections in 1992 – 653,338; federal election in 1992. - 575,628; republican elections in 1993 – 380,855; local elections in 1996 – as much as 907,040; federal elections in 1996 - 287,414; republic elections in 1997 – 309,798; presidential election in 1997 – 252,501-517,906.

1.3.6 Corruption

Corruption, rather than fear, is the secret of despotism, wrote Alexis de Toqueville in his polemic with Montesquieu. “Milošević has put this technique to good use and his attitude to rebellious disciples (‘a charismatic community’) deserves special attention,” says Milan Podunavac.

According to Britain’s *The Economist* (“An Overview of the Balkans¹⁹”), the corruption index of Yugoslavia is 7.4 (the maximum is 9.0). Such an index by far exceeds those of the former Yugoslav republic, Hungary (1.2) and Albania (5.7), countries which are also undergoing transition.

1.3.7 The Promises of the Regime

Using nationalist and patriotic discourse, the regime has often promised to launch major enterprises, particularly in times of war. In 1990 Slobodan Milošević promised Serbia a standard of living equal to that of Sweden; in the summer of 1991, with war going on, Dragutin Zelenović, the former prime minister of Serbia, vowed to build “the high-speed railroad of Serbia”; during the war in Bosnia, in 1992, then Prime Minister Milan Panić promised “reforms”; the former government of the National Bank, Dragoslav Avramović promised a convertible dinar; “Beopolis, City for the 21st Century” was announced in 1995; the slogan “Serbia in 2000 – A Step Into the New Century” was launched in 1996; in 1999 “bridges for a new century”

¹⁹ *The Economist*, Balkan Report

were being rebuilt, and; in February 2000 the Socialist Party of Serbia held its fourth congress under the slogan “Reconstruction, Development, Reforms – 21 Projects for the 21st Century.”

1.3.8 Violence

Two attempts to assassinate Vuk Drašković, the beating of Maki Arsenijević, the arrest of Ivan Novković and the Požarevac scandal involving the Otpor movement are just some examples which illustrate the regime’s repression of political opponents, a process which has particularly escalated in 1999 and 2000. Over the past ten years, police have assaulted protesters on a number of occasions. The fiercest attacks took place in March 1991, June 1993, December 1996, January and February 1997, the autumn of 1999 and May 2000. The regime’s political opponents have appeared in court, mostly charged with libel (Zoran Djindjić, Čedomir Jovanović and Vladan Batić). Vuk Drašković was taken into custody in 1991 but was released several days later after strong pressure from the public.

1.3.8.1 Assassinations

On October 3, 1999, Vuk Drašković was injured in a car accident near Lazarevac. Three officials of the Serbian Renewal Movement were killed, including Drašković’s brother-in-law, Veselin Bošković. On June 15, 2000, Drašković was shot at in his Budva holiday house, two bullets scratching him in the ear and temple. The Serbian Renewal Movement announced a cam-

paigned against state terrorism as its top priority. Early in December, Vuk Drašković filed charges in the Belgrade District Court against the head of State Security for Belgrade, Milan Radonjić and for Serbia, Radomir Marković. He also demanded investigation of the assassination attempt.

1.3.8.2 Prosecution of Otpor members

The Radicals were the first, in the spring of 2000, to label the student movement Otpor (Resistance) as fascists. In mid-May, after an incident in Požarevac involving security guards from the Madona company the whole issue was taken over by the Yugoslav Left. Madona is owned by Marko Milošević, son of the Yugoslav president. In this family affair, the Left accused Otpor of terrorism and endangering the lives of its members. After the assassination of Boško Perošević, the Socialist president of the Vojvodina Assembly, the Socialist Party joined the chorus, labelling almost all political activists in Serbia as terrorists and fascists. In the meantime, a movement which up to then had been somewhat obscure shot to popularity despite newspaper reports on the arrest and interrogation of its activists (a thousand such cases at the very least) and party blackmail of their relatives. Cases of gangs beating Otpor activists occurred on two occasions (in Požarevac and Belgrade) in April and May. One of these incidents was even caught on videotape, but no measures were taken against the assailants.

1.3.9 Raids on the Civil Sector

1.3.9.1 The University under State Control

The most recent violations of academic freedom in the period from 1998 to 2000 testify to the failure of the seven-year struggle for democracy in Serbia and decades of struggle for the autonomy of public institutions. In 1998, at a time when an uneasy truce prevailed in the political arena, the regime passed the University Act, considerably extending its jurisdiction over the University. Under summary procedures, the government appointed new deans in Belgrade, Bor, Niš, Novi Sad, Leskovac, Vranje, Kraljevo, Subotica, Kragujevac, Čačak, Sombor and Užice, followed by Priština. The government pressured academics to sign employment contracts with the deans, who were now its representatives, thus breaching the status of the University and its right to autonomy in the selection of teaching staff. A number of academics were dismissed and many suspended or punished for refusing to sign these humiliating contracts²⁰. In order to pre-empt an imminent strike at the University, the Minister for Education decreed that the 1999-2000 academic year finish early, before the scheduled end of the semester. To back this up, student gatherings were banned and security guards brought into the faculties carried out their orders assiduously, even beating students (an incident at the Faculty of Architecture).

²⁰ Collection of papers "The Suppressed Civil Society," Eko Centar, Belgrade, 1998, Vukašin Pavlović

1.3.9.2 Banning Rebellion

Why did the regime take such severe measures? Probably because it had already had to cope with civil and intellectual mutiny at the University in 1991, 1992 and 1996-97. It appears that each generation of students must undergo its own 1968, a mutiny and defeat which will electrify and socialise generations to come. It is also important to remember that many political parties and organisations had been founded by people from the University. It is a grim irony that the University Act bears the signature of the president of Serbia, the same Milan Milutinović who, in 1970, as a party apparatchik, had thrown elitist academics out of the University. The new repression went far beyond the old model. According to the estimate of Professor Zaga Golubović (Press Club, October 11, 1999), 180 academics were expelled from Belgrade University.

1.3.9.3 Anti-Intellectualism

In 1998 the “government of national unity” included anti-intellectual and anti-liberal parties oriented to the ostracism of committed intellectuals. Both Vojislav Šešelj and Mirjana Marković pulled no punches when expressing their views on rebel academics and students, both of them interpreting academic freedom as a conspiracy. Paraphrasing Hannah Arendt, Milan Podunavac says that negative regimes always rely on radical isolation and the exclusion of citizens from the public arena. Podunavac adds that this totalitarian con-

cept of depoliticisation was used repeatedly as a key argument to justify the adoption of the University Act in the summer of 1998.

1.4 The Devastated Society

The former Yugoslav society fell apart, unprepared to tackle ethnic, economic, political, social, religious and other disputes and contradictions lasting for several decades. Some of these contradictions remained as the economic, political and social problems multiplied. Ever worsening social problems such as poverty, unemployment, social insecurity, negative demographic trends, growth in social and other diseases, the fall in the standard of living and the rise of the death rate, the housing crisis and the rise in the rate of deviant behaviour and crime are not being solved. Instead they have accumulated and become even more complex. This diagnosis is made by Miroslav Milosavljević of the Belgrade University Faculty of Political Science in his book “Social Policy in Transition”.

1.4.1 Recession

“After the NATO bombing, Yugoslavia ranked somewhere in the first half of the nineteenth century on the scale of relative development,” said Stojan Stamenković, the editor of “Monthly Analyses and Prognoses” and a fellow of the Belgrade Institute of Economic Sciences, in mid-July, 1999. If in 1980 the index of Yugoslavia’s position in the global economy

was 100, the same index in 1999 was 16 or, as he puts it, one sixth of the former level.

Stamenković noted that the bombing merely marked the final stage in Yugoslavia's years of economic decline: industrial production in the first trimester of 1999, before the bombing began, had fallen by ten per cent compared to the same period in 1998. In 1999 the average monthly salary was 90 Deutschmarks while by January 2000, said Stamenković, it could easily drop to 60 Deutschmarks.

Even before this last war the average salary in Yugoslavia was a tenth of that in Greece and one twentieth of the German average. Between 300 and 350 thousand of the employed workforce receive no monthly wages whatsoever.

**1.4.1.1 Extent of Poverty – Extremely poor: 462,000;
Poor: 6,186,000; Wealthy: 6,500**

Economist Dana Popović says (Press Club, August 1999) that some 6, 500 people have become extremely wealthy during the time of crisis. In her study on social stratification, sociologist Ljiljana Mijanović (Center for Policy Studies, a rich source of information of this kind²¹) notes that in the first half of 1997, just 35 per cent of the population had an income sufficient to provide the bare necessities. About half a million people

²¹ Milosav Milosavljević: "Social Policy in Transition," Centre for Policy Studies, Social Thought, Belgrade, 1998, pp. 1-40.

were living in extreme poverty²². Because of this crisis the number of marriages dropped by fifteen per cent over five years.

1.4.1.2 The Unemployed

Gradimir Zajić of the Labour Market Bureau of Serbia estimates that, of the total number of unemployed in 1997, between 25 and 30 per cent were actual surplus. During some periods under sanctions, he says, up to half a million workers were on enforced leave, receiving minimum salaries, usually in arrears.

In 1997, 814,000 people were looking for work, 207,000 more than the number of unemployed in 1989. Adding surplus workers to the number of unemployed it is clear that Serbia will have to deal with 1.5 million unemployed once the transition process begins. This fact itself probably makes people fear losing their jobs and results in their continuing to vote against change. A job, no matter how little it pays, guarantees some kind of subsistence and, at the very least, health and retirement insurance.

1.5 Entropic Subjection

What are the political effects of social devastation? Sociologist Berislav Šefer says that the omnipotent state-economic elite rules the employed and pensioners through uncontrolled use of the national income and its

²² Ljiljana Mijanović: "Social Policy in Transition," Centre for Policy Studies, Social Thought, Belgrade, 1998, pp. 211-253.

distribution. Because this has gone on for years, people have developed a sense of unconditional dependence on the state. Thanks to this atmosphere and the deeply-rooted belief that without the state's intervention things might get even worse, the regime has managed to remain in power.

An analysis of the society shows that the effects of increasing poverty are, contrary to expectations, nourished by many domestic and external factors. This hinders the establishment of alternative policies and blocks any turnaround.

Zoran Stojiljković of the Faculty of Political Science is one of those who believe that systematic internal and external pressure can force the regime to accept a compromise leading to political change. He says however (Press Club, July 26, 2000), that tolerance of the chaos in Kosovo coupled with the growing economic, social and political crises, could result in what he calls the End of the Weimar Republic Syndrome, the victory of a rightist, authoritarian faction.

Srećko Mihailović, a fellow of the Institute of Social Sciences, says that citizens fall into two categories of behaviour: civil activity and submissive passivity. The findings of a poll conducted in Serbia in the autumn of 1999 show a rise in the population's fears for their survival. However, says one of the survey team, Dragan Popadić, a social psychologist from the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy, the researchers were unable to establish any correlation between these fears and the willingness of people to become politically active. This could mean that the growing poverty reinforces political passivity,

while isolation entrenches the “Eastern bloc psychology”.

1.5.1 Loss of Support

In their study “Two Essays on Legitimacy” (Belgrade, 1999), Zoran Dj. Slavujević and Srećko Mihailović noted a rise in overt distrust and a fall in people’s confidence in the major state institutions. In 1997, for example, fewer people trusted the Serbian government than in 1993, at the time of hyperinflation and general impoverishment. In terms of support for the government, Serbia in 1996 was well down on the list of countries in transition and in 1997 at the very bottom. An overview of the chart from this trough on shows the following: Belarus (the difference between the percentage of people trusting the government and those not trusting it is negative and amounts to 70), Serbia in 1997, -55; Ukraine, -47; Hungary, -39; Serbia in 96, -29; Rumania, -29 and so on. The people of Serbia do not see their government as a responsible and efficient executive body: 38 per cent believe that it is under the direct control of Milošević; 10 per cent see it as being under the control of a small circle of senior officials from the Socialist Party of Serbia, and; 21 per cent believe that the government is not accountable to anybody. The government is seen as an executive body accountable to the legislature by 7 per cent. Only 4 per cent of respondents believe that the government is accountable to the citizens of Serbia.

The authors of the study point out the paradox that power is retained by the pro-regime bloc, the political

system imposed by the Socialist Party of Serbia, despite the fact that confidence in it has constantly fallen: in 1990 it won 40 per cent of the total vote, by 1997 that had dropped to just 20 per cent. In other words, support for the regime and ruling party had halved and fallen to just one fifth of the electorate in 1997.

Ever since the Serbian parliamentary elections in 1997, the parties in the ruling coalition have steadily lost voter support, with support for the Socialist Party of Serbia and the Yugoslav United Left almost halved (See chart “Voters’ Choices in 1997-1999”, Section 3.4.2).

The findings of the survey show that as many as 59 per cent of respondents believe that the bombing of Yugoslavia could have been avoided had foreign policy been more prudent. The opposite view is held only by a majority of supporters of the ruling coalition, 82 per cent of those supporting the Socialist Party of Serbia and 74 per cent of Radical supporters. The findings also indicate that the majority of citizens (mostly those supporting the opposition) have pro-West attitudes (43 per cent). Most supporters of the Socialist Party of Serbia (64 per cent) and the Serbian Radical Party (60 per cent) advocate a union with Russia and Belarus.

Only five per cent of respondents claim to be satisfied with Serbia’s international position. In 1996, this figure was 95 per cent. Dissatisfaction with Serbia’s international standing was expressed by between 96 and 100 per cent of respondents supporting the opposition, but also by 57 per cent of Socialist supporters and

as many as 85 per cent of those supporting the Radical Party of Serbia.

1.5.2 Partial Success of Non-Parliamentary Means of Struggle

1.5.2.1 Election Boycotts

Abstainers make up one of the largest non-government “parties”. Although the number of abstainers varies by as much as 700,000 – about the membership size of one of the larger opposition parties – the total number is about 2.8 million. People low on the scales of wealth, education, power and prestige are mostly apathetic. Apathy is also characteristic of ill-informed people, women, manual workers and, as of recently, those who have become politically indifferent after their early enthusiasm in 1990. The opposition has so far not managed to attract the abstainers in any of its boycott strategies. Appeals to boycott elections failed in May 1992 and in 1997 because the majority of people once again saw the elections as a manifestation of loyalty to the state.

Appeals to boycott elections have proved to be a risky gambit, immobilising a section of political power while turning the control of institutions over to the regime and enabling it to govern an isolated state.

Two unsuccessful boycotts (in the summer of 1992 and the autumn of 1997) created a vacuum in the electorate, considerably assisting the rise of Vojislav Šešelj

and his Radicals. (See Section 2.2.3, The Serbian Radical Party²³.)

In the summer of 1992 it was the democratic opposition, including the Democratic Party, the Serbian Renewal Movement and other related parties, which appealed to the public to boycott elections. In 1997 the boycotters were the Democratic party, the Civil Alliance of Serbia and associated parties while in the spring of 2000 it was the Serbian Renewal Movement which opted for a boycott.

It should be noted here that, sticking to the strategy of their national movement, the Kosovo Albanian parties boycotted Serbian and federal elections for a decade. However that is another story. In any case it was not the opposition which benefited from the Albanian boycott but the regime, which used to get forty-odd parliamentary seats from Kosovo at cost price.

1.5.2.2 Strikes

Darko Marinković, a fellow of the Institute for Political Studies, analysed a strike which occurred at the Zastava-Namenska plant in Kragujevac. (Interestingly enough the strike occurred in the metalwork industry which had operated at 80 per cent below capacity for years and in a town with a population of 200,000 people of whom 50,000 were unemployed and 36,000 worked for Zastava including, at that point, 24,000 workers on enforced leave.) The Kragujevac metal

²³ "Absent Parties," Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, Belgrade, 1999.

workers went on strike, taking to the streets 39 times and finally beginning a hunger strike, all to no effect. Most of the demands made by the strikers were such that they could not be met without the launching of radical economic and social programs.

By way of illustration Marinković also cited a strike in the Jugoeksport company, the longest strike ever in Yugoslavia, lasting 526 days. The strikers made no demands for salaries or paid leave but were opposed to the illegal privatisation of the company and the blatant plundering of its assets. Marinković noted that the effects of the strikers' endeavour were insignificant and that strikes by themselves could not bring radical change to the society. The activities of trade unions, therefore, have often centred on the political arena. And, for that matter, have been pretty futile.

1.5.2.3 Petitions

On March 17, 1991, enormous numbers of Belgraders put their signatures to "An Appeal to the Public by Intellectuals of Serbia". The text read: "Elected as president of the Republic only three months ago, Slobodan Milošević is now no longer trusted by the people. The entire world, all the Yugoslav republics and nations (apart from the vassal regime in Montenegro) and, finally, Serbia itself and its youth have stood up against Milošević's Serbia. His ability to make enemies of all and sundry have brought Serbia to the very brink of civil war."

1.5.2.4 Protests

Over nine years there were six huge waves of pro-opposition demonstrations, the most famous of all being the protest of March 9, 1991. On October 5 of the same year a mass rally took place in Belgrade on the occasion of the arrival of Prince Aleksandar in Belgrade. The 1992 rally on St Vitus' Day lasted for three weeks. In 1993 people rallied for a month to defend Vuk and Danica Drašković who had been arrested and taken into custody. The Radicals staged a series of small rallies in 1994 in defence of their leader. In 1996-97 a civil protest lasted 88 days and the accompanying student protest more than 117 days. In the summer and autumn of 1999 the Alliance for Change, a group of opposition parties, staged protests in several towns throughout Serbia. In Belgrade the police used force to prevent protesters spreading outside the city centre.

All of these protests were only partially effective. What had been won on the streets was often lost later on. The people won the right to assemble in March 1991, although there were some later attempts to restrict this. The regime's concessions in the field of mass media were subsequently annulled. The 1992 St Vitus' Day rally forced the regime to condescend to a round table and extraordinary elections. The opposition lost the elections. Thanks to both internal and external pressure, Vuk Drašković was released in 1993. The 1996-97 winter protests made it possible for the opposition to claim its victory at local elections. Again, the quality of the opposition local governments is quite another story.

1.5.2.5 Student Rebellion

One popular notion in Belgrade is that even since 1968, every generation of students graduates with a political rebellion. Rallies staged by students have been long, imaginative and persistent. They have often challenged or ridiculed the powerful police forces which have blocked, rather than suppressed them. The students rose on March 10, 1991, while army tanks were cruising the streets of Belgrade; in 1992 they launched the Student Protest; their actions under the motto "Belgrade is the World" during the 1996-97 protests are considered a model in civil behaviour. The outcome of this battle has been considerably diminished by the subjugation of the University in 1998. The last student rally gave birth to such interesting institutions as the Student Parliament, the Student Union and the Otpor Student Movement. This last more or less managed to keep up the tension of opposition to the violation of academic freedom in 1998. The movement was revived during the 1999 rallies, while in the spring and summer of 2000 it has figured as a principal target of the regime's campaign, marked by allegations of terrorism and the systematic arrest of more than a thousand of the movement's activists (arrested, photographed, fingerprinted, police files opened and occasionally appearing in court).

1.5.2.6 The Serbian Orthodox Church in the Political Arena

After the tragic events in Kosovo, in the summer of 1999, the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church

demanded that Slobodan Milošević and the federal cabinet resign and allow the establishment of a government of national salvation, in the interest of the people and their redemption. The Church had acted similarly back in 1992 when, in its Memorandum, the Synod proclaimed that “The Serbian Orthodox Church openly distances itself from the regime as such ... nobody’s office is more important than the destiny and liberty of an entire nation and nobody is entitled to claim a monopoly on our people and the future of our children”. By mounting a religious procession, the Church helped students break the police cordon in central Belgrade in 1997. In the summer of 1999 the Church hosted an attempt to promote the idea of a transitional government of experts. Over the past ten years the Church has taken an anti-regime attitude, although somewhat contradictory views have been voiced from its upper ranks²⁴.

Although the Church has no political infrastructure of its own, several political parties, beginning with the Serbian Renewal Movement, have attempted to include it in their activities. There is a party using the name Christian Democratic, but there is no real Christian Democracy whatsoever in Serbia’s political ambience.

²⁴ “The Serbian Elite,” Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Belgrade, 2000; Radmila Radić: “The Church in Politics and Politics in the Church,” pp. 39-82.

1.5.2.7 Generals in Politics

General Vuk Obradović founded the Social Democracy Party in 1997; a year later General Momčilo Perišić established his Movement for the Democratic Transformation of Serbia; retired generals Aksentijević, Jokić and Negovanović, are prominent in the New Democracy Party, from which they used to advocate Yugoslavia's joining the Partnership for Peace, and there is also Colonel Dragan Vukšić, engaged as an adviser by the Movement for a Democratic Serbia. All of them have been targets of regime demonisation and persecution: the Disciplinary Commission of the Union of Reserve Officers stripped Momčilo Perišić and Dragan Vukšić of their ranks. Rumours aside, there is no serious indication that the Army might step into the political arena. However the top people in the Army, particularly the Chief of General Staff, Nebojša Pavković, are politically exposed and overtly support the regime and Slobodan Milošević, whom they consider their supreme commander. (The president of Yugoslavia commands the Army together with the Supreme Defence Council which includes the presidents of the two republics. Since autumn 1998, however, Montenegrin President Milo Djukanović has not been present at meetings of the Council.)

There is no doubt that a faction of the former Yugoslav People's Army's senior officers worked behind the scenes to assist the rise of Slobodan Milošević to power. On the eve of the 1990 elections, for example, General Kadijević gave statements which could be interpreted as the Army's support for Milošević. Milošević,

however, has hardly ever seen the Army as a pillar of his authority. Instead, he has relied on the police.

No coup has ever been staged, though some suspected they had been prepared. From April 12 to 14, 1991, for instance, the Supreme Command demanded that the leadership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia impose a state of emergency, but this move was declined in the face of strong protest from Croatia and Slovenia. In his capacity as president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Dobrica Ćosić met the Supreme Command of the Yugoslav Army on May 23, 1993. This meeting earned him a prosecution later on. A source within the meeting revealed that one of the generals had said to him: “What are you waiting for, Dobrica? You have the Army!” The Serbian Radical Party moved successfully for the dismissal of Ćosić on June 1, 1993, by secret ballot of the Parliament. In the course of 1998 and 1999, the Montenegrins (those who supported Djukanović) were constantly sounding the alarm over a possible coup. It failed to eventuate. Vuk Drašković claims, however, that at a federal cabinet meeting held during the state of war in 1999, the issue of “a coup in Montenegro” was on the agenda. The plan, as he described it, was to occupy Montenegro’s state-run television, accused by the Army of revealing the deployment of troops. The cabinet denied everything, saying it had no authority to command the Army and that only the Yugoslav president had such authority. Just before the Constitution was amended to provide for direct election of the president, a statement from the General

Staff fiercely attacked Montenegrin President Milo Djukanović.

1.5.2.8 Civil Parliaments

A variety of “civil parliaments” and “civil resistance movements” have held small but persistent protests in Čačak, Leskovac, Valjevo and Kragujevac during the summer of 1999²⁵. In some towns rallies were held on up to fifty consecutive days, bringing together between two hundred and a thousand protesters demanding the dismissal of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević.

Previously obscure people were thrown into the limelight by events. On July 5, 1999, an unheard-of desk editor at the local Leskovac television station, Ivan Novković²⁶, broadcast a statement on air which brought 20,000 people onto the town square, beginning an entire

²⁵ “The Serbian Elite,” Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Belgrade, 2000; Radmila Radić: “The Church in Politics and Politics in the Church,” pp. 39-82.

²⁶ Ivan Novković

For several months in 1999, the desk editor in TV Leskovac, Ivan Novković, was prominent as a symbol of civil disobedience, which the opposition parties never managed to articulate. On July 1, during a break in a basketball game between Yugoslavia and Germany which was being broadcast live, Novković interrupted the program and went on air to protest against the many Leskovac residents who had been mobilised and subsequently died in Kosovo and the generally poor situation in the district. His seven-minute speech was open and sincere. His expression was grave, his dress was formal, and he faced the camera holding a piece of paper in trembling hands. He introduced himself to the audience, apologised for his stage fright, demanded that the head of the Jablanica district, Živojin Stefanović, resign and called on the people of the district to assemble in the town’s central square and protest

series of protests. Painter Bogoljub “Maki” Arsenijević called for civil protest in Valjevo. Both were arrested and

against the local authorities. With his statement over, Novković simply walked out of the building. Leskovac residents responded en masse to his appeal and assembled in the square and in front of Stefanović’s house. During nine days of protests, nine people were arrested. The management of TV Leskovac suspended Novković and all staff working in the same shift. Novković was arrested at the home of friends where he had taken refuge. Judge Mirjana Marković sentenced him to one month in jail for “organizing an unauthorized rally”. His trial lasted little more than 20 minutes. Novković is still facing criminal proceedings. In a way, Novković is a more ordinary person than Bogoljub “Maki” Arsenijević, a self-educated iconographer born in 1955. On July 12, together with the Civil Resistance of Valjevo, Arsenijević organized a protest against the regime and the opposition. A group of protesters attempted to storm the Town Hall, the police intervened and at least three police officers and five citizens suffered injuries. Arsenijević is high-strung and inclined to public performances. Several years ago, he built a monument to the then president of Serbia. The monument was in the form of male genitalia. He also erected a monument to his favourite opposition leader – this time in the form of buttocks dyed red. He was given suspended jail sentences for the two performances. And, in a way, Maki suffered more than Novković. When arrested, he was brutally beaten by the police. His jaw was broken. However, he was kept in custody in the Valjevo prison. It was only after ten days that he was sent to hospital for surgery. In mid-November, Bogoljub Arsenijević, the father of five children, was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment. Such brutal treatment of a relatively benign incident made Maki a victim of the regime’s paranoia. Novković is more a symbol of the spontaneous revolt of ordinary people. Actually, he is an ordinary man although, ironically, he bears a physical resemblance to President Slobodan Milošević. His friends even call him by the same nickname, Čobi. However, his subsequent career move demonstrates that it is not feasible to deal with politics outside political parties. Novković became an activist of the Democratic Party.

put on trial. Arsenijević subsequently escaped from prison.

