

NATIONALISM IN LATE COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE: COMPARING THE ROLE OF DIASPORA POLITICS IN HUNGARY AND SERBIA

By Richard Andrew Hall

Part 1: ETHNIC PRIMACY (1944-68) AND THE INVISIBILITY OF DIASPORA POLITICS

All communities are imagined; some are clearly more imagined than others. No one perhaps learned this lesson better -- or more bitterly -- than communist rulers and ideologues in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Ethnic and national identities may indeed be artificial, constructed, and malleable, but not infinitely so. Moreover, in comparison to other identities they are remarkably enduring and particularly resistant to orchestrated efforts to eradicate them or diminish their relevance once they have become established -- even where a regime may have played a critical role in their formation and early formulation, as occurred with certain national identities in the former Soviet Union.

For all the works in the tidal wave of recent research educating us that ethnic and national identities are not, after all, organic -- a battle, one might argue, that has often been joined and won largely by taking on a journalistic and pop-culture straw man -- the reality remains that certain myths have historically proved more resilient and durable than others. In Eastern Europe, the most "fit" from a Darwinian standpoint has been the national myth -- even if the reason for its resilience has been a derivative of broader political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. (One can, for example, argue that religion in the Middle East, and class in Latin America, have been the most recurrent and galvanizing myths in those regions -- thereby suggesting the contingent and historically determined character of which myth emerges preeminent.)

Such generalizations, however valid in the comparison of different geo-historical regions, do not help much in the way of explaining variations within those regions, however. After all, there has rarely been an era in which there was such strong institutional and ideological similarity -- even if far from identicalness -- across a single region as during the communist era in Eastern Europe. And yet, as we well know, the role and impact of ethnicity and nationalism on politics varied sometimes greatly from place to place in communist Eastern Europe.

One puzzle that continues to intrigue is why Serbian politics became seized with and was eventually captured by nationalism in the late 1980s? One is tempted to ascribe this almost singularly to the personality and ruthlessness of Slobodan Milosevic -- and certainly many single-case studies analyzing Serbia, especially journalistic and popular accounts, do just that. Without Milosevic's advocacy and incitement of the nationalist cause -- especially after his famous "moment of truth" in Kosova* on 24 April 1987 --

clearly this outcome might not have happened. Yet such an argument presupposes -- as many longtime scholars of Yugoslavia have rejoined -- the existence of a nationalist sentiment that could be exploited. Hence, their focus in the analysis of causes tends to turn the clock further back, to the fall of 1986, and the publication of the famous SANU (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts) Memorandum outlining Serb grievances and demands against the Federal Yugoslav state. Without Milosevic's willing scribes among the Serb intelligentsia, these scholars suggest, the opportunistic and ideologically colorless Milosevic might never have undergone his nationalist conversion, with its tragic repercussions for the future of Serbia and Yugoslavia as a whole.

Still, such explanations suffer somewhat from having been argued largely in a vacuum. Serbia was not the only place in Eastern Europe where the diaspora issue played an influential role during the late-communist era. The role of nationalism -- and "diaspora politics" specifically -- in the Hungarian transition is easily forgotten in the wake of the brutal wars of Yugoslav succession, Hungary's comparatively smooth postcommunist evolution, and the eventual postcommunist warming of relations between Hungary and Romania. Yet at the time -- as literature from the period indicates -- it was a significant issue.

In comparison to a country such as Romania, the communist regime's embrace of nationalism in Hungary and Serbia was belated, but it did emerge, particularly during the late-communist era. In both the Hungarian and Serb cases, the issue of ethnic diaspora -- for Hungarians in Transylvania (Romania), southern Slovakia (Czechoslovakia), Vojvodina (Yugoslavia), and Subcarpathian Ukraine (the Soviet Union), but particularly in Transylvania; for Serbs, in Kosova, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, but particularly in Kosova -- was a key catalyst in the resurgence of nationalism into the political arena. In both cases, a progressive loss of ethnic representation, power, and influence in these regions, and emigration to the homeland from a region considered to be THE primary cultural source of the nation -- but where that nation now constituted a "besieged" minority in the face of the policies of the political authorities who controlled the region -- forced this issue onto the agenda of dissidents and communist politicians alike. As in Serbia, diaspora politics in Hungary galvanized regime opposition and helped draw populist and liberal regime critics together as never before. And, as in Serbia, declining regime legitimacy and a process of leadership succession allowed for, and encouraged the mobilization of, nationalism in the political arena.

Yet, as is well known, the outcome of the nationalist resurgence was very different in Serbia from in Hungary. In Serbia, the question came to transfix the Serbian state and society, unleashing a politics of nationalism that played a central role in the destruction of the Yugoslav state and the horrendous loss of life in the wars of succession of the 1990s. In Hungary, by contrast, the fate of Transylvanian Hungarians that was such a fundamental feature of politics in the late 1980s receded from center-stage and became merely A characteristic -- rather than THE characteristic -- of the broader transition. What happened? I try to answer that question in this five-part article by comparing the differing role and impact of diaspora politics in late-communist Serbia and late-communist Hungary. I do so in the hopes of better highlighting, from a comparative

standpoint, what it was specifically that contributed to and enabled the tragic outcome in Serbia.

A word on the comparability of the two cases before I embark on this comparison. Clearly, Serbia was not an internationally recognized "nation-state" during the period under investigation. Nevertheless, I treat it as comparable to one -- and thus comparable to Hungary -- for analytical purposes. As early as 1984, Ramet compared post-Tito Yugoslavia to something approximating a "balance of power" state system, with ethnic groups and their titular republics/provinces essentially assuming the role that states would in the international system (Ramet, 1992, pp. 3-18). Moreover, it is debatable, for example, whether the Serbian republican leadership under Tito had significantly more autonomy than the Hungarian leadership did vis-a-vis Moscow. Certainly, during the 1980s, it can be argued that Moscow's influence on the leadership and policies of the Hungarian party was at least equal to and perhaps greater than the Yugoslav Federation's on the leadership and policies of the Serbian party. Finally, it is clear that, particularly during the 1980s, knowing the relationship between the party-state and society for Yugoslavia as a whole, or in any (one) particular republic, was a weak predictor for understanding that relationship in any (other) particular republic.

A Theoretical Overview Of The Evolution Of Ethnic And National Identity In Communist Eastern Europe

Ethnic and national identities became politicized in communist Eastern Europe precisely because communist rulers tried to negate their influence and raise the profile and salience of competing class, institutional (the Party), and inter- or supra-national identities (especially loyalty to the Soviet Union