The Civil Parliament of Serbia was established in Čačak on September 4, 1999, and is now a general assembly of all the civil parliaments so far set up (in Valjevo, Kruševac, Sombor, Zemun, Leskovac, Kraljevo, Niš and, of course, Čačak). On September 22, 1999, civil movements throughout Serbia decided to act under a common umbrella, the General People's Movement. The president of the movement's Collegium, Dušan Janjić, has warned that the enormous energy of the people aimed at radical change could easily degenerate into chaos and violence unless the opposition political parties responded appropriately.

1.6 Media

The opposition's political struggle has been closely linked with the struggle for free media²⁷. One of the most frequent slogans during the March 9 protest of 1991 was "We want the truth!" This event became a paradigm of persistent public pressure on one hand and Milošević's refusal to free "TV Bastille" as Television Belgrade used to be known, on the other²⁸. Even when giving way to anything, Milošević would promptly break his promise. When pressed by protesters on March 9, for example, he was forced to sacrifice the then

²⁷ Mihajlo Bjelica: "Media and Political Power: A Survey of Political Press and Journalism in Serbia, 1945-1997," Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade, 1997.

²⁸ Dušan Reljić: "Death Writing," Samizdat-B92, Belgrade, 1998.

director of Television Belgrade, Dušan Mitević. By August that year he had replaced the old team with a new one and appointed as director of the state broadcaster Vojislav Mićović, the author of booklets on “special war”. The practice of rewarding and encouraging “para-journalists” to carry out patriotic tasks continued (See Section 1.1.2.1, The “Anti-Serb Conspiracy”. Journalists who couldn’t meet professional criteria became major writers, most of them recruited from the ranks of outmoded veterans standing somewhere between journalism and politics. Local correspondents and journalists from war zones were being promoted.

The stepping up of the warmongering tone in 1991 provoked a new revolt by journalists. Protests went on for days in one of Belgrade’s main squares, Terazije, in central Kragujevac, Novi Sad and several other towns. In the autumn of 1991, just a kilometre away from Terazije which was overflowing with journalists protesting against the abuse of television for war-mongering, people from New Belgrade, the dormitory suburb for army officers, were euphorically cheering convoys of soldiers heading for the front near Vukovar.

The struggle for the Belgrade media did not let up during the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, nor during the NATO war against Serbia in 1999 when all political activities were put on hold²⁹.

A somewhat futile struggle over the major newspaper publisher, Politika, and Radio Television Serbia in the

²⁹ “Purges in Belgrade Radio & Television,” January 1993 – a dossier compiled by the Executive Committee of the Independent Trade Union of Radio & Television Belgrade.

summer of 1992 demonstrated that journalists were probably the sector of the population most hit by dismissals and professional obstruction. In the wake of the 1992 strikes at Radio Belgrade and Radio Television Serbia, more than 1,500 journalists and other television program makers were suspended and sent on enforced leave. Many were dismissed.

It is only to be expected that people are drained and exhausted by struggle. During the March 1991 protest, police occupied Studio B Television and banned broadcasting. The incident only fuelled the protests, now under the slogan "We want the truth!" shouted by students from New Belgrade. However when the regime seized control of Studio B in 1995, the event met with only token public resistance. In 1997 the opposition was able to reclaim its victory in Belgrade's local government elections. After breaking with its competitor, Zoran Djindjić, the Serbian Renewal Movement took over control of the station. The best journalists walked out, but again the ensuing public protest was pretty scant.

At this point, the media in Serbia are under threat from the regime, from the opposition which has "fought" for them for a long time and from international factors which have assisted some and regarded others as legitimate military targets, thus putting their protégés in a position which can hardly be justified in an ethical sense. In terms of program content, the regime, the opposition and even the international sponsors have in recent months trampled over the independence of the media by attempting to dictate their "commitment" (to patriotic tasks such as reconstruction of

the country and promotion of its ruler, the anti-Milošević cause of the opposition and justification of NATO intervention, investigation of war crimes and so on)³⁰.

There is no doubt that the Socialist Party of Serbia has a crucial influence on the state-run media, despite the fact that the Serbian Information Ministry is headed by a Radical while the Federal Ministries for Information and Telecommunications are in the hands of the Yugoslav Left. As far as the “positive propaganda campaign” goes, the Socialist Party of Serbia has the greatest coverage, while the Yugoslav Left and the Serbian Radical Party’s releases and statements dominate media reports which demonise political opponents.

Journalists from independent newsrooms and rebels from the state-run media are members of the Independent Association of Serbian Journalists. Political influence on independent media varies, a number of local radio and television stations are influenced by the Serbian Renewal Movement through local governments while the others, to a far lesser extent and occasionally only in the form of appeals are linked to other parties and the non-governmental sector.

1.6.1 Technically Destroyed State-run Media

Steps taken by the NATO commanders during the 1999 war are good examples of perverse arbitration in a

³⁰ “Public Opinion,” a collection of papers, Institute for Social Sciences, Centre for Policy Studies and Public Opinion Research, Belgrade, 1994.

dispute blown out of proportion. In the early hours of April 30, 1999, the telecommunications tower on Mt Avala was toppled. The mast was built in 1965 and was used by Radio Television Serbia as a transmitter, but it was also a landmark of Belgrade, as is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. On April 23, at 2.10 a.m., NATO missiles hit the Radio Television Serbia building in Aberdareva Street in central Belgrade. Sixteen staff on duty that night, including makeup artists, desk editors and technicians, were found dead under the terrible debris. Belgraders attending protest concerts that day made a magnificent gesture of sympathy: in a silent column they marched to “TV Bastille” which, eternal protesters, they had besieged many a time, and laid wreaths of flowers in memory of the dead. Brussels justified the attack by claiming the station was a “legitimate target”.

The nature of Radio Television Serbia’s programs was not changed by the bombing. They retain their pogrom-like tone. The bombing merely hampered and compromised the struggle against “TV Bastille” by putting it in a new perspective. The regime repaired the destroyed facilities, regained control over some other media (as in the case of *Vječernje novosti*) and blatantly hijacked others (Radio B92 and RTV Studio B).

1.6.2 Independent Media: Surviving with Difficulty

The independent media are perhaps the unsung heroes of the ten-year struggle for democracy in Serbia. The veterans of this campaign are the weekly *Vreme*, founded in 1990, *NIN* weekly which was purged when Milošević came to power and beat the populist drum

during the first years of his rule before regaining its independence in 1992, the bi-monthly *Republika* magazine, daily *Naša borba*, closed down step by step from 1995 to 1998, the paper's successor *Danas*, Radio Television Studio B which has been closed down, regained and passed from hand to hand, Radio B92, closed down twice, in March 1991 and April 1999, and so on. During the NATO air raids, regime associates seized control of Radio B92. The employees refused to work for the newly-appointed management. Thanks to the assistance of Studio B, a new station was set up under the name Radio B2-92 and the crew resumed work under somewhat changed circumstances in the summer of the same year. In May 2000 the regime took over Studio B and B2-92 was forced to restrict its broadcasts to the Internet, but by the summer of 2000 had begun to implement a solution to reach its Belgrade audience from distant transmitters in Bosnia.

The regime clamped down severely on independent media in 1998, 1999 and 2000. Against a background of NATO threats and an unproclaimed state of war in the fall of 1998 and on the basis of a special government decree, the police forced the newsrooms of dailies *Danas*, *Dnevni telegraf* and *Naša borba* to close down. Then in October 1998 the legislature passed an utterly restrictive Public Information law under which magistrates imposed Draconian fines on a number of newspapers and their editors. The regime's most drastic showdown was with Slavko Ćuruvija, the owner of *Dnevni telegraf* and the fortnightly *Evropljanin*. Enormous fines virtually strangled the publications and forced Ćuruvija to move

his newsrooms to Montenegro. Soon after the outbreak of war, Ćuruvija was assassinated on his doorstep by unknown executioners. In October 1999, under the pretext of alleged wrongdoing, the regime imposed a fifteen-day ban on daily *Glas javnosti* and its printer.

Private publishers launched interesting projects such as *Blic* and *Glas javnosti*³¹ following Ćuruvija's model of an evening paper, *Dnevni telegraf*. The offensive against *Glas javnosti* began in the summer of 1999 and has been escalating ever since. First the publishing house was drained by scores of heavy fines. Then its privatisation was annulled, severely jeopardising the *Glas* printing house, which was also printing a number of other independent papers. Magistrates handed down hundreds of fines on newspapers under the Public Information Act. In court the publishers were given virtually no opportunity to submit evidence³². The regime seized control of Studio B in a police raid at 2.30 a.m. on May 17, 2000. The Serbian government had decided to remove the right of ownership of the broadcaster from the Belgrade City Assembly. Staff from the Studio B newsroom were thrown out into the street. An attempt to defend Studio B lasted for a week. Police beat and dispersed protesters on May 18 and 19. Rallies of support in Belgrade and ten or so other towns grew weaker and weaker and finally came to halt. At the same time the regime attempted to close local television outlets in

³¹ "File on Repression," Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (IJAS), Belgrade, 2000.

³² "File on Repression," Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (IJAS), Belgrade, 2000.

Kraljevo, Pirot and Požega. Local residents mounted massive protests and the regime was forced to give up. It did, however, manage to close down a number of local stations, including TV Nemanja in Ćuprija.

From February 10 onwards, reporters from the independent dailies, *Glas javnosti*, *Blic* and *Danas*, and the Beta news agency were on several occasions thrown out of sessions of parliamentary committees and otherwise obstructed in their reporting of the work of the Serbian legislature and the Federal Parliament. This was explained as being by request of the representatives of the Serbian Radical Party, unanimously boycotted by independent media since party leader Vojislav Šešelj had begun accusing them of terrorism and treason.

When the opposition won power in the local government of a number of towns in 1997, the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) developed a network of local broadcast media. Some of these local outlets, such as Radio Pančevo, Radio Bajina Bašta, Radio Boom from Požarevac and many others offer their audiences most attractive programs. However most radio frequencies and television channels are taken up by private outlets close to the regime. There are also a number of television production houses such as VIN (Video Weekly) and Mreža (Network) as well as the Local Press organisation, an association of independent local newspapers, some which, such as *Nezavisna svetlost* and *Novine Vranjske* are of genuinely high quality. All of them survive only with great difficulty. They are forced to compete under unequal conditions with state-run media, they are demonised and targeted by the law.

Their access to markets is strictly limited, particularly the advertising market: advertisers' business depends greatly on the regime and they must therefore be most careful not to identified as "opposition supporters"³³.

1.7 The Network of Trade Unions

Trade unions generally fall into the categories of "pro-regime" and "pro-opposition", though both deny any links whatsoever with political parties. The Socialist Party of Serbia exerts the strongest influence on the state trade union. However, in July 2000, the Yugoslav Left announced that it intended to strengthen its influence on trade unions.

Professional associations are similarly polarised. Journalists working for the state-run media are members of the Journalists Association of Serbia.

And the same applies to academics and, most recently, the judiciary³⁴.

1.7.1 The State Union of Independent Labour Unions

The labour union scene in Serbia is marked by pluralism and an extremely fragmented union movement at the lower levels of organisation. The actual central office of labour unions, the Alliance of Independent

³³ The source of information is "Mass Media in the Republic of Serbia," issued by the Information Centre of the Institute for Journalism.

³⁴ "The Role of Trade Unions in Transition," Centre for Political Studies, Belgrade, 1999, Slavoljub Luković: "The Trade Union Scene of Serbia," pp. 247-275

Trade Unions (“state-run labour union”) was established in 1992 when the former Union of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia was disbanded. In an article published in a collection of papers under the title “The Role of Trade Unions in Transition” (Center for Policy Studies, Belgrade, 1999), Slavoljub Luković wrote that eighteen members of the “state-run trade union” represented 1,820,000 workers. Zoran Stojiljković of the Belgrade Faculty of Political Science describes the union as a castle in the air. He questions the official information on the number of workers represented, claiming that any calculation can yield no more than 1.3 or 1.4 million members.

1.7.2 Nezavisnost Trade Unions

The Nezavisnost (Independence) Trade Unions organisation was founded in Belgrade in 1991. The organisation claims to be independent of the state, political parties and religious institutions. In 1994, Nezavisnost established a labour union school, focused on “training in democracy and labour union activity”. The Association of Independent and Free Trade Unions was established in 1998. According to Zoran Stojiljković’s estimate the association has a membership of between 300 and 350 thousand.

By way of illustrating the Serbian labour union movement’s fragmentation and factions, Slavoljub Luković (in the collection of papers “The Role of Trade Unions in Transition”) cites one company (The Public Transportation Company of Belgrade – GSB) which has as many as nine labour organisations: the GSB

Independent Labour Union, the Independent labour Union, the Union of Free Trade Unions, the Drivers' Trade Union, the Trade Union, the Trade Union of Physical and Technical Security, the Independent and Free Labour Union, the Employees' Labour Union and the GSB Labour Union for Salvation. The fragmented labour union scene probably reflects the chaos which prevails in Yugoslav firms. During the 1999 war, it appears that there was internal skirmishing in the Nezavisnost Trade Unions which resulted in the establishment of the teachers' trade union Prosvećenost (Enlightenment).

1.8 Network of NGOs

More than twenty thousand associations, most of them dealing with sports, culture, the arts and a variety of hobbies are registered in Yugoslavia. We have Red Cross organisations and volunteer fire-fighters, welfare and humanitarian organisations, along with several thousand professional organisations including engineers, sociologists, artists and so on. Most organisations were established under the former system and so have remained under the actual control of the regime. The remainder, some 1,000 organisations, have been established over the past ten years. Most are listed in the "Directory of Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Organisations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," issued by the Center for Development of the Non-Profit Sector. Most NGOs are focused on ecology (114), youth and students (50), local communities (48), social and

cultural issues (45), humanitarian work (43), various trades (40), education and scientific research (31), alternative culture (24), displaced persons (23) and so forth.

Yugoslav Action, which brings together 52 organisations was established at the beginning of the NATO bombing as a result of close cooperation between the Nezavisnost Trade Unions and a number of non-governmental organisations. In the summer of 1999 the association organised a symbolic referendum on the question “What kind of Serbia would I like to live in?” Yugoslav Action announced that it was prepared to coordinate its activities with the Alliance for Change. The Alliance of Free Towns was established in 1996 following the opposition’s victory in local elections in an attempt to coordinate the work of local governments.

The regime also made an attempt to set up a network of newly-emerged “pro-government NGOs” which were supposed to act as its mouthpieces. Judging by such activities as charges laid against inappropriate media and similar campaigns, the Patriotic Alliance could easily be an exponent of the regime’s hard-core wing, the Yugoslav Left. Most social, sports, cultural and other organisations are, in any case, under the thumb of the regime.

1.8.1 Expert Groups

University academics have founded a number of organisations such as the Alliance for Defence of the University and the Alternative Academic Educational Network (AAOM), a kind of parallel university.

Together with AAOM, the reformist economists of G17 and the reformist physicians of G15, the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID) was notably active in the summer of 1999. CESID, for example, drafted a model package of election laws, including media legislation. In the social sphere, the Center for Policy Studies (CPA) team of experts joined G17 to strengthen the argument in favour of crucial and unavoidable social reform. The Forum for Ethnic Relations and the Forum for International Relations also figure as expert groups. Most (Bridge) and the Center for Anti-War Action organise seminars on peace as a kind of additional multidisciplinary training for students. There is also an expert team working with the Nezavisnost Trade Unions. All these groups produce various papers such as draft election laws, analyses and recommendations which they offer to political parties.

2 The Party System

2.1 Relevant and Irrelevant Parties

Vladimir Goati, in his book "Elections in Yugoslavia from 1990 to 1998"³⁵, divides the almost two hundred political parties registered in 1998 into those which are relevant and those which are not. The parties Goati treats as irrelevant are those winning less than four per cent of the vote in parliamentary elections. However even such small parties may from time to time play a significant role on the political scene because of their huge potential for the forming of coalitions or black-mail³⁶.

According to Goati, the relevant parties are the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) and the Democratic Party (DS). Some analysts also include the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) in the list. Taken together with the parties representing the Vojvodina Hungarians and the Muslim-Bosniaks from Sandžak, this is a total of seven major groupings. During the period from 1990 to 1999, the Kosovo parties were not aligned with the opposition as they recognised neither the state nor the Constitution³⁷.

³⁵ Vladimir Goati: "Elections in Yugoslavia from 1990 to 1998: Citizens' Will or Electoral Manipulation," Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, Belgrade, 1998, p. 50

³⁶ Ognjen Pribičević: "Regime and Opposition in Serbia," Radio B92, Belgrade, 1997.

³⁷ Mihailović, Bačević, Goati et al.: "From Electoral Rituals to Free Elections," Institute for Social Sciences, Belgrade, 1991.

2.2 The Ruling Bloc

2.2.1 The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)

The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) emerged formally from the unified League of Communists of Serbia and the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Serbia at the congress of unification which took place in Belgrade on July 17, 1990.

The congress adopted the party's platform and statute by which the SPS was presented as a modern leftist party. The SPS platform, reputed to be written by Mihailo Marković, an Academician and philosopher belonging to the former celebrated and persecuted Praxis group, is a comprehensive, election-oriented and pragmatic plan of action, designed to appeal to a large segment of the population (see Section 1.3, The Techniques of Rule). In its early stages, SPS activists favoured a discourse brimming with sentiment for Serbia, Yugoslavia, and "socialism". Later they mostly spoke of "reform", although the major trump was the image of a party "capable of safeguarding the state". (See Section 1.1.2, Fear of Losing the State.)

The SPS took over most of the assets of the former party with whatever remained going to the League of Communists – The Movement for Yugoslavia, which later became the Yugoslav Left.

The SPS also retained the League of Communists' historical, ideological, organisational and cadre framework. In his closing remarks at the unification congress,

Slobodan Milošević, the former president of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, now elected founding president of the Socialist Party of Serbia, said “A strong platform has been adopted, which can mobilise not only party members but all citizens of Serbia,” adding “We are facing a leftist era”. He also described the newly-founded Socialist Party of Serbia as a bulwark against the Right which, he said, was advocating utterly destructive political positions. “Together with the unified Left,” said Milošević, “the Party itself is striving for a better life”.

During its first election campaign, true to its platform, the SPS presented itself to the electorate as a safe haven for Serbia. The party strongly emphasised its success in establishing “a unified Serbia”. It also took pains to point out its “progressiveness” and dedication to peace, labelling the opposition “the forces of darkness”, whose election victory would leave Serbia facing bleak prospects. The SPS election slogan was “With us, you’ll never feel insecure”.

Once the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was dissolved, the membership of the League of Communists of Serbia began to disperse. Even after the founding congress of the SPS, the former communists were not rushing to joining the new party. Only fifteen or twenty per cent became members of the SPS. In the autumn of 1990 the SPS established a number of local headquarters charged with the task of enlisting new members. Local committees of the former Socialist Alliance of Working People of Serbia played a major role in recruitment and upgrading the infrastructure of the

party. Most of the newly recruited members came from rural areas.

The directors of large enterprises were crucial in upgrading the party's infrastructure. The party also used the socio-political organisations such as the Independent Labour Union and the Alliance of Reserve Army Officers as its mouthpieces. According to the records of the SPS Fourth Congress, the party now has a membership of 630,000, a figure the party's secretary-general, Gorica Gajević, inflates to 700,000³⁸.

When the Zajedno Coalition won local government elections and took over some parts of the political infrastructure (media, local government and some minor centres of power), the Socialists' most active strongholds became passive. Still the party won the Serbian elections in 1997.

Because, under the Serbian Constitution, the president of the Republic is not permitted to hold any other public office, the role of party president was first transferred to the Central Committee's Executive Board. The Board carried out the duties of SPS president until May 1991, when it decided that a collective body could no longer act as a party leader and the office should, therefore, be conferred on an individual. Thus Borislav Jović, up to then Serbia's representative in the collective presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was elected president of the SPS.

At the Second Congress of the SPS, in late October 1992, Slobodan Milošević was once again elected the

³⁸ See the Fourth Congress of the SPS under the slogan "Serbia, Reconstruction, Development, Reform" of January 27, 2000.

president of the party. However his presidential title was “frozen” and the presidential duties were carried out by the party’s secretary-general, Milomir Minić.

Once again at the SPS Third Congress in March 1996, Milošević was elected president, and once more his title was immediately “frozen”.

The Fourth Congress of the SPS, on February 17, 2000, brought together 2,318 delegates. The congress was dominated by the slogan “Reconstruction, Development, Reforms”, the promotion of the “21 Projects for the 21st Century”³⁹ and a prevailing tone of demonising the opposition⁴⁰. The necessity to cooperate with the rightist Serbian Radical Party (without the party’s name ever being explicitly mentioned) forced a major ideological amalgam, proclaimed as the need to bring all patriotic forces under one umbrella. The congress also made an attempt to formulate “resistance to the New World Order”⁴¹. Slobodan Milošević was again elected president and Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Marjanović was elected vice-president. Gorica Gajević was re-elected secretary-general. The congress also

³⁹ Fourth Congress of the SPS: “Serbia, Reconstruction, Development, Reforms,” “Modern, Patriotic Party of the Left,” January 27, 2000, Belgrade.

⁴⁰ In his address to the congress, President of the SPS and President of Yugoslavia Slobodan Milošević said there was no opposition in Serbia, but just a group of people manipulating feelings and needs of some citizens. He labelled the opposition as “new janissaries, who, unlike the janissaries of several centuries ago, rushed to kiss the hands of invaders who have their eyes on our fatherland” and “good-for-nothing people.”

⁴¹ Referring to the President’s address to the congress as a panellist in the Press Club of February 21, 2000, Dragan Lakićević, a fellow

elected 217 members of the Central Committee. Unlike previous congresses, which had replaced up to two thirds of the Committee's members, the fourth refrained from any major changes in the make-up of the body.

There is no telling to what degree the SPS has been affected by the functional disablement of Slobodan Milošević which has resulted from his indictment by the Hague Tribunal. In any case the impact must be significant, because the SPS has been a monocratic party for a decade. Judging by the amendment of the Federal Constitution on July 6, 2000, enabling Milošević to improve his party's rating through a direct vote, it might be said that the SPS is counting on its leaders influence to throw it a lifeline. No other leader is in sight. In 1999 and 2000, the SPS traded on two second-stringers, Milutin Mrkonjić⁴², the director of the

of the Institute for European Studies, said that the regime simply sent the opposition "undercover" and renewed an old political vision – to make Yugoslavia a pivot for countries jeopardized by the new world order. This necessitates continuity of power, which must not be interrupted by opposition activities or a possible overthrow. "I am not sure about the opposition's response to that, though I am afraid this is an attempt to update a policy the predecessor of which, as it seems, can only be traced back to Enver Hoxha's Albania," said Lakićević, adding that congresses as such were no longer held even in China.

⁴² Milutin Mrkonjić

In the early nineties, as director of the Transport Institute CIP, Mrkonjić was in charge of "Serbia's high-speed railway", a project the opposition described as a symbol of hollow words. In his capacity as director of the Directorate for Reconstruction of the Country, Mrkonjić keeps inspecting construction sites and ensuring that work on bridges and "solidarity apartment buildings" is

Directorate for Reconstruction of the Country and General Nebojša Pavković⁴³.

The SPS is a party which has an enormous capacity for renewing its leadership. After the party's Third Congress, just 33.4 per cent of members of the Central Committee remained (51 out of 153), while only six of the 26 members of the Executive Committee survived (23 per cent). No internal political dissent is tolerated.

completed ahead of deadlines. He is most enthusiastic, energetic and a confirmed demagogue. He flexes his broad authority by imposing suspensions on contractors.

⁴³ Nebojša Pavković was born in 1948 in the village of Senjski Rudnik near Despotovac. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1970. For a time he was head of the Operations Department of the National Defence School. In 1994 he was posted to Kosovo. At the age of 48 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. On December 25, 1998, he was appointed commander of the Third Army. He has been awarded the Medal of Courage.

On the eve of the NATO bombing, as commander of the Third Army, he appealed to soldiers and officers of the Priština Corps to "fight with knives if necessary, as befits the descendents of Prince Lazar, the immortal Obilići, Sindjelići, Vukotići, Tepići and other heroes, known and unknown". Once the war was over he said: "The Third Army has not lost the war in Kosovo," adding "I will not let anyone belittle the results of our defence. We've done our job most correctly and fairly".

In the following months he reiterated the Yugoslav Army's support for "the president, the supreme commander in the defence of the country". The expression of his loyalty to the supreme commander was backed up with denunciations of the opposition who were demanding the resignation of the president in what the general described as "carnivals of small-time policy". He also attacked the former chief of general staff, General Momčilo Perišić, now the leader of the opposition Movement for a Democratic Serbia. Perišić sued *Politika* but a magistrate dismissed the charges against the paper for carrying Pavković's slander of Perišić.

This is best illustrated by the ouster in 1995 of six top party officials, including two vice-presidents. The purge was completed in a twelve-minute meeting of the Central Committee. No discussion took place, not one member's voice was raised in disagreement. It was only the party vice-president, Mihailo Marković, who wrote in an open letter: "Dear Comrades, you have swallowed something which is an antipode to any democracy". In 2000, the party's capacity for regeneration has been markedly demonstrated in the field: the SPS has replaced about fifty per cent of its top people⁴⁴.

The SPS is the only political hierarchy in South-Eastern Europe which has not been splintered into factions. In 1992, ten MPs from the party – including Kosovo Serb leader Momčilo Trajković – walked out of the party and established the Social Democratic Party. For a while the new party acted as an opposition grouping in the Serbian legislature but never succeeding in attracting any significant proportion of the SPS membership. None of the officials expelled later have succeeded in politics outside the party. The only exception is, perhaps, Nebojša Čović, a former mayor of Belgrade, now leader of the Democratic Alternative. (See Section 2.3.1.3.3.)

⁴⁴ Political expert Dijana Vukomanović of the Institute for Political Studies points to the fact that 50 percent of cadres were replaced at the local level. According to her, the entire political scene has become "Belgradecentric" although political life is not restricted to the capital only, which is something the opposition must be aware of. She says that a technocratic wing of the SPS, able to reform the party from within, was not to be seen in the first rows of seats at the congress. (Press Club, February 21, 2000).

The Socialist Party of Serbia has also exhibited great ability to form coalitions. (See Section 3.1.1, Informal and Formal Cooperation between the Regime and the Opposition).

The party triumphed in elections in 1990: thanks to the simple majority election system it received 45.8 per cent of the vote (2,320,587) to win 77.6 per cent of seats (194 out of 250) in the National Assembly of Serbia. Slobodan Milošević won the presidency with 3,285,799 votes, 63.34 per cent of votes cast.

The SPS won its lowest number of votes in 1992 (1,359,086) when many of its supporters swung to the Radicals. In September 1997 it won 1,418,036 votes. (See the sections discussing election results: 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

The Socialist Party of Serbia relies heavily on the charisma of its leader, Slobodan Milošević. (See the sections discussing elections: 5.1 and 5.3).

2.2.1.1 Slobodan Milošević: Playing for High Stakes

In early 1999 Slobodan Milošević claimed that Yugoslav would never give up Kosovo whatever the cost, bombing included. After negotiations in Rambouillet and Paris failed, and personal meetings between Milošević and Richard Holbrook (“I know you’re going to bomb us: your mission is over,” said Milošević), NATO launched a war against Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999. In spite of the fact that, of the thousands of bombs thrown at Serbia during the two-month campaign, a few hit the abandoned residence of the Yugoslav president in Užička Street on April 22,

Western politicians have been unsuccessful in proving that they were actually waging war “against Milošević” rather than against Serbs. The European Union shored up the entire war platform by proclaiming Milošević *persona non grata*, denying visas to him and members of his family. The list was later extended to include 582 people close to the regime. On May 27, 1999, the Hague Tribunal indicted Slobodan Milošević and four senior officials for war crimes committed in Kosovo.

In early June, 1999, Milošević seemed to have one foot in the political grave. He accepted the peace plan brought to Belgrade by Chernomyrdin and Ahtisari (“What’s the catch?” quipped Clinton). Once a military-technical agreement had been signed by representatives of NATO and the Yugoslav Army, and the United Nations Security Council had adopted Resolution 1244, Yugoslav Army troops and Serbian police began to withdraw from Kosovo. Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins followed them. Those who remained lived in a chaos supervised by KFOR troops. President Milošević then declared victory, announced the reconstruction of the country and began showering decorations around. By the end of the year almost five thousand people had been decorated for bravery.

On the very day Milošević was promoting thirty generals and bestowing decorations on three thousand officers and soldiers, the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church demanded that he and the Federal Cabinet resign, in the interest of the people and their salvation. In the week that followed a petition for Milošević’s res-

ignation was circulating in several towns in Serbia. Milošević himself simply turned a blind eye.

In late September, 1999, in Pančevo, Milošević described the reconstruction of the country as “efficient and victorious”. Launching a new railway station in Leskovac, he labelled the organisers of opposition rallies as “cowards, blackmailers and bootlickers”

In late November, 1999, police arrested the “Spider” group and charged them with planning the assassination of the Yugoslav president under the auspices of French intelligence services. Regime propaganda began to use the affair as a catchword for its concept of the struggle against conspiracies from abroad.

The war boosted Milošević’s authority as supreme commander, while its end and the loss of Kosovo renewed public debate on the catastrophic effects of his ten-year rule. His chance of retaining power seemed ever slimmer given the nation’s sense of defeat and his indictment for war crimes. However the international community’s warrant merely homogenised the top people of the regime and made the dismissal of Milošević before the end of his term less likely. His internal opponents are today perhaps handicapped by the fact that the political struggle against him has boiled down to a kind of pursuit of the hunted which gives his supporters the motivation to beat their political opponents flat.

After luring one dissident from Montenegrin President Milo Djukanović’s Democratic party of Socialists, pro-regime MPs needed just one day (July 6, 2000) to amend the Constitution so as to enable Milošević to run for another term as president in direct

elections. This escalated the crisis of the federal state, as the Montenegrin Parliament passed a resolution denouncing the amended Federal Constitution.

2.2.2 The Yugoslav United Left (JUL)

In Orwellian vocabulary, JUL could be termed a “family party”, headed as it is by Slobodan Milošević’s wife, Mirjana Marković. In terms of ideology, JUL advocates some kind of alternative, opposing the New World Order and sticking to the strategy of leaning on the communists of Russia and China.

When, in the summer of 1990, it became clear that communist and pro-Yugoslavia attitudes were things of the past, a group of communist generals (Defence Minister Veljko Kadijević, Chief of General Staff Blagoje Adžić, retired admiral Branko Mamula, former chief of general staff Stevan Mirković and several pro-Yugoslav politicians such as Federal Police Minister Petar Gračanin, Nijaz Duraković, Momir Bulatović, Lazar Mojsov and others), together with non-party figures such as Minja Tomašević, Dragomir Drašković and Mirjana Marković swung into action. On November 19, 1990, the group founded the League of Communists—The Movement for Yugoslavia (SK-PJ). The main idea was to maintain power in all the Yugoslav republics by replacing the dissolved league with the new one. The Yugoslav People’s Army was meant to play a key role in the scenario for regenerating communism. In his book “He, She and We”, Slavoljub Djukić wrote that there was even a plan for a parachute attack on Ljubljana and the arrest of the Slovenian leadership on June 30, 1990,

but the idea had to be abandoned at the eleventh hour. (See Section 1.5.1.8, Generals in Politics).

The party inherited the former league's ideology and its assets. The major assets were the fifteen-floor Ušće business centre (destroyed in NATO's air raids in the spring of 1999) and funds estimated at five million US dollars taken over from the former league's committee in the Yugoslav People's Army.

Only Generals Mirković and Mamula remained in the SK-PJ after the party's founding congress. An engineer from Kumanovo (Macedonia), Dragan Atanasovski, was appointed the first president of the party. However he was soon replaced by General Stevan Mirković. Mirković was also ousted before long, actually being ejected from the party premises at gunpoint, and the party acquired another civilian leader, Dragomir Drašković, close friend and brother-in-arms of Mirjana Marković in the University Committee of the League of Communists in Belgrade. This same committee was known as the ideological centre of the infamous "Eighth Session" and a hotbed of "storm troopers" in 1988, the year of the "anti-bureaucratic revolution" which enthroned Slobodan Milošević as a populist leader in Serbia. Dragomir Drašković was also shown the door in 1994 when communist policy was replaced by "leftist policy" and the party opted for a new symbol, the dove of peace, instead of the five-pointed communist star.

After the SK-PJ election debacle of 1993, Mirjana Marković decided to step out of the shadows and create the Yugoslav United Left. At the founding convention on July 23, 1994, in the Student Cultural Center in

Belgrade, several leftist groups and organisations united to form the party. (People from JUL claim that 23 organisations and parties joined together at the same time. This figure actually refers to the groups and organisations set up by the SK-PJ itself for the occasion.)

The First Congress of JUL, held on July 20, 1998 in Belgrade's Sava Center, elected the avant-garde theatre director Ljubiša Ristić as party president. Mirjana Marković was elected president of the JUL Directorate. She is also the author of resolutions of the Congress which read "Peace does not exclude war" and "The defeat of the forces of destruction and disintegration which are most powerful in our society is a prerequisite for the material and spiritual restoration of the society".

The participants in the Congress heartily applauded a resolution claiming that "JUL considers such media a fifth column acting against Yugoslavia," and demanding "the urgent adoption of information legislation to protect citizens from untruths, aggression and vulgarity". Just such a bill was adopted in the autumn of 1998.

Mirjana Marković used the occasion to remark that "The Left should not be in conflict with the Right, wage bloody wars against it or engage in futile dispute with it. The Left should outwit the Right and win it over to its side." This was the year when MPs from JUL sat side by side with those of the rightist Serbian Radical Party, collaborating closely with them. The "Right" referred to by JUL primarily meant pro-West democratic parties.

There is a general feeling that Mirjana Marković has a strong influence on the personnel policy of the ruling party. Though her party failed to win a single seat in the

Serbian legislature in 1993, two cabinet members came from JUL. The generosity of the SPS to JUL is probably best illustrated by the findings of research conducted by the Institute for Social Sciences: just 1.1 per cent of the electorate supports JUL while the SPS has 14.6 of the vote. This means that the SPS is 13.3 times more influential than JUL. However in 1997, the SPS acquired only 4.3 times more seats in the legislature than did JUL.

Some analysts regard JUL as a competitor to the SPS, saying that a conflict of interests between the two parties is inevitable. They support this position with the example of six SPS officials in the Lebane municipality. On June 1, 1998, these officials asked Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević for protection against harassment by the mayor, JUL member Gojko Marjanović, and his associates. The officials were expelled from the party and, as they put it, dismissed from their jobs for no reason whatsoever, when JUL took over local government in the underdeveloped Lebane municipality in late 1996. (The paradox here is that the municipality had formerly been governed by the Radicals. Some political experts explain the phenomenon by the “dual loyalty of the poor,” a philosophy that “supporting only Sloba is not enough, we should support both Sloba and Šešelj,” or “we should support both Sloba and Mira”.)

Despite its leftist proclamations, JUL is more a party of newly emerged businessmen than a workers' party. Through the directors of state-run companies, JUL controls a significant segment of business and has several major nouveaux riches among its ranks. Notwithstanding such a widespread impression,

Milovan Bojić, a senior official of the party, claimed at the congress that “JUL cannot and never will be an association of company directors but a party of workers, farmers and intelligentsia”. Mirjana Marković has said in an interview that the nouveau riche and war profiteers were criminals who aspired to power. “All war profiteers,” she said, “should be treated as the criminals they are rather than as wealthy people using their assets to gradually win political power”. Despite these high principles, Mirjana Marković in her column “Diary” (September 10, 1996), boasted of JUL as “the party which brings together the greatest number of private entrepreneurs. We not only have more of them than the other parties but they are also in the highest positions in JUL. The outstanding businessman and private entrepreneur Nenad Djordjević was the first president of the party,” said Marković. (Djordjević was later arrested and convicted to two years’ imprisonment for abuse of his office.)

Ognjen Pribičević⁴⁵ points out that one aim of JUL which it has almost fully achieved is to weaken the opposition parties as much as possible. “Until JUL emerged, private entrepreneurs were major donors to opposition parties. By winning over almost all major private entrepreneurs in Serbia, JUL has pulled the rug from under the feet of the opposition and made it even poorer,” says Pribičević. (See Section 1.3, The Techniques of Rule)

Pribičević also believes that the party was not established to compete with the SPS. “On the contrary, it was founded to support Milošević as well as satisfying

⁴⁵ Ognjen Pribičević: “The Regime and the Opposition in Serbia,” Radio B92, Belgrade, 1997.

Mirjana Marković's ambition to take an active part in politics," he says.

2.2.3 The Serbian Radical Party (SRS)

The Serbian Radical Party (SRS) has a strong leader, Vojislav Šešelj. He is seen as a camp follower of the SPS, a front man in the campaign against democratic parties and a figure with a marked nationalist and anti-American discourse. (See Section 1.3.3, The Elimination of Decency.)

The SRS was founded on February 23, 1991, in Kragujevac when the Serbian Chetnik Movement united with the People's Radical Party. The SRS describes the event as the Second Fatherland Congress, claiming January 23, 1990 as the date of the First Fatherland Congress. On this day the founding congress of the Serbian Freedom Movement was held in Batajnica on the initiative of the leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Vuk Drašković, and Vojislav Šešelj.

The SRS emerged from the 1998 wave of populism. Šešelj was first the leader of the Serbian Freedom Movement (16 members)⁴⁶. When his attempt to make a joint party with Vuk Drašković failed, Šešelj created the Serbian Chetnik Party in July 1990, but did not succeed in having it registered. However, having united var-

⁴⁶ "Founding Manifesto of the Serbian Freedom Movement," January 6, 1990, Belgrade. Signatories included Vojislav Šešelj, Djordje Nikolić, Vojislav Lubarda, Tripo Zirojević, Aleksandar Čotrić, Radivoje Panić, Vojin Vuletić, Milija Šćepanović, Mladen Markov, Miodrag Glišić, Todor Bošković, Bogoljub Pejčić, Jovan

ious groups from the factionalised People's Radical Party, headed by lawyer Veljko Guberina and close to the regime at that time, Šešelj finally set up a party of his own and succeeded in having it registered. Several factions within the SRS split away, probably under the influence of the SPS, but did not succeed in surviving on their own.

The Third Fatherland Congress of the SRS was held in Belgrade on January 31, 1994 and, according to the introduction to the SRS platform published in July 1997, united Serbian Radicals from all the Serbian lands in one organisation.

The Fourth Congress, on May 18, 1996, marked the launch of the SRS's election campaign for the federal and local elections scheduled for November of that year. The congress again elected Vojislav Šešelj president.

On January 23, 2000, the party held its Fifth Fatherland Congress, with delegates from Serbia, Montenegro, the Republic of Srpska and the Republic of

Radulović, Ljubica Miletić, Rajko Petrov Nogo, Slobodan Rakitić, Dušan Vukajlović and Milorad Vukosavljević. Later on, some of these people denied having had anything to do with the document. For instance, in an open letter carried by *Politika* on January 31, 1990, writer Mladen Markov said to the founders: "Take my name off the list!"

A press release announced that: "The Constituent Assembly of the Serbian Freedom Movement was held on January 23, 1990, in a private apartment in Belgrade. The Assembly decided to rename itself the Movement's Constituent Congress and elected the Central Fatherland Committee as follows: Vojislav Šešelj, president; Vojin Vuletić, secretary; Djordje Nikolić, Tripo Zirojević, Miroslav Šolević, Radivoje Panić, Milija Šćepanović, Ilija Živković, Aleksandar Čotrić, Miodrag Glišić, Hasan Delić, Todor Bošković, Bogoljub Pejić and Milorad Vukosavljević, members."

Srpska Krajina⁴⁷. The party's platform and structure covers Serbia, Montenegro and the Republic of Srpska.

According to information carried by Belgrade daily *Glas javnosti*, the party has a membership of 200,000 and 190 municipal committees. In the summer of 2000, Vojislav Šešelj claimed that his party lived on membership fees and had about 270,000 members, a somewhat questionable claim.

After authorities refused to register his Serbian Chetnik Movement, the leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Vojislav Šešelj, joined the first multi-party presidential race on December 9, 1990, as the candidate of a group of citizens. Still an outsider at the time, and the leader of a party which never gained legal status, Šešelj won just 96,277 votes (1.91 per cent). In the federal elections of May 31, 1992, which other opposition parties boycotted, the SRS managed to win thirty seats in Serbia and three in Montenegro in the Federal Parliament's Chamber of Citizens. Apart from the Montenegrin MPs and those from the ruling party, the SRS was the only party with seats in the Federal Parliament.

It was at this time that Slobodan Milošević, then Serbian president and leader of the SPS, said that of all the opposition leaders he had the most respect for Vojislav Šešelj. In extraordinary elections called for December 20 of the same year, Šešelj's party won thirty "federal" seats in Serbia and four in Montenegro, also winning 73 of the 250 seats in the Serbian Parliament.

⁴⁷ Beta News Agency, January 14, 2000

On the party's initiative, MPs from the SPS, who had a majority in the Federal Parliament, dismissed Prime Minister Milan Panić on December 29, 1992, and, a few months later, on May 31, 1993, the president of Yugoslavia, Dobrica Ćosić.

In the ensuing extraordinary elections for the Serbian Parliament, on December 19, 1993, the Serbian Radical Party won 39 seats. At sessions of both the Federal and Serbian Parliaments during 1994, Radical MPs and their leader provoked dozens of incidents. On September 28, the Privilege Committee of the Chamber of Citizens deprived the head of the SRS caucus of Parliamentary privilege, leaving him vulnerable to prosecution for offences committed in the Parliament. The next day Šešelj was arrested and sentenced to thirty days in jail. On October 28, the District Court in Belgrade overruled the First Municipal Court and sentenced Šešelj to three months' imprisonment for the crime of obstructing a public servant in the execution of his duty, as proscribed in Article 23 of the Act on Public Peace and Order. On the demand of a Gnjilane magistrate, a group of SRS MPs, including Vojislav Šešelj and Tomislav Nikolić, were deprived of their seats for inciting disorder in Gnjilane, Kosovo, where they had attempted to stage a rally on June 3, 1995. The Serbian Radical Party won a majority of the vote in elections for local government in Zemun, and party leader Vojislav Šešelj was elected mayor. At the same time the Radicals won sixteen seats in the Federal Parliament's Chamber of Citizens. At elections for the Serbian Parliament on

September 21, 1997, which were boycotted by twelve opposition parties, the party won 82 seats.

Running at the same time as Radical party candidate for president of Serbia, Vojislav Šešelj made it to the second round. His opponent was the SPS-JUL-ND (New Democracy) candidate, Zoran Lilić. Šešelj polled ahead of Lilić with 1,733,859 votes (49.1 per cent) over Lilić's 1,691,354 (47.89 per cent). The election was proclaimed invalid because the voter turnout was less than fifty per cent. New presidential elections were called for December 7 of the same year. Šešelj again went to the second round, this time against Milan Milutinović, who had replaced Lilić as the candidate of the SPS-JUL-ND coalition. Milutinović became president of Serbia with 56.46 per cent of the vote (2,181,808) over Šešelj's 35.81 per cent (1,383,368). On March 24, 1998, the SRS for the first time joined the Serbian cabinet, which otherwise consisted of members of the SPS and JUL.

The Radicals hold 15 of the 35 portfolios in the Serbian cabinet and have two deputy prime ministers. When the president of Yugoslavia and the Federal Parliament accepted the Kosovo peace plan, the Radicals voted against the decision and announced their withdrawal from the cabinet. They were prevented from resigning by a decree of President Milan Milutinović on June 15, 1999, ruling that all Serbian cabinet members were to retain their portfolios. On August 12, the Radicals joined the reshuffled federal cabinet with five portfolios.

In 1992 and 1993 the Radicals supported the minority Socialist government. Then from 1993 to 1996 they

became a rightist opposition to the SPS-JUL-ND coalition. In late 1996, Šešelj became a mouthpiece of nationalist rhetoric against “everyone waving foreign flags in the streets of Belgrade.” Finally, in 1998-99 he joined the regime coalition, becoming a “double partner” in the coalition in 1999-2000.

Election results and a survey conducted by the Institute for Social Sciences in Belgrade show that there is an overlap between SRS and SPS voters. As many as forty per cent of SPS supporters consider the Radicals as their “second party”. Šešelj has usually lost votes when he has been in conflict with the SPS. In 1995 such a conflict even earned him arrest and imprisonment.

It could be said that SRS activists and voters represent the most nationalist sector of the populist movement which enthroned Slobodan Milošević. The policy of the Radicals leans on the East, on Russian nationalists and Slavophiles and on Zhirinovskiy, although Šešelj has also been on good terms with the French nationalist politician Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The SRS is an egalitarian party and, although some regard it as the last of the communist parties, advocates liberal capitalism and privatisation. Its platform is basically a demagogic amalgam able to attract voters from large cities and working-class suburbs. Vojvodina, and Srem in particular, is one of the party’s electoral strongholds.

The SRS attracted the greatest support in Vojvodina during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, when party activists acted as bellwethers in the prosecution of the non-Serb population, mostly Croats (the case of the vil-

lage of Hrtkovci). At that time, in 1992, 22.86 per cent of voters in Vojvodina opted for the Radicals. In December 1993 they won the lowest vote ((168,937) but since that time the number of their voters has been on an upward curve. At federal elections in 1996 the Radicals won 199,360 votes and in the 1997 Serbian elections the party triumphed with 285,390 votes, their best result ever in Vojvodina. There is no doubt that the influence of the centralist and nationalist SRS on Vojvodina residents derives from the high proportion of Serb immigrants, refugees and settlers from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as from the weakness of the autonomist and regionalist options.

The Serbian Radical Party's election results range from the 1,116,933 votes the party won in the May 1992 federal elections, boycotted by other opposition parties, through the 595,467 votes in 1993, just before the end of the Bosnian war when the party and its leader were under attack from the SPS to the 1,162,216 votes in 1997 when Šešelj beat Socialist candidate Zoran Lilić but did not become president because the voter turnout fell below 50 per cent. (See Sections 5.1 and 5.3 for more discussion of election results). Defeat in war and the ensuing treaty had a negative impact on the Radicals' popularity. However the chaos in Kosovo, sanctions and the continuing war of words provide the Radicals with fertile ground for recovery.

2.2.3.1 Vojislav Šešelj: A Red-Black Heat

From the perspective of the regime, the significance of the Radical leader has grown. Šešelj has announced

that the time has come to shuffle the cards and is seeking a higher price for the distribution of power, letting the Socialist know that they could easily fall into chaos were it not for him. He is building his image with vigorous anti-Americanism. On February 19, 1999, his party appealed to “all patriots and citizens to resist the onslaught of savage American totalitarianism and hegemony” because “the freedom and honour of Serbia are beyond price”. Šešelj outshines everyone when it comes to war rhetoric and the defaming of political opponents and independent media, particularly in periods preceding and following the state of war. He was one of the group which “revealed” to the public the existence of “a classified CIA document,” in fact a text available to all and sundry on the Internet, using it to denounce independent media, trade unions and the like. Once the state of war was over, Šešelj was again without peer in accusing opposition parties, student organisations, independent media, trade unions, magistrates and others of treason. To date he has surpassed even Professor Mirjana Marković, who has used the JUL Directorate to proclaim the “decontamination” of independent media. The post-war rhetoric of the Radicals and JUL could be interpreted as pure demagoguery, but it may also indicate a mounting paranoia in the ranks of the regime.

During the war, on April 27, 1999, the SRS Presidential Collegium announced its belief that “Serbia and Yugoslavia will defend themselves against foreign aggressors on the military plain as well as promptly and efficiently settling accounts with the domestic accomplices of those aggressors.” This statement was released

at the same time as Drašković's appeals for an immediate end to the war, while political life in Serbia had been brought almost to a standstill, partly by war censorship and partly by the broad consensus that open political dispute was not appropriate with the country at war".

On June 3, 1999, MPs from the Radical Party voted against the peace plan presented by Chernomyrdin and Ahtisari and accepted by the Yugoslav president and Parliament. On June 14 the SRS members of the federal cabinet announced their resignations. These, of course, were never accepted. ("They only think they've resigned," commented one Socialist.) Furthermore, the Serbian president ordered them by decree to retain their ministerial portfolios. Not only did the Radicals remain in the Serbian cabinet, they also joined the federal cabinet with five portfolios on August 12. During the post-war crisis, with all polls showing that the Radicals were paying heavily for national defeat, Šešelj stepped up his anti-American polemic, stopped proclaiming the disappointment in Russia which had marked his discourse at the end of the war ("My heart is heavy when I think of Russia.") and began to demonise his political opponents even more fiercely.

2.3 The Opposition Bloc

2.3.1 Parliamentary Opposition

The Democratic Opposition of Serbia, sometimes referred to as the United Democratic Opposition, was

established by the parties of the opposition bloc. In 1999 and 2000 it has been characterised by tension between the SPO and other member parties. The division into parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties is relative and derives from the fact that, in 1997, the SPO participated in elections for the Serbian Parliament while another group, led by the Democratic Party, boycotted the elections. The line of demarcation was drawn more sharply by the disintegration of the Zajedno coalition (forged for the 1996 federal elections), the Vojvodina Coalition (established to contest the 1997 Serbian elections) and the split in the ruling coalition of the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Yugoslav Left and New Democracy. Various manoeuvres were employed to seize seats from the Vojvodina Coalition, a parliamentary party at both the federal and the republic level, although it is often classified as regional. (See Section 2.3.3, The Alliance of Democratic Parties – Regional Parties and Section 2.3.3.1, The Vojvodina Coalition. Similar manoeuvres were used against MPs from New Democracy and the Democratic Alternative. Since January 2000, MPs from the SPO have not attended sessions of the parliaments but have taken part in the work of parliamentary committees. MPs from both the Democratic Party of Serbia and the Vojvodina Coalition have been present at sittings of both the Federal and the Serbian Parliaments.

2.3.1.1 The Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO)

What Slobodan Milošević is to the Socialist Party, Vuk Drašković is to the Serbian Renewal Movement. Drašković (born 1946), a lawyer by profession, was a reporter for state news agency Tanjug and its African correspondent and a press officer in the Alliance of Trade Unions of Yugoslavia. As a novelist he wrote “Judge”, “The Knife”, “Prayer” and “The General’s Night”. Early in his career as a journalist, Drašković was inclined to leftist discourse, writing, for example, a series of articles on rampant consumerism and the threat of the petite bourgeoisie, and was rather aggressive to people unable to stand up for themselves. He is a talented orator, preferring hyperbole to facts and heavily given to pathos and epic pleonasm.

Drašković in 1990 was a fierce nationalist. At that time his language reflected the crisis of the seventies when a number of Serbian writers used the question of the Kosovo Serbs as the main topic of their literature and public activity. His nationalism later became somewhat tempered and enriched with catchphrases about nobility, courage and morality (as in his condemnation of crimes against Muslims in Bosnia in 1992).

For a time he collaborated with Mirko Jović (Serbian National Renewal, a small, nationalistic party, founded in Stara Pazova by a group of nationalists who during the “anti-bureaucratic revolution” of 1998 became known as professional protesters). He was then close to Šešelj for some time before managing to shrug off the embrace and found a party of his own – the strongest of all opposition parties if judged by election

results. The Serbian Renewal Movement was actually founded on March 10, 1990, in Belgrade. At the first multi-party meeting ever, a round table on Kosovo organised by the Serbian opposition, Vuk Drašković announced the unification of four parties: Serbian National Renewal (SNO), Šešelj's Serbian Freedom Movement (SSP)⁴⁸, the Liberal Party from Valjevo and the Democratic Party of Freedom⁴⁹. His announcement resulted in a schism. While Vuk Drašković and Vojislav Šešelj were still, so to speak, in a bear hug, the leader of

⁴⁸ SSP – The Serbian Freedom Movement published the “Founding Manifesto of the Serbian Freedom Movement“ on January 6, 1990, in Belgrade. Signatories included Vojislav Šešelj, Djordje Nikolić, Vojislav Lubarda, Tripo Zirojević, Aleksandar Čotrić, Radivoje Panić, Vojin Vuletić, Milija Šćepanović, Mladen Markov, Miodrag Glišić, Todor Bošković, Bogoljub Pejčić, Jovan Radulović, Ljubica Miletić, Rajko Petrov Nogo, Slobodan Rakitić, Dušan Vukajlović and Milorad Vukosavljević. Later, some of these people denied having had anything to do with the document. For instance, in an open letter carried by Politika on January 31, 1990, writer Mladen Markov said to the founders: “Take my name off the list!”

⁴⁹ Democratic Party of Freedom - a nationalistic, right of centre party, headed by Dušan Bošković. Its founders include outstanding figures such as Bogdan Velešević, Mirko Vujičić and Jovan Glamočanin, later on a “man for all seasons.“ In his story about Glamočanin, journalist Milovan Brkić wrote that he was “on several occasions expelled from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, but kept on appealing to the party to take him back, as he considered it his’ ‘mother and father’.“ He used to attract public attention with pompous statements such as “I and Slobodan Milošević will solve the Serb national question.” He acknowledged that the Socialists had paid him 100,000 DEM for his services. He is the author of the books “Autonomy in the Yugoslav Federation” (1988) and “For the Cause of United Serbs” (1994).

the SNO, Mirko Jović, walked in and announced Drašković's excommunication from his party.

Four days later the strongest opposition party in Serbia, the Serbian Renewal Movement, was officially founded. The promoters of the merger, Vuk Drašković and Vojislav Šešelj, called a press conference for March 14, in the Blue Room of the Majestic Hotel. A number of reporters and even more supporters of the two leaders showed up. The press conference, however, was cancelled, when the hotel management claimed that the Blue Room was already booked. Drašković proposed that the journalists join him in the hotel lobby. No sooner had he and Šešelj taken their seats at a table than a man approached them, introduced himself as the manager and threw everyone out saying he would tolerate no Chetnik gatherings as long as he managed the hotel. So the SPO was launched in Republic Square, in front of the statue of Prince Mihajlo. Vuk Drašković read aloud the manifesto of the SPO's Central Fatherland Committee.

It was not long before Drašković split with Šešelj, winning a vote of confidence from the Committee on June 8, 1990. Only nine of the 35 Committee members voted for Šešelj, the remainder siding with Drašković who has been the leader of the party ever since.

The SPO is defined as a right of centre nationalist party⁵⁰. It is governed by a Central Committee but actu-

⁵⁰ On May 1, 1990, the SPO launched the *Srpska Reč* magazine. The first issue was banned. Starting with a circulation of 15,000, the magazine was printing more than a thousand copies of each edition by the end of 1990. *Srpska Reč* is the most enduring party bulletin. Later on, Danica Drašković, wife of Vuk Drašković, was

ally ruled by its leader, Vuk Drašković, who enjoys enormous statutory authority. Under the party's statutes, the president has extensive discretionary rights: to impose sanctions, appoint a secretary-general, assign duties to party vice-presidents and so on. He has a deciding vote in the case of disagreements within the party presidency.

Strong presidential authority is, in any case, more or less characteristic of all political parties. There are almost no exceptions to this rule. Parties are actually personified by their leaders while the leader himself stands for the entire party.

In his capacity as leader, Drašković has drawn maps with ethnic boundaries and attacked cartographers; he has stood up for deserters and encouraged war volunteers at the same time. He has never been recognised for the strong moral stand he has voiced on major issues such as war crimes and atrocities, particularly since late 1991.

The former regime put Vuk Drašković on the mat for his nation-wide bestseller "The Knife" (1982). The book deals with ethnic slaughter in Herzegovina during World War II. Like bees round a honey pot a variety of

appointed the paper's director. Danica Drašković was formerly a judge, but was dismissed for dismissing charges against a defendant (accused of "reselling peppers at a Belgrade market place"). As an explanation of her ruling, she said the state, rather than the defendant was guilty for his poor condition. She is acid-tongued and polemical, inclined to extreme stands when it comes to her opponents, but also to extremely humane gestures. As an advocate of radical methods in political struggle she has often been in the focus of opposition turmoil.

political groups and parties swarmed around him when he stepped into the political arena in 1990 as a kind of national messiah. His aspiration to lead the entire opposition was evident. He drew the ire of the regime, becoming one of the most criticised and slandered opposition leaders. On the other hand he has been under permanent threat of being replaced as the most prominent opposition leader by some non-party authority. The nation's intellectual elite, "supervising" the opposition as a kind of mentor, has never wholeheartedly approved of him.

The SPO's supporters have usually displayed the greatest tenacity and courage in protests; the party itself has been seen for a decade as having the best "street entrepreneurs". Its platform and public image are characterised by its calls for the restoration of the Serbian monarchy and the right of the Karadjordjević dynasty to return to the country. On October 5, 1991, the SPO organised a mass rally to welcome the heir to the throne, Prince Aleksandar, the son of Yugoslavia's last king, Petar II. It was the first time since World War II that a member of the Karadjordjević dynasty had returned to Serbia. In spite of his tumultuous welcome in Belgrade, it was clear that the prince was merely a relic, with no crucial impact on the Serbian political scene. Though no longer insisting on the monarchy, the SPO still mentions reformation from time to time. It also advocates the rehabilitation of the Chetnik movement headed by General Draža Mihailović, and asks for the movement to be recognised as guerrilla and anti-

Fascist, demanding that the Chetniks themselves no longer be treated as Nazi collaborators in World War II.

The Serbian Renewal Movement is a right of centre party focused on patriotism. During the NATO air attacks in 1999, it called a halt to its anti-regime campaign. This was not solely motivated by the fact that the party had joined the federal cabinet of Momir Bulatović only a month before the outbreak of the war. By May of the same year, the party had been expelled from the cabinet. Once the war was over the SPO began advocating reconciliation with the most powerful Western states. The Serbian Renewal Movement's rhetoric is redolent with sentiment for Russia, but the party has displayed a deeper insight into Russian policy, and taken a more positive attitude to the reforms of Boris Yeltsin, than has ever been shown by the SPS, JUL or the Radicals.

Drašković has also had aspirations to "Western licence". When he was arrested and beaten in 1993, it was French President Mitterand who most persistently demanded his release.

In the struggle for primacy on the opposition scene, the SPO competes vigorously with the Democratic Party. When the opposition won local power in a number of towns throughout Serbia, the SPO and the Democratic Party even waged a miniature political war over Belgrade. Drašković succeeded in removing Democratic Party leader Zoran Djindjić from the position of mayor of Belgrade. Today the party has a minority city government in Belgrade, operating with the tacit approval of the SPS. The party has often been

accused by its opponents of nepotism and abuse of office.

On the eve of St Croix' Day, on January 18, 1999, Drašković joined the reshuffled federal cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of international relations. He was, in less than a hundred days, dismissed on April 28 after giving an interview to Studio B in which he insisted that Serbia should immediately accept the peace plan of Russian mediator Viktor Chernomyrdin and put an end to a futile war. On September 16 he claimed that, in his capacity of deputy prime minister, he had personally prevented the federal cabinet passing a decree on the military occupation of Montenegrin media and had blocked executions of the regime's opponents.

When the war was over Drašković refused to negotiate a return to the federal cabinet. Instead he demanded that extraordinary elections be called, at the same time opposing the belligerent rhetoric of the Alliance for Change leaders. "Who's going to carry out this Romanian scenario?" he asked.

The SPO joined the Alliance for change for the Transfiguration rally of August 19, 1999, but supporters of the Alliance jeered Drašković. After the event the SPO leader said he would no longer join the demonstrations of other parties and would run for elections on his own. He constantly reiterated the position that extraordinary general elections were the only way to avoid civil war. Apart from two protests, in Kragujevac and Niš, in the summer of 1999, the SPO was biding its time, waiting to see the effect of the Alliance rallies.

At a meeting of the party's Central Committee on December 11, 1999, Drašković set the regime a deadline of December 15 to call extraordinary elections. Should they not be called, he announced, he would personally summon the leaders of all influential and responsible parties for consultation on a joint plan of action.

All sectors of the opposition scene have been waiting ever since for Drašković to make a move, and all of them believe he is hesitating. Regardless of any agreements signed to define a common struggle against the regime, including that of January 10, 2000, the SPO has not yet consolidated its relations with other parties of the democratic opposition.

The party has stepped easily into coalitions (ranging from the rightist movement of Mirko Jović to the Civil Alliance of Serbia) but they have never lasted long. Judging from election results, the SPO has body of voters which remains more or less stable regardless of whether it is running for elections within a coalition or on its own (794,783 votes in 1990; 809,731 in 1992 within the Depos coalition; 715,564 in 1993 with Depos II; 969,296 in 1996 with the Zajedno coalition and 793,988 votes in 1997). This was probably the key reason for the SPO, after the dissolution of the Zajedno coalition, opting for the strategy of independent participation in the 1997 elections.

Drašković ran for president in 1990, winning 824,674 votes: 16 per cent of the vote or 11 per cent of the electorate. In the 1997 presidential race he won 852,000 votes, meaning he has managed to keep the loy-

alty of his voters. (See Sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 for more discussion of election results.)

2.3.1.1.1 Vuk Drašković – The Vigil of the Victim

As party leader, Drašković rules unopposed. Though the party has not been without its dissidents, they have never achieved their aims. (For example: in 1993, when the party openly turned against Radovan Karadžić and moved closer to a civil option, Slobodan Rakitić walked out⁵¹. Mladen Markov then followed in Rakitić's steps⁵². Protesting against authoritarianism in the party, Mihailo Marković, Milinčić and others first moved to the Democratic Party and then joined the Democratic Party of Serbia). The SPO leader has never managed to achieve a monopoly on opposition. He has certainly been the backbone of the opposition but never strong enough to put his domination beyond dispute. Thus there has been a constant game of "who's the boss?" while from half a million to 900,000 votes are squandered on small parties. (See Sections 3.3.1.6 Dispelling the Winter Dreams; 5.3 and 1.5.2.1 discussing election boycotts; 3.3.1.7, The Endless Unification of the Opposition; 5.1 and 5.3 on elections.)

⁵¹ Slobodan Rakitić, born 1940, writer and editor. Politically active as vice-president of the SPO and head of the party caucus in the Serbian legislature. Moderate in expression, but with strong nationalist affiliations. He seceded from the SPO and set up the Parliamentary People's Party.

⁵² Mladen Markov, born 1934, novelist and journalist for Radio Belgrade (1958-70).

Thanks to his general attitude during the war, the appeals he made for its immediate end and his role in the defence of the country, Drašković and his political faction have been saved from the ruling parties' free-and-easy demonisation. The regime propagandists, however, certainly didn't turn down the opportunity to attack him after he was filmed kissing Madeleine Albright's hand in Berlin, airing the footage day in day out on state television.

The opposition, on the other hand, took Drašković to task for joining Momir Bulatović's federal cabinet. His refusal to use non-institutional means of political struggle after the war put him in conflict with the opposition forces closest to him, particularly those which make up the Alliance for Change. Innuendo about his restraint deriving from some kind of secret agreement with the regime, however, lose credence in the face of two attempts to assassinate him. It could even be said that after the attempt to assassinate Drašković on June 15 in Budva, the regime began focussing its major offensive on the Serbian Renewal Movement. This argument is supported by an almost unbroken sequence of similar events which had begun on November 3, 1999. On that day on a gentle curve in the Lazarevac road, a truck suddenly veered and crashed into a car carrying Vuk Drašković and senior party official Veselin Bošković. Drašković was injured and Bošković and three other party officials killed in the incident. At Bošković's funeral, Drašković swore to a crowd of party supporters that the victims would be avenged and their assassins brought to justice. A team

of party legal experts began an investigation parallel to that of the police, but in spite of persistent pressure, the state bodies have never managed to obtain information about the owner of the truck which killed the four men. A customs officer who impounded the truck and, according to the party's legal team, handed it over to the State Security Service, was killed in an accident. The case was first assigned to the Lazarevac Municipal Court and filed as an ordinary traffic accident. Then, without warning, after the party pressed another charge, the public prosecutor cynically declared the case closed.

After this first assassination attempt on Drašković, the SPO announced the establishment of a scout organisation and the formation of teams of operatives to be known as the Serbian Defence Movement. (See Section 1.3.8.1, Assassinations.) Some scout organisations are occasionally seen on appropriate occasions and occasionally they issue public bulletins, but little is known of the Serbian Defence Movement. It seems that the series of assassination attempts has deeply affected Vuk Drašković and the calling of elections on July 27 caught his party, which has always depended to a large extent on his energy, in a state of vigil.

2.3.1.2 The Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS)

The Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) was formed by a split in the Democratic Party in the summer of 1992. A faction joined Vojislav Koštunica⁵³, until then vice-president of the Democratic Party, who opposed participation in the Depos coalition.

Vojislav Koštunica⁵⁴ (born 1944) is actually the country's best-qualified opposition leader. Some older dissidents, such as Matija Bećković, had declared him to be the man for Serbia's political future. He was a firm favourite of the national intelligentsia in 1992.

What makes the DSS unique is a kind of national-ism found among the people of towns and cities.

⁵³ Vojislav Koštunica, born 1944, was a fellow at the Faculty of Law (1970-74). He was forbidden to lecture because of his support to Professor Mihajlo Djurić, a most outspoken critic of the 1974 Constitution. He is the author of the study "Political System of Capitalism and the Opposition" and co-author of "Multiparty System or Monism." He mastered in "Political Theory and Practice of the Constitutional Judiciary in Yugoslavia" and was awarded a doctorate for "Institutionalised Opposition in a Capitalist System." He is a taciturn, somewhat vain and reserved man with a permanent twitch of misanthropy, which merely reflects his strong self-restraint. However, this impression is dispelled the moment he begins to speak. He is not much of a public orator, but is an extremely consistent person. It used to be a general feeling that some older dissidents saw him as a man for Serbia's political future. In 1992 he was the favourite of Borislav Mihajlović-Mihiz, a major figure in the Belgrade dissident circle, outstanding novelist, poet, playwright, critic and editor. Of his numerous works, "Autobiography of Other People" should be noted for the sake of symbolism.

⁵⁴ He and Kosta Čavoški co-authored studies "Multiparty System or Monism" and "Social Movements and Political System in Yugoslavia 1944-1949," published by the Centre for Philosophic and Social Studies in 1983 in Belgrade.

Koštica gives an upper hand to constitutional and democratic procedures, as well as to an institutional struggle for the national interests. He advocates a constitutional reshuffle of Yugoslavia into a state composed of regions and in this is backed by leading experts in constitutional law from the Belgrade University Faculty of Law.

The last time it took part in elections the DSS won 280,000 votes. Given the fact that these votes were rather scattered, they did not win the party an appropriate number of seats in the Parliament.

2.3.1.2.1 Vojislav Koštunica – The Shadow Candidate

The president of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), Vojislav Koštunica, has systematically set his position equidistant from both the regime and Western countries. He advocates cooperation with the international community, at the same time arguing for less trust than some other opposition parties are prepared to give. He was one of the first to describe the Kumanovo agreement on Kosovo as “a step further along the path to loss of sovereignty in Kosovo” and capitulation. He was also among the first to criticise KFOR: “Outside the parameters of the UN Security Council Resolution, NATO has established a military dictatorship in Kosovo whereby everyone is accountable to something called KFOR which itself is accountable to no one”. He criticised politicians appealing to Serbs not to leave Kosovo: “It’s not worth staying if it costs you your life and only

those who manage to save their necks will be able to return to Kosovo”.

Koštunica has criticised both the Serbian regime and the international community for failing to protect Kosovo Serbs from exodus, murder, abuse and plunder, describing the Kosovo policy of both as abortive.

It is not difficult to understand what Koštunica doesn't want: he is critical of the regime, Djukanović and the Montenegrin regime, Western bureaucracy, elections under inappropriate circumstances and so on. It's a far more troublesome task to perceive what this perhaps most constitutionally-informed of opposition leaders really wants. Many opposition figures refer to him with a dose of irony, criticising him for aloofness on one hand and a tendency to lecture everyone on the other. According to public opinion researchers (Srboljub Branković, for instance) and social psychologists (such as Bora Kuzmanović), most people in Serbia manifest ill-feeling for Western politicians while simultaneously revealing aspirations to Western democracy. In this context, Koštunica is an educated representative of broad public opinion. He thus figures regularly in surveys dealing with voter attitudes, despite a widespread feeling that the DSS has a poor infrastructure and despite the fact that Koštunica himself is generally seen as something of a lone ranger. In July 2000, some analysts and a number of opposition politicians saw Koštunica as a possible presidential candidate.

2.3.1.3 The DAN Coalition

Collaboration among the Democratic Center (DC), New Democracy (ND) and the Democratic Alternative (DA) gave rise to the DAN coalition in late 1999. Both the DC and the DA were in the Alliance for Change, but walked out without much fuss. There was overt disagreement within the Alliance in 1999 over the issue of whether opposition leaders should go to Budapest to meet Western politicians and Milan Panić while the country was still at war. Dragoljub Mićunović, the leader of the Democratic Center, announced the founding assembly of the DAN coalition for January 22, 2000. The coalition, as he put it, was to be established as a unique political organisation with the option of transforming itself into a political party. However no one has shown much enthusiasm so far to take this option up.

2.3.1.3.1 New Democracy (ND)

New Democracy emerged at the time the League of Communists of Serbia was being turned into the Socialist Party with the property of the former youth organisation as its founding assets. In his former capacity as a deputy prime minister of Serbia, the leader of New Democracy, Dušan Mihajlović, negotiated election conditions with the opposition over a “round table” in 1990. New Democracy could be seen as a reformist wing of the old political hierarchy. It advocates decentralisation and integration into Europe under the slogan “Think globally, act locally!” The party used to support Yugoslavia joining the Partnership for Peace. Under the

aegis of Dobrica Ćosić, the party was first known as New Democracy: The Movement for Serbia. Inclined to compromise and agreement, the party has been through excursions as “the regime within the opposition” and “the opposition within the regime”.

After the December 1993 election, New Democracy was “the opposition within the regime”. The Serbian Parliament after these elections included a unique opposition: the Depos caucus of all elected MPs on the Depos list (37 from the SPO, six from ND and two from the Civil Alliance of Serbia). However from the constituent session of the Parliament, MPs from New Democracy formed their own caucus and then, in 1994, joined the “Government of National Unity” with Mirko Marjanović as prime minister. To all appearances the party’s coalition partners approved of this, although they denied it. Having changed sides, the party stuck with the regime in the next elections and in 1996 its candidates stood as part of the SPS-JUL-ND-Slobodan Milošević list.

Party vice-president Vojislav Andrić describes New Democracy as “constructive opposition since March 1998, when our election partners chose to form a coalition government with Šešelj’s Radicals. This was a combination of outmoded ideology and national demagoguery which ND, as a democratic and Europe-oriented party, wanted nothing to do with”. According to Andrić, the party had a more than modest effect during the period (1994-1998) when it was in coalition with the SPS. Only one of its initiatives was accepted, and only partly, so that ND “succeeded in having its

Privatisation Bill considered, but it was adopted in a form which imposed no liability, deadlines or solutions for the privatisation of state property". "In this way," said Andrić, "all initiatives to have the assets of the Pension Fund, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the royal family restored failed, including those dealing with the issue of 'old foreign currency savings', recompense for errors made in the process of nationalisation and the repayment of foreign lenders".

Other ND projects such as the Local Self-Government Bill (aimed at decentralisation), the Information Bill (democratisation of media) the Arms and Ammunition Bill and the initiative for Yugoslavia to join the Partnership for Peace are among the many reformist proposals which have never been seriously considered.

While it was part of the Serbian cabinet, says Andrić, ND managed to block undemocratic laws on information, the universities, a "tax robbery" system and many others which were adopted under summary procedures once Šešelj's Radicals joined the cabinet. New Democracy presents itself as a pro-European party, a party which once acted as an "opposition within the regime" in an attempt to institute pro-European policy in Serbia's strategic interest.

ND's position in the Serbian parliament has been moderately oppositional. The party formally joined the opposition in the spring of 1999 when the SPS-JUL-ND-Slobodan Milošević coalition first expelled it then, assisted by the Radicals, stripped New Democracy MPs of their seats in the Parliament.

2.3.1.3.2 The Democratic Center (DC)

The Democratic Center (DC) may be treated as either a remnant or the core of the Democratic Party. In fact it is the product of several schismatic processes afflicting the Democratic Party in 1990-91 and 1993-94. The party has a foundation for the development of democracy under the same name. One of the few political emigrants who has returned to the country, Desimir Tošić⁵⁵, is among its membership. After years as a political émigré, Tošić first joined the Democratic Party in 1993 and then moved to the Democratic Center. He is also one of the founders of the European Movement in Serbia. In his public addresses, the leader of the Democratic Center, Professor Dragoljub Mićunović⁵⁶ (born 1930) is fond of quoting the classics of political

⁵⁵ Desimir Tošić, born 1920, a man of refined expertise in democracy and social analysis. He was editor of the London-based *Naša Reč* magazine (1958-90) which reached dissident circles in Belgrade through underground channels. As a member of a democratic youth organization he spent time in concentration camps in Belgrade and Germany. Tošić was an emigrant until 1990. He is the author of the books "Totalitarianism and Human Rights," "Workers' Council in Yugoslavia," "Serbian National Issues," and "Power and Helplessness" (dealing with constitutional and social problems in the former Yugoslavia). He was a research fellow at the International Centre of Free Trade Unionists in Paris and in the Centre for Research of Yugoslav Developments in London (1959-80).

⁵⁶ Dragoljub Mićunović, born 1930, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy from 1975 to 1990. Expelled from the Faculty as "morally and politically unsuitable." An activist in the events of 1968. Since 1981 a scientific fellow at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory. Author and editor of the editions "Logic and Sociology," "Bureaucracy and the Public" and "Social Philosophy."

liberalism and examples of democracy from antiquity as well as emphasising the significance of tolerance for the cause of democracy. The political credo of Mićunović and his party is moderation and cooperation, which lends a certain irony to the fact that the party he has led from the beginning is so prone to schism. As a candidate in the presidential elections of 1997, Mićunović won 86,583 votes, a figure which may indicate the election strength of the DC.

In the autumn of 1999 Mićunović chaired the opposition round table which articulated the demand for calling extraordinary general elections. This round table resumed the practice of opposition assemblies.

2.3.1.3.3 The Democratic Alternative (DA)

The leader of the Democratic Alternative (DA), Nebojša Čović, stepped onto the opposition stage as a renegade from the Socialist Party. As mayor of Belgrade at the time of the disputed 1996 elections, Čović called on the SPS to acknowledge election fraud and put an end to the crisis by striking a compromise with the opposition. He resigned from his office not long before the crisis was over. The SPS expelled him from the party and then stripped him of his seat in the Serbian Parliament.

Čović could well have been described as the very model of a senior SPS official⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Nebojša Čović, born 1958, a master in mechanical engineering. He was a fellow of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (84-90), director of the "FMP" plant, vice-president and then president of the Executive Board of the Belgrade Assembly (92-93), mayor of

Once expelled from the ruling party, he was also dismissed from all other offices he held, including the presidency of the Basketball Alliance of Yugoslavia. He used to say that the Alliance was faced with enormous problems the moment the sponsors of the national basketball team, the state companies Simpo and Progres, “forgot” to pay their donations. The director of Progres was the Serbian prime minister, Mirko Marjanović, while Simpo was managed by the minister-coordinator in the Serbian cabinet, Dragomir Tomić. This is just one illustration of the booty which usually goes hand in hand with political office and attractive and lucrative managerial positions. All benefits simply vanish once you are “dropped from a political team”.

Čović named his party the Democratic Alternative to indicate his ambition to “link the left and the right” and act as “a bridge between the two unarguably real forces on our political scene”. He aspired to win voters disillusioned by both the SPS and the Zajedno coalition in 1996.

He complained that the SPS had the knives out for him, describing “a perfect example of a political slaughter”. The ruling party may have been irritated by the fact that Čović, once an insider, was familiar with its techniques for manipulation. For his part, Čović claimed that he would respond to attacks with every means at his disposal. “I know a lot and will simply no longer

Belgrade (94-97), president of the SPS Belgrade Committee (92-93), MP in the Serbian Parliament and president of its Financial Committee (93-97). When expelled from the SPS (1997), he founded the Democratic Alternative and became its first president.

keep silent. The regime has absolutely everything under its control. Because the regime has nothing to do with democracy, I am now concerned for my safety”.

When the DA and the Rural Party of Serbia nominated him as their presidential candidate in the 1997 Serbian elections, Čović demanded strict control over the printing of ballot papers. He claimed to be in possession of information about the regime’s intention to cheat once again.

During the war and in the post-war months, he was careful to manifest his patriotism and criticism of NATO, but criticised the regime as well. He left the Alliance for Change, implying that some leaders (and mentioning Milan Panić by name) had overtipped the balance of the group. As a presidential candidate Čović has won 93,133 votes, while in coalition with the Rural Party of Serbia and the Pensioners’ Party of Serbia, his party has won 60,855 votes and one seat in the Serbian Parliament.

2.3.2 Non-Parliamentary Opposition

2.3.2.1 The Alliance for Change (SZP)

The Alliance for Change (SZP) was launched at a conference held in Niš on June 21, 1998, under the title “Alliance for Change – Milan Panić”. The conference brought together Milan Panić, former National Bank governor Dragoslav Avramović, academician Ljubiša Rakić, Bishop Artemije of Raška and Prizren, Momčilo

Trajković, Vojin Dimitrijević, Jovan Marjanović, Nebojša Čović, Mile Isakov, Dragoljub Mićunović, Vuk Obradović, Velimir Ilić, Branislav Čanak, and representatives of ethnic minorities and local governments. All declared publicly that they shared the view of the special US envoy to the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, that the democratisation of Serbia was a prerequisite for settling all problems in the state, the crisis in Kosovo and Metohija included.

The participants claimed to stand for an internationally recognised force intent on building a democratic and market-oriented society in Serbia in order to avert the impending chaos. The leader of the Democratic Party, Zoran Djindjić, said on that occasion that the Alliance for Change would not turn to the international community for assistance in winning elections, adding that elections were won from inside the state rather than from the outside. The convention announced the draft of an efficient socio-economic platform and clearly defined plans to promote reformist and democratic ideas and reintegrate the country into the international community, whose assistance would be needed once democratic government was established.

In the summer of 1999 the Alliance revolved around the Democratic Party, the Democratic Christian Party – a former faction of the Democratic Party of Serbia headed by lawyer Vladan Batić, the Civil Alliance of Serbia with its new and dynamic leader, Goran Svilanović, historian Milan St. Protić – grandson of a famous Serbian historical figure and himself the leader of the Movement for Serbia's Revival and Velimir Ilić,

the rather self-assured mayor of Čačak and leader of New Serbia, a party formed by secession from the Serbian Renewal Movement.

The leading light of the Alliance during 1999 was Dragoslav Avramović. When he played on Milošević's team as governor or the National Bank, Avramović managed to bring the 1994 hyperinflation to a halt but was ousted anyway. What Yugoslavia needed, said the former governor, was a new stabilisation program. "We must make a four-year investment plan, cut a variety of funds from the state budget, cut back the army and the police and prepare the ground for former invest," he said. What gave the Alliance its upper hand was its option for the West. This, however, was also its handicap, allowing the competition to call it the West's bootlicker and the regime to persistently accuse denounce it as a fifth column.

There's no telling whether it was because of the state media's systematic demonisation of Zoran Djindjić, the leader of the Alliance's biggest party or because it was difficult to reach agreement on tough issues, but the Alliance began to dissolve. The Social Democratic Party, headed by General Vuk Obradović, although slightly reserved in 1999, took part in all activities and then walked out (See Section 2.3.2.1.5.) Shortly after the end of the NATO attacks, Nebojša Čović announced that his party was no longer part of the SZP, distanced himself from the Alliance and then joined the DAN coalition.

On September 8, 1998, the SZP leaders had demanded the calling of general elections. Djindjić was

prone to assessing public opinion in Serbia as being “on the point of turning positive” because the people were becoming “irritated with being humiliated, lied to and insulted”. He also announced that in 1999 the SZP would demand the calling of early elections and win them with 2.5 million votes. Once the 1999 war was over, the SZP began staging rallies in twenty-odd towns throughout Serbia, but did not succeed in forcing a withdrawal of the regime. To all intents and purposes, the SZP does not have the power the Zajedno coalition once had. Despite this, the regime’s reaction in 1999-2000 appeared more nervous than in 1997. Supporters of the SZP were protesting every day in Belgrade and other towns. The police occasionally intervened in Belgrade to disperse the rallies.

Overcome with populist rapture, Djindjić went so far at one point as to assert that “only the people, not political parties, can defeat the regime,” and “elections are Milošević’s last trump card today”. He also alleged that Drašković was actually acting in collusion with Milošević and, therefore, was not eager for the president to resign.

After the 1999 war Drašković criticised the violent rhetoric of the SZP leaders. “Who’s going to carry out this Romanian scenario?” he repeatedly asked. The SPO leader’s adviser, Ognjen Pribičević, said in 1999 that the policies pursued by the SPO and the SZP were already so defined that any coalition between them would bring both more harm than benefit. “If democratic opposition parties win a sufficient number of seats in the Serbian Parliament they might form a coalition government

after the election; however to win the election the opposition will have attract a pretty large number of people who used to support the SRS and the SPS in the first place,” said Pribičević.

As events unfolded it was clear there was no possibility of a stronger alliance between the SPO and the SZP. When Vuk Drašković left the federal cabinet in 1999, the self-assured leaders of the SZP signalled that he might join them. Drašković, seeing himself as far stronger than the Alliance, generally turned down such “offers”.

It seems that the SZP is not only not powerful enough to dominate the opposition but also makes scant contribution to the consolidation of a broken kernel of democracy which houses yet another two coalitions. (See Sections 2.3.3, The Alliance of Democratic Forces and 2.3.1.3, The DAN Coalition.

A survey conducted by sociologist Srećko Mihailović in September 1999 showed that the SZP was seen mostly as a “radical opposition” (radical in that it demands resignation of the government prior to elections). Most respondents preferred the SZP to the other entities on the political scene, but the majority of the coalition’s supporters still identified themselves with their mother parties.

2.3.2.1.1 The Democratic Party (DS)

The history of the Democratic Party is a paradigm of the rambling Serbian opposition or, to be more precise, a paradigm of the roving intellectual and political group known as Line 2 (an allusion to the No 2 tram line

which encircles the very heart of downtown Belgrade). The committee responsible for establishing the Democratic Party was made up mostly of intellectuals such as Dragoljub Mićunović, Kosta Čavoški, Vojislav Koštunica, Zoran Djindjić, Borislav Pekić, Milovan Danojlić, Slobodan Inić, Vladimir Gligorov, Gojko Djogo, Radoslav Stojanović, Miodrag Perišić, Dušan Vukajlović and Marko Janković. The party was founded on December 11, 1989 and the founding board presented the Democratic Party platform. Dragoljub Mićunović was elected president and Kosta Čavoški president of the party's Executive Committee at a founding assembly held on February 3, 1990, in the Youth Center in Belgrade.

An open letter from the founders of the Democratic Party began by asserting that people needed a responsible government as a crucial prerequisite for the viable development of any society. As a way of overcoming complex problems the founders proposed radical reform aimed at creating a modern market and a political system based on free elections and multi-party democracy. Politically and ideologically the DS lies in the liberal democratic centre. For pragmatic reasons, this civil formula would later be seasoned with a little nationalist spice, affecting both the make-up of the party and its position.

At home the Democrats have generally raised the issues of free elections and political procedures, from time to time taking the initiative in the struggle for free media. On several occasions they have opted for what they call diffuse protests, which are long lasting and take place in multiple venues.

Almost as soon as it was founded, the Democratic Party faced a grab for power by its top people. Slobodan Inić and Vladimir Gligorov were the first to walk out, in disapproval of the party's course towards nationalism. Then two of the leaders, Dragoljub Mićunović and Kosta Čavoški clashed over the pecking order in the party. Čavoški was defeated and left the party saying he was dissatisfied with its insufficiently nationalist position.

In 1991 the Democrats stood opposed to the imminent war. At the climax of the crisis they proposed an overall armistice and a six-month moratorium on all decisions to give enough time to hold elections for the Parliament of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which should draft a constitution stipulating procedures for secession and the reformation of the federal state. The proposal was ignored.

The Democratic Party would later encourage the development of Radovan Karadžić's Serbian Democratic Party by making its branch offices in Bosnia-Herzegovina available. For some time Zoran Djindjić was far more outspoken than Dragoljub Mićunović in an attempt to build an image of the DS as a nationalist and democratic party. When Milošević split with Karadžić, Djindjić went to Bosnia, to Pale, to register his protest against Milošević's move and make a symbolic challenge to NATO's threats to bomb Bosnian Serbs. There he attended a traditional ox-roast, an event which has haunted him ever since.

While NATO was still bombing Serbia, Djindjić made a controversial move by contacting Western

politicians through Montenegro. The regime responded with heavy fire.

The party has usually been better at staying out of than in coalitions. It did not join the 1992 Depos and stood for elections alone. This provoked a split in the party: the pro-Depos faction, led by Vojislav Koštunica, seceded and established the Democratic Party of Serbia.

In early 1994, when Depos II was defeated in elections, the Democratic Party once again split in two. In fact the split began on the eve of the 1993 elections. Zoran Djindjić and Dragoljub Mićunović went to verbal war over, among other things, the issue of who would meet Milošević. (The topic of who met Milošević would later also trigger the dispute between Djindjić and Drašković which led to the dissolution of the Zajedno coalition in 1997). In fact the real reason for the conflict was that Djindjić had brought a group of company directors into the party and was gradually pushing aside the old leadership in an attempt to turn the DS into a political business. Favoured by the state-run media, TV Politika in particular, Djindjić ran a rather successful election campaign for the Serbian Parliament. He brought into the party younger people and businessmen such as Slobodan Radulović, the director of Centroprom and Radoje Djukić, a private entrepreneur close to the regime. What he was actually attempting was to attract Socialist loyalists.

People began referring to the Democratic Party as a “yellow company”. (The party’s logo is blue and yellow while its sponsor, Centroprom, has a yellow logo.) Centroprom director Radulović was elected to the

Parliament on the DS list. However he became a member of the Serbian cabinet despite the fact that he had been elected on an opposition list and later moved to New Democracy.

The conflict between party president Dragoljub Mićunović and the aspirant to his office, Zoran Djindjić, was resolved in February 1994 when a disillusioned Mićunović submitted his resignation to the DS Assembly and set up the Democratic Center together with a group of his adherents. Zoran Djindjić became president of the Democratic Party.

Probably with the intention of damaging his political career, Djindjić's opponents dubbed him the Germanophile. The label was based on the fact that Zoran Djindjić (born 1952) was awarded a doctorate in philosophy in Konstanz in 1974. Djindjić declared himself a graduate from the class of Professor Habermass while his opponents fell over themselves attempting to prove that he had been a student of Habermass' assistant. Djindjić has been an editor of *Theoria* magazine, a lecturer at the Novi Sad University Faculty of Philosophy and, as a member of dissident circles and attempted to launch the magazine *Javnost*, which was never licenced by the regime of the eighties.

Djindjić has been a frequent victim of judicial repression. In the seventies he was in the dock for trying to turn a student organisation into a political one. In 1995 he was convicted of libel after publicly accusing Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Marjanović of improperly profiting from the wheat market. In 1999 he was summonsed on charges of meeting Western politicians and

avoiding military call-up. The draft avoidance charges were later dismissed by the court.

In the political arena Djindjić has displayed both flexibility and tough, slalom-like pragmatism. (“Zigzags too much and often misses the course,” said one associate.) From a too-rapid speaker, prone to losing his point, he has turned into a pretty skilled orator. He is experienced in party lobbying and inter-party conflicts and figures as an effective party tactician and strategic party manager.

The supporters and activists of the DS have a more urban profile than, for example, those of the SPO. The party’s election results have varied with its policy: in the December 1990 elections it won 374,887 votes, in December 1992, 196,374 votes and, in December 1993, supported by pro-regime media, gained 497,582 votes. (See Sections 5.2 and 5.3 on election results). It seems that the DS voters are as changeable as the party itself and with as much tendency to split as the party of their choice. The political passivity which afflicted the party after the election boycott in 1997 and its leaders controversial activities probably lowered its popularity and influence as much as its new initiative in the summer and autumn of 1999 restored them⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ In 1990 the party’s membership was estimated at 15,000. Ten years later, Zoran Djindjić said in an interview with Studio B that the DS had 42,000 registered members, “double-checked by phone.”

2.3.2.1.1.1 Zoran Djindjić – Action and Manoeuvre

The NATO intervention in the spring of 1999 imperilled the activities of the Alliance for Change as the pro-regime media began denouncing Zoran Djindjić for travelling abroad, abandoning his voters at home to meet Western politicians waging war against his country.

From June to December, 1999, Djindjić set the tone at protests organised by the Alliance of Change in about a dozen towns across Serbia. He reiterated that “only the people, not political parties, can defeat the regime,” and spoke of the emergence of “voices in the ranks of the Army and the police which will refuse to obey Milošević, realising that supporting him would cost more than abandoning him”.

On the eve of a series of rallies he put his leadership of the Democratic Party on the line: “I will resign if Milošević is not overthrown by the New Year,” he said. The pledge was a hot topic in late 1999 once it became evident that the Alliance for Change’s protests would not result in this deadline being met, and the Alliance itself was not exactly a stable coalition. A meeting of the DS Central Committee adopted the annual report in late December. In practical terms this means that Djindjić still heads the party as a major player in Serbian political affairs.

It would be rash to assert that Djindjić is effective only in the streets. His party’s influence has been significant in various expert teams, particularly active in 1999.

Persistent, even at the point when the prospects of his activities seem dim, Djindjić has somehow managed to overcome the effects of the regime's denunciations and his own mistakes. He may have strengthened the influence of the Democratic Party despite the handicap of its absence from the Serbian Parliament since the failure of the 1998 election boycott but he has certainly not managed to create a winning formula within the Alliance for Change.

2.3.2.1.2 The Civil Alliance of Serbia (GSS)

All Belgrade civil and non-governmental initiatives are mostly associated with the civil option and therefore closest to the Civil Alliance of Serbia (GSS), a party which, despite going through hard times from 1990 to 1999, has never abandoned its opposition to war, totalitarianism and nationalism.

In the overheated nationalist atmosphere characteristic of the beginnings of a pluralist system, sections of the critical intelligentsia were conscious of standing between a rock and a hard place in the attempt – quite unpractical in a time of danger – to swim against the tide and somehow maintain an atmosphere of dialogue, tolerance and respect for human rights.

The party is among the descendents of the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Influence (UJDI), itself among the first parties registered under the changed circumstances on December 30, 1989, in Titograd (today's Podgorica). The UJDI for Serbia was registered on October 2, 1990, with Professor Dejan Janča as president. The members of the party were later

to move on either to the Republican Club or the Reform Party.

The Republican Club (RK), which took part in the 1990 elections under the umbrella of the UJDI, was actually registered on April 20, 1992. The president of the RK Council was Nebojša Popov (born 1939), a sociologist with the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory and expert in social history. He had been a member of the Board of Management of the once famous Korčula Summer School, secretary of the Yugoslav philosophy journal, *Praxis*, and president of the UJDI for Serbia since 1990. In these first multi-party elections in 1990, the RK won 24,982 votes, most of them from Vojvodina.

In 1989 the group was politically close to the then prime minister, Ante Marković. Out on a limb and under fire from all the republics, Marković opted for direct political support. On the basis of his reform program he set up his own party, the Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia. Launched as it was after elections in Slovenia and Croatia, his project came to late. In Serbia, Marković was treated as the arch-enemy. With the obvious blessing of the regime, extremist, nationalist and state-run media railed against “the Reformists” and “Ante’s Serbs”. Šešelj and a group of his “Chetniks”, to give one example, forced their way into a promotional rally organised by the Reformists in Belgrade’s Youth Center and provoked an incident. Writer Mirko Kovač was injured in the melee. The Reformists began to attract liberal intellectuals, young pacifists, autonomist groups from Vojvodina, liberals from Sandžak,

some reformist groups from the former league of Communists of Serbia and even some figures from the “defeated forces” of the infamous Eighth Session. It was difficult for all these multifarious groups to sit comfortably together. The reformist communists were virtually pushed aside while the autonomists gradually distanced themselves.

The Reform Party took part in the 1990 elections under the umbrella of the Alliance of Reform Forces for Serbia. The party was actually registered on October 29, 1990. When its first president, Ivan Djurić, emigrated, the helm was first given to Professor Vojin Dimitrijević of the Belgrade Law Faculty and then to Vesna Pešić (born 1940), of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Science, lecturer, researcher, member of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Thought and Expression and one of the dissidents sentenced to jail in 1982 for demonstrating against human rights violations⁵⁹.

It should be noted here that from its very inception, the GSS, usually regarded as honourable but weak, enjoyed success which should not be underestimated. Its presidential candidate, Ivan Djurić, won 277,398 votes in the elections of December 1990. Djurić was a Byzantine art historian, an associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and taught at universities in Nice and Paris. In Paris, in 1996, he founded the Movement for Democratic Freedoms, which was scarcely known in Serbia. He returned to Serbia for a short time during the

⁵⁹ Vesna Pešić: “Social Deviations;” Vesna Pešić: “Social Strata and Life Style.”

student protest of 1996-97, focusing his activity on Kragujevac. Djurić died in Paris in 1997 at the age of 51.

The Civil Alliance of Serbia emerged under its present name before the 1992 elections as a coalition of the Reform Party, the Republican Club, the People's Rural Party and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina and Yugoslavia (LSDV/J). The party negotiated cooperation with the Democratic Party which, at the time, may have seemed its natural ally. The idea was short-lived, however, because the GSS began to see the Democrats as nationalists while the Democrats regarded the GSS as devoid of national feeling.

From its beginnings in November 1992, the Civil Alliance of Serbia represented the civil option and anti-war attitude established earlier as the group's founding principles. Its basic task was concern for citizens as individuals who were not seen simply as "townspeople or passive citizens but as individuals who had a stake in public affairs". Acting in the name of such individuals the party began its struggle against the destruction of individuality by national collectivism and against the "ideology of ethnic exclusiveness which leads to war over territories, ethnic cleansing and the subjugation of private and public lives to a militant nationalist policy". It also condemned the "malign, primitive and aggressive nationalism which incites fear, hatred and violence, provokes wars and nourishes dictatorships". And yet the GSS, a party aspiring to dialogue and mutual understanding and constituted as "a mode of action", failed to make peace between the autonomist parties and those advocating liberalism, just as it failed to keep the

Vojvodina autonomists among its ranks. Because the issue of whether the territorial or the civil yardstick should be the ruling criterion was never resolved, the People's Rural Party and the LSDV soon left the GSS, although both remained on good terms with it. (See Section 2.3.3.1, The Vojvodina Coalition). The GSS also went through trials and schisms. In 1996, for example, a faction headed by Žarko Korać split with the GSS and established a party of its own. (See Section 2.3.3., The Alliance of Democratic Parties – Regional Parties.)

The GSS enjoyed good relations with parties of ethnic minorities, but the actual effect of their cooperation was minimal. This was perhaps because the political mainstream was being determined by quite different standards, constantly giving elections and political campaigns the character of an ethnic census. The political profile of the GSS reflects modern political trends in Western Europe, particularly when it comes to concern for endangered ethnic minorities. Today it is the Social Democratic Union, headed by Žarko Korać, which builds its strategy on ethnic minorities and regional parties. In the context of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, such a formula could scarcely have been implemented, flying, as it does, in the face of an ethnically homogenised majority and the even more homogenised smaller ethnic communities of the day. As for the parties of ethnic minorities, their civil "guard" was often nothing but an imitation of the statehood projects characteristic of any ethnic group with more than 50,000 members. (See Section 2.3.6, Ethnic Minority Parties.)

The present leader of the GSS is Goran Svilanović, of the Belgrade Law Faculty. He stands out in the Alliance for Change thanks to his energy and his balanced position. A pacifist, he was the only political leader to be drafted into the army during the 1999 war, just like another famous Serb, Dimitrije Tucović, in 1914.

Though a major balance in political life, the GSS cannot be classed as a significant party in terms of the election results it has achieved when standing alone. In the 1992 elections it won just 17,276 votes. At the same time in Vojvodina, a coalition comprising the LSDV, the People's Rural Party, the Republican Club and the GSS won only 36,780 votes.

2.3.2.1.3 New Serbia (NS)

New Serbia (NS) emerged after a clash which took place between the mayor of Čačak, Velimir Ilić, and the main headquarters of the SPO during the dissolution of the Zajedno coalition in 1997. When Drašković expelled Ilić from the SPO Central Committee, Ilić announced he would establish a "New SPO", but later renamed it New Serbia.

Because of a statement he made during the 1999 war about a senior army officer mounting some kind of weapon near a civilian facility, Ilić was forced to take refuge on Mt Jelica. When, after the war, he returned to Čačak and took part in the first post-war opposition rally, he realised that his influence in the town had not declined in the meantime. Ilić once had ambitions of being a major political player but was always handi-

capped by being unable to restrain himself from attacking Vuk Drašković. In turn, Ilić was to Drašković a red rag to a bull. Aware that they could not afford to antagonise Drašković, other opposition leaders tacitly agreed to leave Ilić flat.

Ilić made vehement speeches at the SZP rallies in the summer and autumn of 1999, attacking both the regime and Drašković. In late 1999, the press carried reports that Velimir Ilić and Milan St. Protić, the president of the Serbian Democratic Club Odbrana (Defence), would unite their parties with themselves as co-presidents. Milan St. Protić has been on the Serbian political scene for a decade. Eloquent, educated and outspoken, he comes from a family which has played a significant role throughout Serbia's history. According to Milan St. Protić, this "Double entente", as Vesna Pešić labelled the alliance, was initially to have included Odbrana, New Serbia and the Civil Alliance of Serbia.

2.3.2.1.4 The Movement for a Democratic Serbia (PDS)

The entry of General Momčilo Perišić to the political scene in the summer of 1999 coincided with a growing dispute over whether the Army should support democratic forces or defend the constitutional order.

General Perišić had been the Chief of General Staff of the Yugoslav Army since 1993. He was dismissed on November 24, 1998 after criticising the policy of President Milošević. In a speech on October 19 that year, in Gornji Milanovac, Perišić had said: "We have warned the politicians that war should never be waged

against the entire world". He also said that seeking a helping hand from Russia would be in vain, adding "Never before have we been isolated so long with no single ally as we are today". And: "As the saying goes, and here I apologise to the ladies, amateurs have wrecked everything, even prostitution. Many senior officials have subordinated everything to their own interests". He described his sacking as an inappropriate and illegal act. "I will never accept the office they have planned for me in the federal cabinet. I remain at the disposal of the Army, the people and the state," said Perišić.

He had become some kind of darling of the opposition public in 1996 when, during the student protests, he gave his word to a student delegation that army troops would not be deployed in the streets (already occupied by police). He publicly demonstrated his disobedience during the election crisis in Montenegro by not being sufficiently enthusiastic about the idea of military intervention.

After eight months of hesitation he announced his entry into the political arena and called for the creation of "a platform able to attract all the democratic forces in Serbia and Montenegro and aimed at the reintegration of Yugoslavia into the world". He founded the Movement for a Democratic Serbia with democratic change and the ousting of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević as its major objectives. "If anyone attempts to deploy the Army against its own people, the weapon will probably backfire on him," he warned the regime's officials.

Perišić's party targets all groups which oppose the current regime: political parties, non-governmental organisations and student associations.

He describes the Movement as "a fresh force". He has said it would not be "correct" and nor is he "entitled" to appeal to soldiers to join the party because, as he puts it, the Army is "apolitical". However, he added, he was certain that soldiers, being fighters for their country and patriots, would support him. Perišić claims that it "could not be ruled out" that people from the ruling parties, aware that it was the only way to overcome Serbia's parties, would join his PDS.

Commenting on allegations about his role in the war in Croatia – where he has been convicted in absentia and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, Perišić says he merely defended his country with honour, all the way from Zadar to Kosovo.

In a feature on General Perišić, the French *Le Figaro* wrote that his reputation in the army soared in 1991 when he managed to break out of the encirclement of Croatian forces, heartening his subordinate officers by saying: "I will not surrender. But if I go mad and try to do so, I order you to kill me". The paper described Perišić as an admirer of the former French president Charles de Gaulle, adding that lower-ranking officers held him in particularly high esteem. Asked whether generals in the Yugoslav Army sided with President Milošević, Perišić replied that "from their positions and their overall behaviour, some senior Army people show that they have become a party cell of the SPS and JUL," adding that "everyone knows who these people are".

2.3.2.1.5 Social Democracy

Social Democracy (SD) is a moderately pro-Western party, attempting to be a catchall because every other social democratic party to date has been somewhat unsuccessful. (For example the Social Democratic Party of Yugoslavia suffered a catastrophe in the first multi-party elections, winning just 0.03 per cent of the vote. There are also other parties of similar profile, such as Korać's Social Democratic Union.)

The party was established on April 22, 1997, with retired army general Vuk Obradović as one of its founders. Obradović was elected party president on July 12, 1997.

Vuk Obradović joined the army at the age of 17 and spent 28 years in the service. He was, inter alia, the head of General Veljko Kadijević's office and in 1990 became the first spokesman for the then Federal Secretariat for National Defence. Two years later he was in charge of the Secretariat's Department of Moral Education. He ended his successful military career (at the age of 44 he was the Army's youngest general), in 1992, resigning because he had failed to keep his promise to the parents of privates held under siege in barracks in Sarajevo that he would return their sons to them by May 20, 1992. Once out of the Army he opened a contracting business. When he entered politics he turned the business over to his sons.

As a presidential candidate in 1997, Vuk Obradović promised "profound social, economic and democratic reforms through dialogue, tolerance and compromise

with opponents". He managed to win 100,000 popular votes. Gradually distancing his party from the Alliance for Change, in late 1999 he became closer in some ideological matters to the Alliance of Democratic Parties and continued to emphasise his party's social democratic profile⁶⁰. Then, in January 2000, he began moving closer to the DAN coalition. According to some sources his party has embarked on the upgrading of its infrastructure.

2.3.3 The Alliance of Democratic Parties – Regional Parties

The membership of the Alliance of Democratic Parties (SDP) includes Žarko Korać's Social Democratic Union, Nenad Čanak's League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Branislav Kovačević's Šumadija Coalition, Rasim Ljajić's Sandžak Coalition, Laszlo Jozsef's Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, Miodrag Isakov's Democratic Reform Party of Vojvodina and the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians. (See Sections 2.3.3.1, Vojvodina Coalition and 2.3.6, Ethnic Minority Parties.) According to Isakov, the Alliance of Democratic Parties has two essential characteristics: it is multiethnic and a regional alliance, he says, which reflects its basic goals of decentralisation and regionalisation of Serbia.

⁶⁰ On October 22, 1999, the SD abandoned the Alliance for Change after the latter's decision to become an election coalition. Leaders of the Alliance of Democratic Parties told the Beta news agency that they discussed a mode of SD's joining them with the party leader, Vuk Obradović.

2.3.3.1 The Vojvodina Coalition of 1997

The Vojvodina Coalition was formerly made up of the Democratic Reform Party of Vojvodina (RDSV), the People's Rural Party (NSS) and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSDV). The coalition, however, was dissolved. When Nenad Čanak and several other members of the Serbian Parliament were stripped of their seats, Dragan Veselinov, the leader of the Coalition and its representative in the Parliament explained it by their having left the Coalition. "The only force applied was the law," he said. Veselinov, an academic from the Faculty of Political Science, president of the NSS and leader of the Vojvodina Coalition said that the residents of Vojvodina had opted for a "Serbia with a unique constitution, a unique emblem, a unique diplomatic service, unique currency and unique customs. All Vojvodina residents want from this unique Serbia is an autonomous economy".

Nenad Čanak, the leader of the LSDV, claims it was propaganda that turned him into "the most extreme autonomist". A skilled humorist, he tends to turn everything into political cabaret. After leaving the Vojvodina Coalition, the LSDV joined the Alliance of Democratic Forces. Čanak has proposed that Serbia be divided into six federal units, Vojvodina, Kosovo, Sandžak, Šumadija, South-eastern Serbia and Belgrade, with differing degrees of autonomy. In the fall of 1999, Čanak formed and illegal "transitional government of Vojvodina". (See Section 2.3.3.)

The leader of the Democratic Reform Party of Vojvodina (RDSV), Mile Isakov, was formerly (1990-

1996) the president of the Independent Association of Vojvodina Journalists and was among the founders of the Nezavisnost Trade Unions. Nominated by the Vojvodina Coalition, Isakov won 111,166 votes in the 1997 presidential elections. While campaigning for the presidency Isakov said: "Some people see me as a provincial candidate, but tend to forget that I am the candidate of the Serbian Athens – Vojvodina, the most developed part of Serbia and a Serbian Europe in many respects. So let's see whether the citizens will opt for the provinces or Europe". His election slogan was "Stop the plunder!" The RDSV is a descendent of the Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia, set up in 1990 by the former Yugoslavia's last prime minister, Ante Marković. It was formerly the Alliance's provincial branch in Vojvodina.

The Vojvodina Statute, enacted in 1991, considerably decreased the degree of autonomy the province enjoyed under the 1974 Constitution. Autonomists were demanding an even higher degree of autonomy. In December 1995 the Vojvodina Club issued a Manifesto for Vojvodina, signed by seventeen organisations. Demanding amendments to the constitutions of both Yugoslavia and Serbia, the Manifesto advocated the notion of Vojvodina within Serbia, but constituted as a modern European region, linked to other communities and guaranteeing the rights of ethnic minorities. Although its platform is based on aspirations to autonomy, the RDSV has never declared itself on the document.

Vojvodina is usually regarded as a stronghold of the civil option and its political secessionism is seen in that light. It should, however, be noted that the SPS, Šešelj's Radicals and nationalist parties, including ethnic minority parties established by the Vojvodina Hungarians, have had the upper hand in all federal and Serbian elections from 1990 to 1999. This is best illustrated by the fact that in the 1997 elections the centrist "red-black coalition" (SPS-SRS), with 567,780 votes, won 43 of the 56 seats assigned to Vojvodina in the Serbian Parliament. All the parties (RDSV, LSDV and NSS) which called the political identity of Vojvodina into question were more or less unsuccessful. In the 1992 elections for the Serbian parliament, seventeen of the Vojvodina seats were won by the Socialists, seventeen by the Radicals, eleven by Depos and two by the DS-RDSV-GSS coalition. The Vojvodina Coalition won 112,589 votes, a rather poor outcome when compared with its aspirations. (See Sections 5.2 and 5.3 on elections).

2.3.3.2 The Šumadija Coalition

The Šumadija Coalition is regarded as an armchair coalition advocating autonomy for Šumadija. The fact that it won just 300 votes in the 1997 elections best illustrates the support given to the idea by Central Serbia.

2.3.4 Political Representation of the Kosovo Serbs

Until June 1999, Kosovo Serbs more or less supported the regime, mostly the Socialists and, in some areas, the Radicals. Of the opposition parties the SPO and the DSS had some influence, albeit weak. Since the end of the 1999 war, Serbs who have resisted persecution and remained in Kosovo have been concentrated in two political groupings: the Serb National Council of Kosovska Mitrovica headed by Oliver Ivanović and the Serb National Council of Gračanica, with Bishop Artemije at the helm. In addition to Bishop Artemije, this political faction includes Arandjel Nojkić of the SPO and former Serbian Radical Party figure Rada Trajković.

Bishop Artemije⁶¹ has clearly distanced himself from the regime's repression in Kosovo. The pro-regime media frequently denounce him as a traitor while Albanian extremists label him a nationalist. However he has consistently condemned all violence and, on that issue, does not discriminate between Serbs and

⁶¹ Bishop Artemije of Raška and Prizren (Marko Radosavljević) was born on January 15, 1935, in the village of Lelić near Valjevo. After completing seminary training he worked with his spiritual adviser Justin Popović, a monk in the Čelije monastery some 10 kilometres away from Artemije's birthplace. He was a professor of theology in the Krka monastery (1964-68). He mastered in theology in Athens. After being awarded a doctorate he was a professor at the Prizren Seminary. In 1978, he went as a monk to the deserted Crna Reka monastery and lived there for 13 years until in 1991 he was elected Bishop of Raška and Prizren. He has been actively engaged in the reconstruction of monasteries throughout Serbia, and has worked as an editor, educator and translator of theological books. (Source of information: <http://www.decani.yunet.com/ecreka.html>)

Albanians. Just as he condemned the onslaught of the Milošević regime against the Albanians, so did he condemn the crimes of the Kosovo Liberation Army against innocent Serb civilians. Again, in the same tones, he condemned the NATO air raids against Serbia which killed a number of civilians.

Though without political ambitions, Bishop Artemije entered the political arena in an effort to protect people from violence. Together with Momčilo Trajković, he joined the Transitional Administrative Council of Kosovo. He soon realised, however that the Albanian side would not act in good faith because it had turned a blind eye to crimes against Serbs and other non-Albanian residents. So he walked out, saying that with a knife held at their throats there was no way Serbs could work together with Albanians for their own extinction.

The Serb National Council of Gračanica is in active collaboration with the Serbian Democratic Opposition where it is usually represented by Momčilo Trajković.

2.3.5 Coordinators

Several groups of intellectuals focused on the unification and homogenisation the opposition were established during 1999. This phenomenon of intellectual supervision of opposition performance used to be ascribed to Dobrica Ćosić. First to emerge was the Council for Democratic Transformation of Serbia (consisting of intellectuals closest to Sveta Stojanović, Trivo Indjić and Boško Mijatović). It was followed by the Stability Pact for Serbia, later renamed Group 17 Plus (in

fact an extension of the economic think tank, Group 17, led by Mladjan Dinkić, economic adviser to Zoran Djindjić). Bringing together historians, writers and lawyers of the younger generations, the group proposed a plan for a transitional expert government which was adopted by the Alliance for Change. The coordinators also include the Council for Democratic Transformation of Serbia (in the country), presided over by historian Dušan Bataković, an adviser on Kosovo issues to the Serbian Orthodox Church and author of the cantonisation plan for Kosovo.

2.3.5.1 Experts

2.3.5.1.1 Dragoslav Avramović: Mascot or Platform Magician?

Avramović is chiefly associated with the idea of setting up a shadow cabinet, a national council or some other form of expert government. A figure of international repute, Avramović was invited to present his program for humanitarian aid to Serbia to a trilateral panel in Budva. (The meeting brought representatives from the European Union and the USA, together with those from the Montenegrin government and the Serbian opposition). In late 1999, Avramović's plan for a shadow government of experts was in the limelight but, as with a similar project which preceded it, was opposed by the SPO, which refused to recognise Avramović as a coordinator of the opposition.

2.3.5.1.2 Mladjan Dinkić: Before the Deadline

Since mid-June, 1999, the coordinator of the economic think tank G17, Mladjan Dinkić, has advocated the idea of a transitional government of experts, the smash hit of that summer. Early in August, Dinkić announced that the opposition parties of the Alliance for Change, the Serbian Orthodox Church and G17 were in agreement on key issues of the transitional government first posited by the Stability Pact for Serbia. The August 9 meeting between the head of the Church, Patriarch Pavle and Serbian opposition leaders agreed to demand the setting up of a transitional government of experts stage a rally in Belgrade on August 19, the feast of the Transfiguration.

Although the Transfiguration Day protest failed, Dinkić continued to express his confidence in the establishment of a transitional government. He appealed to MPs from the ruling coalition to express their support for the Stability Pact for Serbia, by “signing their own dismissals” as “the only realistic way to peacefully and rapidly overcome the crisis in the country”. The regime simply turned a deaf ear. The hazy prospects of their expert government notwithstanding, Dinkić, Labus et al. toured Western capitals in an attempt to test their attitudes. In the meantime, G17 became G17 Plus with the addition of people from various professions.

Dinkić was set on promoting his ideas by any means, including his own talent for music. (He held a rock concert in late December, 1999). The failure of the idea was largely due to its Utopian nature: it was unre-

alistic to expect something like this to be implemented without elections or a coup.

2.3.5.2 Voices from the Diaspora

The political Diaspora has little influence on political developments within the country⁶², not only because the first generation of post-World War II emigrants ended up abandoned and forcefully isolated from their own country but also because they never linked up with the economic migrants of the sixties.

Three Serbian businessmen from abroad back coalitions or pacts. In July 1998 Miroslav Djordjević founded the Council for Democratic Transformation of Serbia with two branches: one in the Diaspora whose members are influential Serbs abroad and the other, at home, with sixty members. Boris Vukobrat is the founder and president of the Peace and Crisis Management Foundation and patron of the Alliance of Democratic Forces. Milan Panić, prime minister in 1992 and a presidential candidate, founded the League for Change which preceded the Alliance for Change. All three are focused on strengthening cooperation among their respective groups in order to “coordinate the common endeavour for democratic change in Serbia,” in spite of the fact they themselves do not always cooperate harmoniously. They have been barely visible in 2000. However, still nervous that any of them might turn up as a presidential candidate, the regime took care to include in the election legislation a provision stipulating

⁶² Desimir Tošić: “About People,” Mašić (Nova 160), Belgrade, 2000.

that candidates for elections must have resided in Yugoslavia for at least ten years.

2.3.6 Ethnic Minority Parties

In 1999, ethnic minority parties were reactivated. They set themselves to draft a variety of programs and declarations with which they lobbied in centres of influence for their political goals. These can more or less be described as demands to be invested with some kind of state authority within an autonomy. Manifestoes as such were more characteristic of the times of crisis in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo when ethnic minority problems were regarded as disputes over territory or the creation of new states. Most platforms imply control over a territory which leads to segregation and a growing gap between minorities and the majority community.

2.3.6.1 The National Council of Hungarians

On August 20, 1999, St Stephen's Day, when Hungarians commemorate their first Christian king, Stephen I, the Provisional National Council of Hungarians was founded in Subotica, in the province of Vojvodina with a membership of 45, rather than the envisaged 55. The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM) is represented by 39 members in the Council, the Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (DZVM) with seven, the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (DPVM). The Christian Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians (HDUVM) and the Christian Democratic Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians

(HDPVM) have three representatives each. The members of the Council are not elected by direct vote but are drawn from Hungarian MPs in the federal, Serbian and provincial parliaments who have been elected on the lists of Hungarian political parties and a group of deputies from the municipalities in which the Hungarians make up the majority population. The Council is to be reformed “in the fullness of time” as a permanent body elected by direct vote. Joseph Kaza’s election as president of the Council provoked disputes. The DZVM, the HDPVM and HDUVM announced that they would not acknowledge the Provisional Council as having a mandate to make decisions on behalf of Vojvodina Hungarians.

Only three Hungarian parties, the SVM, the DZVM and the Civil Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians (GPVM), were represented at the Council’s founding meeting. Other Hungarian parties and factions were not invited (the DZVM of Andrasz Agoston, leader of the first Hungarian political movement in Vojvodina, the HDPVM and the Christian Democratic Union). In fact the founding meeting was held at Budapest’s behest. Early in 1999 the Hungarian government resolved to invite only parliamentary parties to the meeting, the motion itself could be interpreted as the desire of the three founding parties to edge other organisations out.

The “Agreement on Political and Legal Structures of Vojvodina and Self-Government of Vojvodina Ethnic Communities” signalled that the Vojvodina Hungarians were bent on taking independent action. Under the auspices of experts from the Urbahn government, six polit-

ical parties of the Vojvodina Hungarians agreed on the document in Budapest. According to SVM official Jozsef Laszlo, they also agreed that the Hungarian government should be in charge of promoting their plan among the international community. The concept of the three-ply autonomy implies an autonomous Vojvodina and territorial and personal autonomy of the Vojvodina Hungarians within it.

The JUL committee of the Northern Banat district described the idea of the Hungarians' personal, cultural and territorial autonomy as "political wilfulness deriving from national romanticism and aimed at destroying the model of cohabitation and tolerance".

The sharp-tongued leader of the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Nenad Čanak, retorted that the Vojvodina Hungarians should solve their problems in Vojvodina because they were not going to live with "Americans and Indians". He also said that he doubted whether Hungary's demarche would make any waves in the Clinton administration.

The leader of the Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians, Pal Sandor, was even more vehement. In an interview with VK Radio in Kikinda, he accused Budapest of "spoiling relations between the SVM and the DZVM by constantly raising the issue of autonomy for Vojvodina, which has only 17 per cent Hungarian population". He added: "The DZVM doesn't go to Budapest for instructions and attitudes and demands of its own and that's why they don't like us in Hungary". Back in 1995, Sandor had suggested threefold Hungarian autonomy, implying an autonomous

Hungarian region with a special status and personal autonomy.

2.3.6.2 The Sandžak Coalition

Two groups of parties figure as the major political representatives of Muslims in Yugoslavia. The first is headed by Sulejman Ugljanin, the president of the Democratic Action Party (SDA) and the Muslim National Council of Sandžak (MNVS). The second group is led by the Bosniak National Council of Sandžak (BNVS), including the Democratic Union (led by Harun Hadžić from Rožaje), the Democratic Action Party of Montenegro (led by Rasim Sahman), the Party of National Equality from Rožaje (headed by Alija Matović) and the Party for a Modern Sandžak (with Muamar Šuljević as leader).

On July 19, 1999, the BNVS Assembly adopted a “Declaration of the Right of Bosniaks to Political and National Equality” and a “Memorandum on Autonomy for Sandžak and Special Relations with Bosnia-Herzegovina”. Prompted by developments in Kosovo, both documents were issued at a time when UN and NATO troops were stationed in Kosovo and relations between Serbia and Montenegro pointed to the virtual disintegration of the federal state.

The Memorandum is based on the principle which states that “The Bosniaks of Sandžak and Bosnia-Herzegovina are a unique ethno-genetic body and represent one nation which should develop cultural, scientific, religious, economic and other links”. Its authors demand a Sandžak constitution, elections monitored by

the OSCE, demilitarisation of the region, the right to collect taxes, a Sandžak government, the right to determine educational curricula, the right to elect judges and so on.

The documents also propose that the Sandžak region should include six Serbian municipalities: Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Tutin, Priboj, Prijepolje, and Nova Varoš and five Montenegrin: Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rožaje and Plav. The fact that the Sandžak region would thus spread across the territories of both republics renders the project rather less than viable.

In the 1997 presidential election, Ugljanin won 68,446 votes. In the election for president of Serbia in December 1990, he attracted 109,459 votes and ranked fourth on the list. He has presided over the SDA from its inception and since May 1991 has also acted as president of the Muslim National Council.

The Democratic Action Party (SDA) has often rambled when it comes to demands and action. Ugljanin first used to say that the Sandžak Muslims wanted the same degree of rights and autonomy that had been granted to Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Later, Muslim political organisations set up the Muslim National Council of Sandžak, but its activity boiled down to faxing messages to politicians all over the world.

In October 1991, at the time the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was disintegrating, the SDA called a referendum "on Sandžak's autonomy and its right to join one of the federal republics". According to the organisers the referendum attracted a turnout close

to 100 per cent of Muslim voters and almost all of them answered “yes” to the proposal.

When, in mid-1993, however, the Muslim National Council of Sandžak issued its “Memorandum on a Special Status for Sandžak”, it was clear that the party leadership had strayed from the course of autonomy. Once again, the project proved to be unviable. This memorandum was issued at the time of the war in Bosnia, as a response to that crisis.

The second memorandum demanded a high degree of autonomy and some of the trappings of statehood, such as a flag, an emblem and an anthem. Both Belgrade and Podgorica turned it down. Most Serbs, for instance, never refer to Sandžak, rather they call it the Raška District after the territory of Raška at the time of the Nemanjić dynasty. Belgrade was suspicious of political activity by Sandžak Muslims and in 1992 launched an operation to round up illegal arms in Sandžak. Once the campaign was over, many humanitarian organisations such as the Human Rights Foundation complained about the violent and illegal methods employed. Serbian paramilitary troops were in evidence and, to all appearances, so were some of Radovan Karadžić’s groups. There were mysterious abductions in Sjeverin and Štrpci. To date state bodies have given no explanation whatsoever to families inquiring into the fate of their missing relatives, although President Milošević himself has promised to look into the matter.

It was against such a background that Sulejman Ugljanin left the country. He returned several years later and again entered the political arena. The SDA, how-

ever, had undergone a change in the meantime. Its new leader, Rasim Ljajić, was pursuing a policy of openness to Belgrade, cooperation with the Serbian opposition and contact with the authorities. Ljajić would not give up pursuing autonomy for Sandžak, but it was an end to repression that topped his list of priorities. He distanced himself from the Muslim National Council of Sandžak, which was ruled by Ugljanin's faction. The Sulejman Ugljanin Coalition includes five parties: the SDA for Sandžak (led by Ugljanin), the LBO (led by Kasim Zoranić), the Bosniak Democratic Party of Sandžak (with Esad Džuverović at its helm), the Reform Democratic Party of Sandžak (headed by Izudin Šušević) and the SDA for Yugoslavia (led by Ibrahim Djerlek).

The leader of the Democratic Action party – Sandžak Coalition, Rasim Ljajic, who cooperates closely with the Serbian opposition within the Alliance of Democratic Parties, called the documents issued by the Bosniak National Council of Sandžak ill-conceived and “not based on reality”, because, he said they “treat Sandžak as a unique political whole”. However, says, Ljajic “We are aware of the fact that Sandžak spreads over the territories of two republics which today are almost two separate states and that the international community would not approve of Sandžak as a single entity on its own”.

The “List for Sandžak” Coalition includes the SDA for Sandžak, the Liberal Bosniak Organisation of Sandžak (LBO), the Democratic Action Party of Yugoslavia, the Reform Democratic Party of Sandžak

and the True Democratic Action party of Sandžak. The coalition won 62,111 votes in the 1996 elections and 49,486 votes in 1997.

2.3.6.3 The Albanians of South Serbia

The Albanians from the south of Serbia have been represented in the Serbian Parliament by a coalition of two Albanian parties: the Coalition of the Party for Democratic Action and the Democratic Party of Preševo Albanians, and the Democratic Party for Preševo and Bujanovac. All these parties took part in the elections of 1990, 1993 and 1997. (See Sections 5.2 and 5.3 on election results.)

2.3.6.4 Kosovo: Disloyal Opposition

The Kosovo Albanian parties still cling to the idea of an independent and sovereign Kosovo. After 1990, illegal Leninist groups were replaced by large organisations such as the Democratic Alliance of Kosovo, the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo, the Rural Democratic Party of Kosovo, the Youth Parliament of Kosovo and the Committee for the Truth about Kosovo. The Democratic Christian party, with headquarters in Zagreb and Priština, followed. The party supposedly attracts the votes of about 50,000 Catholic Albanians. The most important of all is still Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic Alliance of Kosovo. All Kosovo Albanian parties refuse to take part in elections for the Serbian and Yugoslav parliaments.

At its founding assembly in May 1991, the Democratic League of Kosovo (DSK), the largest political party, declared full republic status for Kosovo the top national priority. The second party assembly in May 1992 called for an independent and neutral state of Kosovo open to Albania and Serbia.

In January 1992, the Kosovo Albanians organised the Assembly of National Reconciliation and Unification. Elections for a parallel Kosovo Parliament took place in May of the same year. Rugova's DSK won the election.

Intellectual and political communication between Serbs and Albanians officially ended in 1988. A meeting of Albanian and Serb writers ended in uproar when Albanian intellectuals presented their nationalist program. Another, similar, meeting was called in 1995 under the auspices of the Democratic Center, but had little effect.

Negotiations in Rambouillet and Paris failed in the spring of 1999. War and massive persecution of the Albanians ensued. The Serbs were then expelled from Kosovo under the eyes of international troops. A new force emerged from the 1998-99 war: the overtly secessionist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Dominating in the field, the KLA strove for an independent Kosovo. In the Serbian political milieu this is seen as snatching part of a sovereign territory. The chance of dialogue and political consolidation in the near future is nil.

Former army commander Hashim Thaqi redesigned himself as a political leader with a party of his own. Historian Dušan Bataković, an expert on Kosovo issues,

says that even Ibrahim Rugova, not to mention Veton Surroi and other moderate political activists in Kosovo are wary of Thaqi, the co-president of the Transitional Executive Council of Kosovo (PAVK) and leader of the Party for Democratic Transformation of Kosovo.

3 The Election Labyrinth

Political turmoil in Serbia has been responsible not only for the dissolution of the former state and the consequent wars, but also the present social crisis, the relations between a variety of political forces, their strengths and their positions. It has also been crucial in prompting the desire for change and the wish to safeguard at least the social minimum secured by the old system⁶³. (See Section 1.5.1, Lost Support.)

3.1 Ruling Coalitions

Thanks to its election results as well as its coalitionary capability, the SPS held a mandate to appoint a Serbian government from 1990 to 1999. It has also had the lion's share of portfolios in federal cabinets.

After the 1990 elections, the Serbian cabinet was composed solely of members of the SPS which dominated the Serbian Parliament with a comfortable majority of 194 MPs.

On three later occasions, however, the SPS has had to rely on support from other parties in order to be able to form a government. In 1992, while the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was being established, Šešelj's

⁶³ Ljiljana Bačević, Štefica Bahtijarević, Vladimir Goati et al.: "Yugoslavia at a Crucial Crossroads."

Radicals voted support to the Socialist minority government. At the time the SPS had 101 seats in the legislature. The party has been in coalition with the SRS virtually whenever war was being waged on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, with the state-run media favouring the Radical leader, Vojislav Šešelj. The SRS were the main voice in the vote of no confidence in Yugoslav President Dobrica Ćosić in June 1993. This was a kind of favour rendered to the SPS prior to the temporary split between the parties. The first informal coalition between the SPS and the SRS ended in September 1993, when the Socialist issued a statement describing Šešelj's policy as being "in opposition to SPS policy and contrary to the interests of the Serbian people". Early elections were called in the autumn of 1993 when the Radicals launched an initiative for the dismissal of the Serbian cabinet and the SPO was threatening to vote for the initiative in protest at brutal police treatment of the actress Nadežda Bulatović. (The SPO also announced it would call for the resignation of Interior Minister Zoran Sokolović).

The SPS made a formal coalition with New Democracy after the December 1993 elections, when the ND MPs left the opposition Depos coalition and joined the Serbian cabinet. This provided the government with the necessary majority of three seats. At the time of the Dayton U-turn, this coalition lasted almost the entire term. (See Section 3.2.2, Depos II, 1993.)

Although the SPS went to the September 1997 elections in a coalition labelled SPS-JUL-ND-Slobodan Milošević, it made a coalition with the SRS on March

24, 1998, in the Serbian Parliament. The newly founded coalition took 110 of the 250 seats. Within the former leftist coalition, 85 seats were allocated to the SPS, 20 to JUL and five to New Democracy. However the total number of “leftist” seats was insufficient for a majority government. After lengthy negotiations with both the SRS and the SPO, it was the SRS with its 82 seats which eventually joined the Serbian cabinet, which was dubbed the “Red-Black Coalition”. (See Section 2.2., The Ruling Bloc.)

The radicals were assigned two deputy prime ministerial posts (Vojislav Šešelj and Tomislav Nikolić). The cabinet has 35 members: five deputy prime ministers, 23 ministers and seven ministers without portfolio. The SPS and the SRS are represented by fifteen members each, five come from JUL and one cabinet member is treated as a non-party figure.

New Democracy was given no portfolios. It acted as an opposition party in the Serbian Parliament, rather than a party which had won its seats on the ticket of the ruling coalition. In June 1999 the coalition with ND was formally and unilaterally broken, while the majority in the Parliament stripped ND of its seats.

The bizarre behaviour of the ruling coalition was more than evident once the Serbian Parliament had endorsed the peace agreement on Kosovo proposed by Chernomyrdin and Ahtisari. Šešelj’s Radicals voted against it and the Radical ministers resigned from the Serbian cabinet. However, against the background of the state of war, Serbian President Milan Milutinović

passed a decree ordering all ministers to retain their portfolios.

After this legally questionable ruse, the Radicals carried on with their ministerial duties and then joined the reshuffled federal cabinet of Momir Bulatović.

At the federal level, the SPS had long been in coalition with Montenegro's Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS). After the DPS split into two factions in the summer of 1997 – one led by Momir Bulatović and the other by Milo Djukanović – the SPS continued to act in coalition with Bulatović's newly established Socialist People's Party (SNP).

In the November 1996 elections for the Chamber of Citizens of the Federal Parliament, the SPS-JUL-ND coalition took 64 out of the 138 seats. The federal cabinet was not appointed until March 1997. Radoje Kontić was re-elected Prime Minister. However, in June 1998, on the eve of parliamentary elections in Montenegro, he was dumped without notice and replaced by Momir Bulatović.

3.1.1 Informal and Formal Cooperation between the Regime and the Opposition

There is no doubt that for more than two thirds of the past decade, Šešelj has played the role of the regime's extended arm. The only exception was the period from 1993 to 1995 when the SPS and the SRS were on cool terms and even waged a verbal war over sanctions imposed on the Bosnian Serbs on the eve of the Dayton Agreement.

The others, regardless of their perpetual conflict with the regime, have occasionally opted for a kind of tactical cooperation. In 1993, for instance, when the Democrats were offered two portfolios in Mirko Marjanović's Serbian cabinet, Zoran Djindjić did not exactly stick to his guns. In 1992, there were two ministers from the DS in Milan Panić's federal cabinet along with two ministers and one deputy minister from the ranks of the civil option (Professor Ljubomir Madžar and reformists Momčilo Grubač and Tibor Varadi). After his meeting with Milošević following the 1993 elections, Vuk Drašković turned a blind eye to the fact that New Democracy had joined Marjanović's cabinet and gave tacit approval to the Dayton U-turn. It seems he wavered a little before finally turning down the offer of joining the coalition. Yet he joined Momir Bulatović's federal cabinet near the end of the Kosovo crisis in 1999. He was dismissed in May of the same year for advocating a treaty which would have put an end to the NATO air raids. In 1999 he spurned the offer to join a reshuffled federal cabinet.

3.2 Opposition Coalitions

The major opposition coalitions include the United Opposition of Serbia (1990), Depos I (1992), Depos II (1993), Zajedno (1996) and today's Alliance for Change. Not one has managed to encompass the whole opposition spectrum. All of them have suffered from the same syndrome, a short life and a propensity for schism, with differing views on coalition-making leading to rifts between the member parties.

In 1991 a faction of the Democratic Party disagreed with the policy on elections and attacked the then party leader, Dragoljub Mićunović, for making a decision to contest elections without having achieved general consent. They split with the party to set up the Serbian Liberal Party (SLS). In 1992, Koštunica walked out of the Democratic Party after it refused to join Depos and formed his own Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS). It could even be said that the Parliamentary People's Party (SNS), led by writer Slobodan Rakitić, once a leading official of the SPO, emerged from a dispute over the Depos II coalition which the SPO set up together with the Civil Alliance and New Democracy in 1993. Slobodan Rakitić rebuked Vuk Drašković for turning the SPO into "a party devoid of national feelings". As for the Civil Alliance, the fact that it entered a coalition with Drašković brought about a split and the faction headed by Žarko Korać broke away to form the Social Democratic Union. The issue of joining the Zajedno coalition in 1996 resulted in a split in the Democratic Party of Serbia and the establishment of Vladan Batić's Democratic Christian Party.

3.2.1 The United Opposition of 1990

The United Opposition of 1990 was formed because of the majority election system. The member parties agreed to act as a single body in the second round of the republic election and jointly support an opposition candidate, regardless of the party he came from. The coalition was short-lived and dissolved in squabbling after the elections. A few months later a new round of coali-

tion-making began under a variety of names such as the United Serbian Opposition or the United Opposition of Serbia but in the end remained only an attempt.

3.2.2 DEPOS – 1992

Depos 1992 was founded on May 16 and registered on August 31. Its founders were the SPO, ND, group of DS members (people who later joined the DSS) and the SLS. At the time the coalition consisted of fourteen parties and several thousand of Serbia's leading intellectuals. Until the next elections in the autumn of 1992, Depos would consist of non-party figures, the SPO, ND, the Serbian Royalists Bloc, the Democratic Alliance of Bulgarians, the SLS, the DSS, the Socialist Union of Serbia/Yugoslavia, the Rural Party of Serbia and the Serbian St Sava Party.

3.2.3 Depos II, - 1993

Depos II – 1993 consisted of the SPO, ND and the Civil Alliance of Serbia. Though it won legislative seats on the opposition list, the ND joined the government after the elections. The ND claimed that its coalition partners had agreed with the move. The partners, however, denied this assertion.

3.2.4 The Parallel Parliament – 1996

The Parallel Parliament of 1996 was actually an attempt by opposition parliamentary parties in the winter of 1996 to take common stands on policy. It was one

of the few agreements reached between the democratic opposition and the Radicals. However it broke up after the Radicals disagreed over the issue of minority rights.

3.2.5 Zajedno – 1997

The worker-rural-democratic Zajedno, which brought together the SPO, the DS, the GSS, the DSS and the Association of Independent Trade Unions, suffered the greatest election defeat since 1990. In elections on November 3, 1996, the coalition won only about 969,000 votes, far less than the total of about 1,400,000 votes won by the four parties in the 1993 elections.

3.3 Causes of Opposition Disputes

Opposition coalitions have usually surged in waves and have been short-lived. It took a long time to realise that the democratic opposition was made up of several distinct groups which could possibly never be united under a common leadership.

Serbian politics does not polarise along a single axis. Serbia is a multi-party society in crisis and turmoil, a complex matrix of forces.

In the aftermath of elections, the inaccurate self-images characteristic of election campaigns usually result in leaders quarrelling about who “betrayed” who. In 1990, Drašković vehemently criticised Democratic Party leader Mićunović for having forced the rest of the opposition to take part in the elections while in 1997, Djindjić’s Democrats and the Civil Alliance of Serbia were accusing Drašković of giving legitimacy to

Milošević's elections by taking part in them. For his part, Drašković accused Djindjić of negotiating with Milošević and weakening the opposition by his boycott of the 1997 elections.

The real reason for the Djindjić-Drašković split of 1997 was Djindjić's refusal to recognise Drašković's "ability to win", along with the fact that even when acting together, as in the November 1996 elections, they never managed to prove they were a winning team. In these elections the Zajedno coalition won just fifteen per cent of the vote.

However the fact that in most local governments Zajedno worked well despite the quarrels in the central headquarters of the parties indicates that this opposition coalition may not have been so prone to splitting had they been more successful in elections.

From 1999 and again now in 2000, the parties marginalised on the political scene by boycott have been endeavouring to stage a comeback. Their relations with the SPO – a party they can't do without – are far from harmonious. Traumatized by attempts on its leaders life, and probably wary of a major offensive on the part of the regime, the SPO is sitting and waiting. It would not be natural for a party to passively relinquish a political trophy it already holds and simply let its huge infrastructure go. Thus various changes of direction may be in sight.

3.3.1 Results: The Road to the Presidency Blocked, Parliament Stalled

As discussed earlier, the regime and the opposition have actually met in five electoral tournaments⁶⁴. There have usually been protests in the aftermath. In fact there have been six great waves of extended protests with hundreds of thousands of people in the streets. (1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997 and 1999). Thus elections have never managed to achieve what they are actually meant for – the pacification of the political arena. Under such circumstances, the Serbian opposition has actually taken on the almost Sisyphean task of solving the electoral equation in a variety of ways. In Parliamentary games, the SPS has usually come out with the highest score. When the scores have not been high enough, which has happened on several occasions, the SPS has made coalitions with almost every player in the political game (See Section 3.2, Opposition Coalitions.) This is another explanation of assertion above that Serbia is politically multipolar rather than bipolar. (See Section 2.1, Relevant and Irrelevant Parties, for more discussion of this.)

Elected representatives have remained in office for an average of 2.5 years. Under the Serbian Constitution, MPs are elected for a term of four years and the president of the Republic for a five-year term of office. Once elected, the president is practically untouchable and can only be dismissed by a two-thirds majority vote in the

⁶⁴ "Overview and Analysis of Electoral Results in Serbia: December 1990 - December 1997," Center for Free Elections and Democracy, Belgrade, June 2000, a CD issue.

Parliament followed by a fifty per cent majority of the vote of the Serbian electorate. In fact twice as many votes are required to dismiss a president than to elect one. In 1992 Slobodan Milošević's first term as president was curtailed in a rather odd way: the Serbian Parliament passed a bill decreeing early parliamentary and presidential elections to be called by the end of 1992. This totally blocked the only road once open to the opposition, that leading to the office of the Serbian president. Counting on the charisma of Slobodan Milošević to once again carry it over the line, the regime introduced a direct vote for representatives in the Federal Parliament's Chamber of the Republics and the president of the Yugoslavia.

3.3.1.1 1990: The Year of the First-Round Knockout

In 1990 the Serbian opposition was defeated under the majority election system. More than a defeat, it was actually a knockout blow. The advantage to the ruling party, and its arrogance, were in full view. However the elections did not settle the political scene. On the contrary, shortly after the first multi-party parliament was constituted, mass protest broke out, on March 9, 1991. It was a fanfare for the break-up of a state, for the onset of wars which would swallow up the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Slobodan Milošević, in the role of a newly-enthroned ruler, able to secure peace and stability for the country (or, in the opposition's scenario, a leader of the "Red Gang") and Vuk Drašković, denounced by the regime as leader of "the forces of chaos and frenzy" were the main players.

3.3.1.2 1992: The Year of the New Old State

In 1992 the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was raging. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was created by Serbia and Montenegro. That year the major roles went to Dobrica Ćosić, who accepted the presidency of the newly-established state and Milan Panić, who was the first to take the chair of prime minister, which he did at the time of the St Vitus' Day rallies. The new "Žabljak" Constitution was adopted under summary procedure. The opposition called it unacceptably improvisational, demanding the convening of a constituent assembly and boycotting the May 1992 elections. The boycott actually provided Vojislav Šešelj, up to then merely a political provocateur, with the opportunity to transform himself into the leader of a large party, the Serbian Radical Party. In those May 1992 elections, Šešelj's Radicals won 1,166,933 votes. The Socialists won 1,665,485 votes but retained their dominance.

3.3.1.3 1992: The Year of DEPOS

With dozens of rallies, civil rebellion, the enormous energy of protesters and a range of petitions and appeals behind him, Milan Panić, the regime's new man, businessman and Prime Minister, took the wheel of the opposition. In the early elections of 1991, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) won 2,900,000 votes between them (Socialists 1,478,918 and Radicals 1,024,983). Slobodan Milošević won his second presidential term under the slogan "Serbia will never bow down". Depos, with 809,731 and

the DS with 280,183 votes won just one third of the vote between them. The Socialist were back in the saddle with a minority government, tacitly supported by Šešelj, who also gave them a helping hand when it came to getting rid of Dobrica Ćosić and Milan Panić.

3.3.1.4 1993: An Introduction to Dayton

In June 1993, while the opposition was still licking its wounds, Vuk Drašković was arrested and beaten by police. He was released from custody after pressure at home and abroad. 1993 will be remembered for inflation of 119 million per cent and a prelude to the Dayton Agreement. While preparing to sign the agreement, the SPS staged a conflict with Radovan Karadžić and a campaign against Vojislav Šešelj. After being labelled “a small-time politician from Sarajevo”, Šešelj’s popularity was halved. He got just 595,476 votes while the Socialists won 1,576,287. The opposition coalition Depos II won 715,564 votes, the Democratic Party, though promoted by pro-regime media at the time, 497,582, and the Democratic Party of Serbia 218,056.

The Socialists at the time saw Šešelj as unacceptable, while Djindjić proved a poor choice of favourite and a tough negotiator. They formed a government with New Democracy, luring the party away from the Depos coalition with little fuss. What followed was a kind of truce on the political scene and the signing of the Dayton Accords. What also followed was growing political apathy and a chokehold on independent media such as *Naša borba*, *Nezavisna svetlost* and Studio B. By the end of 1993 the hyperinflation was over and a new star

had been born: Dragoslav Avramović, the creator of the new dinar.

3.3.1.5 1997: The Zajedno Coalition's First Trophy

The November 1996 elections for the Federal Parliament were the first to be held in a relatively peaceful atmosphere. The Socialists were again flirting with the Radicals, getting a helping hand from them to dismiss National Bank governor Avramović. The electorate seemed exhausted, with the workers-rural-democratic Zajedno coalition winning just 969,296 votes. The Radicals were gaining in strength: they took 764,430 votes. The SPS-JUL-ND-Slobodan Milošević coalition won 1,848,669 votes. The ruling coalition and its now devoted fellow travellers, the Radicals, won 2,600,000 votes between them.

The second round of local elections came as a shock to the regime, still feeling secure after its result in the first round of parliamentary elections. The leftist coalition was unexpectedly defeated at the local level, while the Zajedno coalition, consisting of the Democratic Party, the Serbian Renewal Movement and the Civil Alliance of Serbia, won office in 36 municipalities and towns throughout Serbia, Belgrade included. Caught off their guard after their initial success, the Socialists began making one mistake after another. They were caught red-handed rigging the election and fell over themselves to deny it. All they managed to do, however, was make people even more aware of the fact that they had been cheated. People took to the streets in protests which lasted 88 days, from the autumn of 1996 to the

spring of 1997. The regime denounced the opposition for relying on the OSCE and arbitration by Felipe Gonzales. On December 24, 1996, the SPS staged a counter-rally of its supporters in Belgrade. A huge banner declaring that “Serbia will never be ruled by a foreign hand” dominated a stage built for the occasion in Terazije, in the central city. SPS officials were later to use the phrase as their day-to-day slogan. The protests ended in February 1997 when Milošević ordered the Serbian cabinet and legislature to pass a *lex specialis* acknowledging opposition victory in the local elections. Zoran Djindjić was the star of the season, giving notice to Vuk Drašković that he would not abdicate his newly won primacy.

3.3.1.6 1997: Dispelling the Winter Dreams

On July 1997, parliamentary and presidential elections were called in Serbia. Serbian presidential elections are characterised by the low number of signatures required for lists of candidates for office, planned to dissipate the popular vote for the opposition. As a result, dozens of marginal candidates stand, as a rule. In 1990 there were 32 presidential candidates while in 1997 seventeen people ran for the presidency⁶⁵. That year, 517,906 votes went to weak candidates. Vuk Drašković

⁶⁵ List of presidential candidates attested by the Republic Electoral Commission on October 5, 1997: Miodrag Vidojković (a group of citizens), Predrag Vuletić (the Liberal Democratic Party), Vuk Drašković (SPO), Djordje Drljačić (a group of citizens), Dragan Djordjević (the Party of Serbia's Citizens), Miodrag Mile Isakov (the Vojvodina Coalition), Vuk Obradović (Social Democracy),

came in at third place in the first round, with 851,633 votes; the second place went to Vojislav Šešelj with 1,125,140 votes, while Zoran Lilić topped the list with 1,473,621 votes. In the second round, Šešelj scored higher than Lilić, the SPS candidate. After two rounds the elections were proclaimed unsuccessful as voter turnout had been below the required fifty per cent. New elections were called for December. This time, a new candidate for the leftist coalition, Milan Milutinović, beat Šešelj. (See Section 5.3, An Overview of Election Results in Serbia, 1992-1997.)

With the elections boycotted by a section of the opposition and half a million popular votes squandered, Šešelj made a grand comeback. The Zajedno coalition dissolved prior to the elections in the conflict between Drašković and Djindjić. The fact that it had won 793,988 votes on its own, almost the same number as when standing in coalitions, strengthened the SPO's resolve to stand independently in future. Djindjić did his best to recover after his failed boycott. Drašković went on tour from the opposition to the federal cabinet and back to the opposition.

Milan Paroški (the People's Party), Gvozden Šekić (a group of citizens), Radomir Tukmanović (the Progress Party), Sulejman Ugljanin (the List for Sandžak - Sulejman Ugljanin coalition), Branko Čičić (the Party of Natural Law), Nebojša Čović (DA, SSS) and Vojislav Šešelj (SRS).

3.3.1.7 1999-2000: The Never-Ending Unification of the Opposition

In the post-war summer of 1999, in a Serbia devastated by NATO bombs, the opposition found itself at a crossroads. The SPO and New Democracy openly voted for the road to elections. The Alliance for Change opted to stage rallies throughout Serbia. It announced a general strike, and a series of protests and social unrest as methods to overthrow Milošević. The regime struck back, denouncing the leaders of the coalition, Djindjić in particular. Against this background a plan was launched to set up a transitional government of experts which would call new elections and take the necessary measures to restore broken international links. The regime would accept no compromise. The police were breaking up the Alliance's protests. The only day the two options came together was August 9, 1999. The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle, received SPO leader Vuk Drašković and DS leader Zoran Djindjić, the leader of the Democratic Christian Party, Vladan Batić; the leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia, Vojislav Koštunica; the leader of the Democratic Alternative, Nebojša Čović; the president of the Vojvodina Coalition, Dragan Veselinov; the president of the Parliamentary People's Party, Slobodan Rakitić and representatives from the Stability Pact for Serbia, Mladjan Dinkić and Predrag Marković in the Patriarchal See in Belgrade and for two hours discussed with them the issues of necessary change in Serbia and a transitional government of experts.

The spell of this new unification of all opposition forces lasted ten days, to the Transfiguration Day opposition protest of August 19, 1999. The rally drew a seriously large number of people and was massive enough for its organisers to claim success, but too small to effect any kind of change. The scene played out by the major figures in front of 70,000 people showed how impossible it was to unify the opposition in a single bloc. On the one hand the Alliance for Change claimed that Milošević could be overthrown by protest while on the other hand Vuk Drašković called for early parliamentary elections. His party, he said, would not take part in the destabilisation and blockade of Serbia. Zoran Djindjić was giving ultimatums to the Serbian authorities. "It's you or us," he said, demanding their resignations. "It's common knowledge that policy is no longer made in debating chambers or Beli Dvor but in the streets and squares," Djindjić told the crowd. The Transfiguration Day rally demonstrated that not only the leaders, but also the supporters and activists of the parties were in conflict on the opposition stage.

In an interview with the party magazine *Srpska Reč*, Milan Božić, the deputy mayor of Belgrade and a senior official of the SPO described the series of rallies organised by the Alliance for Change as nothing more than "Djindjić's attempt at a comeback". According to Božić, Djindjić made his first mistake when he refused to support Drašković's ambitions within the Zajedno coalition. His second mistake came when, having assessed that he had little chance of winning, he decided to boycott the 1997 elections. Djindjić's third mistake was, as

Božić put it, an attempt to secure political support in Montenegro and in NATO member states, which “can succeed only if backed by successful NATO aggression”. But, said Božić, the aggression was over and had been only partly successful: Kosovo had been lost and Serbia’s infrastructure severely damaged but the regime itself remained in power. “The Democratic party and other parties now close to it are facing the same problem: how to return to their places on the political scene. They are forced to turn to radicalism, which flies in the face of their civil self-image,” said this senior official of the SPO, a party which itself is no stranger to radical methods.

The following year was spent on an attempt to narrow the gulf between the SPO and the other opposition parties. On October 14, 1999, in the head office of the Democratic Center, the opposition held a round table on election conditions. This appeared to result in a considerable degree of agreement. The round table’s recommendations were accepted as a common platform while the Serbian Renewal Movement undertook to launch an initiative in the Serbian Parliament which would force the regime to discuss election conditions. However, despite SPO insistence, the regime discussed only details of the opposition’s proposed legislation, just as it refused to throw any light on the crime on the Ibar Highway. The SPO again insisted that a general plan for elections should be the main item on the agenda of the Parliament’s Administrative Committee and finally walked out of negotiations.

Once the plan to negotiate election conditions within the Parliament had failed, the opposition parties

agreed to coordinate pressure on the regime for early general elections by April 2000 at the latest. The agreement was issued as an opposition declaration on January 10, 2000. In the meantime the situation in the country was growing ever more complex, particularly on the issue of Kosovo. With this in mind, and probably wary of a violent counterattack from the regime, the opposition parties kept putting off mass rallies and adopted a general political document, known as the March Declaration, instead⁶⁶. The Declaration called for reforms in the economy, the political system and the constitutions. A rally was finally called for April 15. It had been postponed so many times it was dubbed the

⁶⁶ *Platform of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia*

Once the authoritarian regime is replaced through elections, the democratic opposition of Serbia deems it necessary to take, without any political revanchism, steps leading to democratic transformation of the society, as follows:

Resolving the Status of the State:

To reach this goal it is necessary to proclaim a new republican constitution determining Serbia as a democratic state with clear division between legislative, executive and judiciary branches of government wherein a parliament would play a major role, while citizens would be granted all legally stipulated rights and freedoms. Serbia would be constituted as a democratic and decentralised state, with strong local and regional governments (for example, in the Sandžak/Raška District), and with respect for historically constituted modes of autonomy in Vojvodina, and Kosovo and Metohija.

Serbia and Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity in Kosovo and Metohija cannot be merely nominal as they are today. It is necessary to fully meet all provisions of the UN Security Council's Resolution 1244, which stipulates that the international civil and security administration shall create conditions for the return of all refugees from Kosovo and Metohija. Only when the return of the non-Albanian, and primarily the Serbian popu-

lation is secured will it be possible to establish democratic, multi-ethnic institutions in the region.

Relations between Serbia and Montenegro should be redefined in line with popular vote in both federal units. Together with the Montenegrin authorities and a newly elected federal government, new, democratically elected representatives of Serbia will endeavour to normalise relations with all states, including the states on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and, as soon as possible, to integrate Yugoslavia into international organisations and European integration processes.

Defining of National Interest and National Policy:

The national interests of the Serbs should be defined through democratic institutions and public debate, and short-term and long-term national policy defined appropriately and in keeping with political circumstances. Regardless of the fact that they are not included in a single state, all parts of the Serbian nation should jointly develop a common cultural and spiritual area, which is the responsibility of the mother state.

The state must solve the issue of refugees and displaced persons not only by instruments of social policy, but also through a complete program which would begin by resolving their status.

Minority communities will be guaranteed all rights they are entitled to by the highest standards of the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, including the right to self-organisation in the safeguarding and development of their identities, particularly in the domains of education, information and culture.

Mechanisms of positive discrimination will be set up in predominantly multiethnic communities, so as to ensure that provincial, regional and local government reflect the ethnic composition in each.

Special agreements on mutual protection of minority communities should be reached with neighbouring states inhabited by a Serbian minority and the minorities of which live in our state.

Rule of Law:

The new government will work publicly and responsibly. It will decisively fight organised crime, corruption and all kinds of wrongdoing. The new government will secure the rule of law, equality of citizens before the law, independent judiciary and free media. Only government as such is able to put an end to the collusion between the state and organised crime, smuggling organised or encouraged by the state and foul games related to foreign

“March ’45” protest. At least 150,000 people crowded into downtown Belgrade and many described it as one of the largest rallies ever in Belgrade. However, in the months that followed, the energy of the people was dissipated rather than bolstered. The regime, for its part, mounted a counter-offensive, virtually blocking travel throughout Serbia in order to prevent a demonstration scheduled for May 9, 2000, to protest against the beating and arrest of activists of the Otpor (Resistance) People’s Movement. Intimidation had begun. The

currency exchange rates. In brief, Serbia and Yugoslavia would be governed by the rule of law in all aspects, from election procedures to public control.

Economy:

Serbia’s economy will be based on free enterprise, free trade unions and private ownership, while government ownership might include strategic industries. Wherever thus far pursued undercover and illegally, and contrary to the public interest, privatisation will be annulled. Regulations will encourage domestic and foreign investors in particular. Denationalisation will be carried out wherever possible.

Social policy:

Through appropriate tax and budget policies, the state will secure social protection for those who are most in need - pensioners and the unemployed, and will make a special healthcare reconstruction program.

Signatories:

The DAN coalition (the Democratic Alternative, the Democratic Centre and the New Democracy), the Alliance for Change, the Serbian Renewal Movement, the Democratic Party of Serbia, the Alliance of Democratic Parties (the Social Democratic Union, the Reform Democratic Party of Vojvodina, the League of Vojvodina Social Democrats, the Sand ak coalition and the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians), the Vojvodina Coalition, the Movement for a Democratic Serbia and Social Democracy.

regime announced the introduction of “anti-terrorism” legislation.

After the SPO’s rally in Ravna Gora on May 13 and a protest in Belgrade two days later where people chanted “Rebellion, rebellion!” the regime seized control of Studio B from the opposition. The defence of the city broadcaster once again exposed the disagreement between the SPO and the rest of the opposition. The SPO refused further participation in preparing common lists of candidates for elections and announced it would boycott. It did not, however, have any proposal about what action should be taken instead. On July 22, the other opposition parties agreed on criteria for a joint election campaign.

3.4 Who Votes for Who?

According to the survey “Public Opinion in Serbia: December 1999” conducted by the Center for Policy Studies and Public Opinion (CPIJM) of the Institute for Social Sciences in Belgrade⁶⁷, the regime parties enjoy support among poorer citizens while the middle class mostly supports the opposition.

⁶⁷ Centre for Policy Studies and Public Opinion of the Institute for Social Sciences, “Public Opinion in Serbia - December 1999,” Belgrade.

3.4.1 Public Opinion in Serbia: A Logical Confusion

Asked to define the direction of society in Serbia, only ten per cent of adult respondents described it as positive⁶⁸.

Today, at the end of the millennium, 95 per cent of Serbia's population are dissatisfied with the international status of their country, 85 per cent are concerned about the future and their children, 67 per cent complain about the standard of living, 60 per cent are concerned about issues of honesty, the way people behave and so on. These are the findings of researchers from the Center for Policy Studies and Public Opinion (CPIJM) of the Institute for Social Sciences in Belgrade, published in the study mentioned above. Polls conducted by other public opinion agencies such as Medijum and the Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) indicate a smaller number of undecided voters than estimated by the Center, but their findings, like the Center's indicate that the pro-opposition option has thoroughly outstripped regime support from the perspective of elections.

⁶⁸ Source: election results in 1997 and surveys conducted by the CPIJM in June 1998 and December 1999.

3.4.2 Voters' Choices: 1997-1999⁶⁹

	<i>Elections in 1997</i>	<i>June 1998</i>	<i>December 1999 (per cent)</i>
SPS-JUL	24	17	13
SRS	16	6	4
SZP	–	3	12
SPO	11	3	7
DSS	–	1	3
Other parties	4	4	2
Undecided voters	–	42	41
Abstainers	42	24	20

It should be noted here that the Alliance for Change did not exist in 1997-98, and its member parties boycotted the 1997 elections, as did the DSS. The percentages of undecided voters are based solely on the findings of polls. The “abstainers” column shows the percentages of survey respondents in June 1998 and December 1999 who indicated that they would not vote or said that they were still unsure about whether they would vote.

The researchers concluded that, while the opposition option was predominant in Serbia’s electorate, people were almost equally dissatisfied with the opposition and the ruling parties. (See chart Voters’ Choices: 1997-99.)

⁶⁹ Source: Surveys conducted by the CPIJM in 1997, 1998 and 1999. Compare with “Overview and Analysis of Election Results in Serbia: December 1990 - December 1997,” Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, Belgrade, June 2000, CD issue.

3.4.3 Undecided Voters and the Opposition

The findings of all surveys mentioned above also show that people are not confident that an opposition which is not united can win elections. Nor are they confident that, in the case of victory, the opposition would manage to reach agreement and execute a plan to overcome the general crisis.

In 1999, undecided voters made up two fifths of the electorate so the key to future elections could be in the hands of these people. The phenomenon of undecided voters could be interpreted as the usual dilemma faced by voters on the eve of elections. The CPIJM's surveys show that there were only one per cent fewer undecided voters in 1999 than in 1998. Though opinion researchers never say so openly, some findings indicate that two thirds of undecided voters are potential opposition voters.

The category of undecided voters includes those who replied that they had voted in the past but had become disillusioned. Of the total respondents who voted for the SPS in 1997, 42 per cent said they would not vote for the party again. The percentage in the case of the SPO is 57 per cent while as many as 69 per cent of former Serbian Radical Party supporters said they would now not vote for the party. More disillusioned voters fell into the undecided category than had become abstainers or supporters of other parties.

3.4.3.1 Poorer Citizens: A Pillar of the Regime

An overview of the electorate's age and education testifies that the strength of the ruling parties is among the elder or less educated citizens. The Socialists and the Radicals are mostly supported by people with only elementary education. The SPO is their only competition among this large sector of the population. Eighteen per cent of Serbia's population is either uneducated or has not completed elementary school. Twenty-six per cent of the population has no more than elementary school education. Together these two categories amount to 44 per cent of the population.

Among secondary school graduates, the DSS, the SPO and the Alliance for Change are rivals to the SPS. This segment includes 17 per cent of those who graduated from secondary trade schools, 17 per cent of graduates from comprehensive schools and 19 per cent of graduates from other types of secondary schools. Thus 42 per cent of secondary school graduates support one of these four parties.

Voters with tertiary education mostly support opposition parties, although this segment of the population is only half the size of that consisting of secondary school graduates. Four per cent of the entire population has completed higher school while ten per cent are university graduates.

Analysis by occupation reveals the SPS is the party of choice for pensioners and rural voters. The SRS might also be described as the party with the highest number of working class voters although the DSS also has a considerable reputation among highly skilled workers who

make up 13.5 per cent of its voters. The DSS itself could be the party most popular with administrative workers, in which it is rivalled by the Alliance for Change.

The opposition parties have almost totally taken the vote of the younger generations from the Socialists. Young voters who support the SPS are mostly former Radical voters. However, relying on the older generations which make up a considerable portion of the electorate, the Socialists are still on relatively safe ground. Twenty-two per cent of the population is under the age of 30; eighteen per cent are between 30 and 40; about another eighteen per cent between 40 and 50; nineteen per cent between 50 and 60 and 22 per cent of citizens are over the age of 60.

It should be noted that younger voters are more indifferent to elections than their elders. This is testified to by the fact that older citizens are more disciplined about voting.

3.4.3.1.1 The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS)

In the 1997 elections, the leftist coalition SPS-JUL-ND-Slobodan Milošević won 24 per cent of the vote while, according to the CPIJM survey of December 1999, the SPS was supported by just 13 per cent of the electorate.

The body of SPS voters is made up of older and less educated citizens: 49.4 per cent of the party's supporters are over 60 while only two per cent are under 29. Of the party's supporters 59 per cent have only elementary education, 32 per cent have finished secondary school; 39.5 per cent are pensioners and 10.6 per cent farmers.

3.4.3.1.2 Serbian Radical Party (SRS)

The SRS has lost more voters than have the SPS and JUL. However the CPIJM researchers warn that care should be taken in assessing SRS support. Radical support varies according to related factors, and at times party supporters have been ordered to remain silent about their party affiliation. Despite this the researchers have no doubt that the party has lost considerable popularity because of its coalition with the SPS and that party's policies.

The body of the Radical's voters mostly includes the unemployed (22.2 per cent), pensioners (20.8 per cent), skilled workers (12 per cent) and manual workers (11.1 per cent).

The Radicals have almost the same percentage of younger and older supporters; 22.2 per cent are under 29; 22.2 per cent between 50 and 59 and just a few per cent less come from the other age groups.

In terms of education, 52.9 per cent of Radical supporters have finished elementary school and 40.3 per cent secondary school.

3.4.3.1.3 The Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO)

According to the CPIJM's surveys, the SPO had its lowest rating in June 1998 after its ambitions in the 1997 elections proved unrealistic. (In that campaign the party claimed it would win both parliamentary and presidential elections). This also reflects the period when the party supporters punished it for flirting with

the SPS and JUL over the issue of forming a “federal cabinet of national unity”. A poll conducted in December 1999 showed that the SPO’s rating had dropped to three quarters of the vote it won in 1997.

The largest group of SPO voters is the unemployed (18.8 per cent). Then come students (12.5 per cent) and pensioners (11 per cent). The SPO could be said to attract the youngest population of voters: 36.8 per cent of its supporters are under 29 and 21.4 per cent between 30 and 39.

The largest group of SPO supporters by education have finished secondary school (42 per cent) or elementary school (33 per cent).

3.4.3.1.4 The Alliance for Change (SZP)

The Alliance for Change had not been formed at the time of the 1997 elections, which were boycotted by the parties which subsequently became its members. It is growing in popularity. It appears that its highest ratings came in September and early October, 1999, when it called for a second round of demonstrations which were brutally dispersed by police.

The SZP may draw on voters from the ranks of abstainers in the 1997 elections, 32 per cent of the electorate, among respondents who were undecided or declined to answer the question on previous voting (31 per cent) and among those who took part in the election but openly admit to voting for the wrong party: 21 per cent, for example previously voted for the SPO.

Here however, any interpretation may be rather free. It’s not clear, for example, whether the group of

“mistaken” voters means former dedicated supporters of the SPO rather than supporters of the boycotting parties who cast their vote despite appeals to boycott the 1997 elections. There is also the intriguing issue of how many respondents declining to reveal their political affiliations come from the other side of the “Red-Black” border. In other words are they dissidents who changed sides or “temporary dissidents” who rebelled by voting for the other side (for or against Šešelj) and who will return home.

It should be noted that disappointed voters concealing their earlier affiliations may also be found among the abstainers, although it appears that this group is mainly made up of former Socialist and Radical voters. Earlier surveys showed that those who crossed the line between the regime and the opposition were few, but not so few when it came to moving from the Socialists to the Radicals.

Most SZP supporters are clerks with university degrees or secondary school graduates (15 per cent each). Next come pensioners (12.4 per cent) and private entrepreneurs (10 per cent). The majority of the SZP’s supporters have graduated from secondary school (49 per cent) or have degrees (19.1 per cent).

The SZP is popular with the active age groups in the population: 25.7 per cent of supporters are under 29 years of age and another 29.1 per cent are between 30 and 39.

3.4.3.1.5 The Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS)

The Democratic Party of Serbia boycotted the 1997 elections. According to the survey its rating in June 1998 was only a third of that in December 1999. In fact the DSS is constantly growing in popularity.

Clerks with secondary school diplomas are the largest single group of supporters (28.8 per cent). These are followed by clerks with university degrees (15.3 per cent), pensioners (17.3 per cent), highly skilled workers (13.5 per cent) and the unemployed (11.5 per cent).

The DSS is supported by active sectors of the population although its voters are in general older than those of the SZP: 28 per cent are between the ages of 30 and 39 and 25 per cent between 40 and 49. Secondary school graduates make up 55 per cent of the party's supporters and 19.2 per cent have university degrees.

3.4.4 Most Trusted Politician: 1993-1999

<i>(by percentage)</i>	1993	1995	1997	1999
None	29	32	29	37
Slobodan Milošević	27	31	19	13
Dragoslav Avramović	–	1	5	6
Vuk Drašković	5	3	5	6
Vojislav Koštunica	4	4	4	5
Vojislav Šešelj	3	4	6	3
Zoran Đinđić	3	2	7	2

The explanation for undecided voters is a matter of charisma. Since the euphoric discovery of a charismatic

leader in the nineties, the support of the people for politicians has not been so crystallised.

Fifty per cent of the people have a positive response to Dragoslav Avramović. Vojislav Koštunica is regarded in a positive light by 28 per cent of respondents; 20 per cent have a positive opinion of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević; 18 per cent of Vuk Drašković while Zoran Djindjić and Vojislav Šešelj each draw a positive response from 13 per cent of survey respondents.

However, when asked which politician they trusted the most – which could be interpreted as “Who is the politician you would vote for?” most respondents (37 per cent) in late 1999 replied “None”. Thirteen per cent chose Slobodan Milošević, 11 per cent Dragoslav Avramović, 6 per cent Vuk Drašković, 4 per cent Vojislav Koštunica, 3 per cent Vojislav Šešelj and 2 per cent Zoran Djindjić. A total of 5 per cent opted for other politicians, an insignificant figure for elections, and 18 per cent of respondents were undecided.

The ratio between “positive opinion” and “greatest trust” shows broad but somewhat shallow support for opposition leaders. Slobodan Milošević still retains two thirds of those who have a positive opinion of him; Avramović gets more than a fifth of such a vote, Drašković a third, Šešelj a quarter, Koštunica a fifth and Djindjić a sixth.

Compared with the findings of earlier surveys, Milošević’s rating is on a downward curve. In 1993, 27 per cent of respondents described him as their favourite politician; in 1995, the percentage was 31 per cent; in 1997 the percentage had dropped to 19 per cent and in

1999 to 13 per cent. The “favourite politician” ratings of Vojislav Koštunica (4.4 per cent, 4.5 per cent) and Vuk Drašković (5.3 per cent, 5.6 per cent) are fairly stable. Dragoslav Avramović was not included in this question in 1993; in 1995 his rating was less than 1 per cent; it rose to 5 per cent in 1997 and to 11 per cent in 1999. In the summer of 2000, few mentioned him as their favourite among opposition politicians.

Of all politicians Avramović would be the least opposed: only 21 per cent of respondents viewed him in a negative light. Koštunica is disapproved of by 29 per cent of respondents; Milošević by 56 per cent, Drašković by 52 per cent, Djindjić by 57 per cent and Šešelj by 64 per cent of respondents. The fact that Koštunica has been mentioned as a possible common candidate of the opposition on the eve of the 2000 elections should be seen in this context. He would be faced, however, with the SPO, as the largest opposition party, wanting to nominate a candidate of its own should it decide to take part in the elections. The CPIJM survey published in late July 2000⁷⁰ shows that Koštunica, if supported by all opposition parties, might win 42 per cent of the vote while Slobodan Milošević would get only 28 per cent. A survey which simulated the federal presidential elections showed that, as well as Koštunica, Slobodan Milošević would have to fight for the presidency against Milo Djukanović, Vuk Drašković, Zoran Djindjić and Vojislav Šešelj.

⁷⁰ “Koštunica Wins,” a feature on CPJIM’s survey of July 11-15, carried by the *Danas* daily, July 28, 2000, p. 23; “Most Citizens against Boycott,” run by the same paper on July 27, 2000.

4 Conclusion

Serbia's political scene is fragmented, its political institutions are either in crisis or falling apart. Newly established institutions are weak and without mutual connections. What might be labelled as an intellectual service to politics is still being formed and still in its pioneer stage. For ten years a number of political players have striven to modernise the state and secure fair elections and free media. However they have not yet mastered the skill of making firm rules and keeping to them. Neither have they developed the ability to build independent institutions or established logical procedures for the management of political conflict. Many have not managed to set up infrastructure, for example, to monitor elections or act as public services in a way appropriate for political parties. It would certainly have a positive impact for more energy to be invested in the struggle for stable institutions and observance of at least a minimum of accepted procedures.

Should this be carried out by new or existing institutions? In the existing political circumstances the idea of a new political system established through a constituent assembly is hardly viable.

There is still no sign of the revolutionary change emerging from collapse of the system which some

domestic and foreign players look forward to. In fact, the collapse of the system would be far more perilous than the current state of affairs because it would be accompanied by chaos and massive violation of human rights. The concern of the ruling political groups to jointly defend a ruler under indictment by the Hague Tribunal is strangely related to the miscalculation of both international and some domestic forces that the model of “the worse, the better” might bring change in Serbia’s system. This miscalculation has only served to help the regime present itself as a force for order and stability. Willingly or unwillingly the starving masses of an isolated country may continue to see the regime as the authority which helps them survive by the distribution of poverty. Hatred of the cultural elite, ostracism and xenophobia would be the logical companions. The regime will continue to present itself as safeguarding Yugoslavia and will readily – if international powers give their support to new secessions – opt again for the mechanisms which, in all stages of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, led to bloodshed and chaos.

Serbia’s complex political scene, however, has one political advantage: it is hardly likely that one populist leader could be replaced by another. At this point such a potential advantage may be seen as a handicap because it seems that the authoritarian ruler has no rival able to compete with him. What Serbia needs is a great deal of patience and adequate assistance to build political institutions, calm down the general atmosphere and awaken a sense of public responsibility among the people which

could bring all the current phenomena into political balance.

Against such a background it the crisis and vulnerability of both the pre-Eastern and pro-Western policies pursued by the domestic player, the coming “defence of the ruler”, the weakness of “the challenger” and the excessive aggressiveness of foreign powers which are hindering the emerging policies of integration into Europe, membership of Balkan projects and the like.

It is only natural that a state as such does not fit into the plan of the regime to maintain power at all costs. The regime has set itself three tasks: to destroy the opposition in Serbia; to separate the Serbian opposition from Milo Djukanović and block the West’s assistance to the Serbian opposition. Through the 2000 elections the Serbian regime actually wants to solve the Somoza paradox: “You may have won the elections, but I won the count”.

5 Election Results

5.1 Serbian Presidential Election, December 1990

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Nominated by</i>	<i>Votes</i>
Slobodan Milošević	SPS	3,285,799
Vuk Drašković	SPO	824,674
Ivan Djurić	SRSJ/S & UJDI	277,398
Sulejman Ugljanin	SDA	109,459
Vojislav Šešelj	Group of citizens	96,277
Blažo Perović	YU Bloc	57,420
Slobodan Mitić	League of all Serbs	28,978
Dragan Jovanović	Green Party	22,458
Ljuben Aleksov Alen	Group of citizens	19,123
Ljubomir Grujić	Group of citizens	17,675
Milan Lazarević	Group of citizens	11,034
Tihomir Živanović	Group of citizens	9,892
Jovan Koprivica	Group of citizens	9,677
Miodrag Gojković	SSP Zapis	9,262
Tomislav Krsmanović	PZLJP	8,095
Živan Harvan	Social Justice Party	7,791
Velimir Cvetić	SDPJ	6,575
Milan Mladenović	Group of citizens	6,459
Miroslav Veselinović	Group of citizens	6,180
Nikola Barović	Group of citizens	5,355
Predrag Vuletić	LS	5,019
Ratomir Vojvodić	Group of citizens	4,414
Ljiljana Ćuić	Group of citizens	3,425
Milorad Radović	Group of citizens	3,425
Saša Goranci	Group of citizens	3,409
Nikola Šećeroski	Group of citizens	3,168
CCedomir Nešić	Group of citizens	2,553

Slobodan Ranković	Group of citizens	2,425
Radivoje Šaranac	Group of citizens	1,918
Jovan Stojković	Group of citizens	1,154
Miomir Tošić	Group of citizens	904
Hercen Radonjić	Group of citizens	847

5.2 Elections for the Serbian Parliament, 1990

<i>List</i>	<i>total vote</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>MPs</i>	<i>percentage of seats</i>
SPS	2,305,974	45.84	194	77.6
SPO	790,616	15.72	19	7.6
GC	455,170	9.05	8	3.2
DS	372,786	7.41	7	2.8
DZVM	132,710	2.64	8	3.2
SDA	84,156	1.67	3	1.2
SRSJ/V	74,715	1.49	2	0.8
NSS	68,045	1.35	1	0.4
ND-PS	67,038			
SSSS	51,683	1.03	2	0.8
SDS	32,927	0.65	1	0.4
UJDI	24,982	0.50	1	0.4
DSVH	23,630	0.47	1	0.4
SJ	21,784	0.43	1	0.4
PDD	11,751	0.23	1	0.4
DRSM	5,432	0.11	1	0.4

Abbreviations

- GC – Group of citizens
SDA – Democratic Action Party
SRSJ/V – Alliance of Reform Forces for Vojvodina
NSS – People’s Rural Party
SSSS – Association of Serbia’s Farmers Party
ND-PS – New Democracy - Movement for Serbia
SDS – Serbian Democratic Party
UJDI – Association of Yugoslav Democratic
Initiative
DSHV – Democratic Alliance of Croats from
Vojvodina
SJ – Party of Yugoslavs
DRSM – Democratic Reform Party of Muslims

5.3 Overview of Election Results in Serbia: 1992-97

Reg. v.	P. 92	R. 92	F. 92	R. 93	L. 96	F. 96	R. 97	P.1.1.97	P.1.2.97	P.2.1.97	P.2.2.97
V.T.	6949150	6777102	6755800	6920571	7158146	7138309	7202498	7188544	7210557	7226947	7225860
Valid	4747165	4723711	4694969	4300440	4291797	4306883	4133641	4126109	3524257	3801473	3671053
SPS	4622341	4437904	4435215	4125609	3902735	4069336	3967657	3968300	3419437	3724118	3555234
S-J-ND	2673375	1359086	1478918	1576287	1317023			1473621	1688856	1662726	2177137
SRS		1066765	1024980	595467	459656	764353	1160393	1125140	1730581	1222381	1378097
SPO							792802	851633		586510	
DEPOS		797784	809731	715564							
DSS				218056	65315						
Zajedno					1017594	969215					
DS		196333	280183	497582							
DS-RDS		71865	101234								
DS-RDS-GS			58505								
SSS		128220			2254						
KV					17791	57645	112475				
DA-SSS-PPS							60822				
DZVM		140825	106036	112456	28170						
SVM					31628	81311	50938				
UGLI					54696	61500	49472				
DRS Mus.			6336		1555						
KP-DD-DPA				29342							
DK P.							14178				
ARK		17352									
MP		1604410									
O.P.		344556	653338	575628	380855	907040	287414	309798	517906	252501	

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Abbreviations

P.'92	Presidential elections, December 1992, Slobodan Milošević (SPS) vs. Milan Panić (GC)
R.'92	Elections for the Serbian Legislature, December 1992
F.'92	Federal parliamentary elections (Chamber of Citizens), December 1992
R.'93	Elections for the Serbian Legislature, 1993
L.'96	Local elections, 1996
F.'96	Federal parliamentary elections (Chamber of Citizens), 1996
R.'97	Elections for the Serbian Legislature, 1997
P.1.1.'97	Presidential elections, first election, first round, 1997
P.1.2.'97	Presidential elections, first election, second round, Zoran Lilić (SPS) vs. Vojislav Šešelj (SRS)
P.2.1.'97	Presidential elections, second election, first round
P.2.2.'97	Presidential elections, second election, second round, Milan Milutinović (SPS) vs. Vojislav Šešelj (SRS)
Reg. v.	Registered voters
V.T.	Voter turnout
Valid	Valid votes
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
S-J-ND	SPS–Yugoslav Left–New Democracy Coalition
SRS	Serbian Radical Party

SPO	Serbian Renewal Movement
DEPOS	Depos Coalition of 1992 and 1993
DSS	Democratic Party of Serbia
ZAJEDNO	Zajedno Coalition of 1997
DS	Democratic Party
DS-RDS	Coalition between Democratic Party and Reform Democratic Party of Vojvodina
DS-RDS-GS	Coalition between Democratic Party, Reform Democratic Party of Vojvodina and Civil Alliance of Serbia
SSS	Party of Association of Serbia's Farmers
KV	Vojvodina Coalition
DA-SP	Coalition between Democratic Alternative, Rural Party of Serbia and PPS
DZVM	Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians
SVM	Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians
UGLJ	List for Sandžak - Sulejman Ugljanin
DRSM	Democratic Reform Party of Muslims
ALPRE	Coalition between Party for Democratic Action and Democratic Party of Albanians from Preševo
DKPB	Democratic Coalition for Preševo and Bujanovac
ARK	Željko "Arkan" Ražnatović, nominated by a group of citizens
M.P.	Presidential candidate Milan Panić
O.P.	Votes squandered on minor parties, independent candidates or groups of citizens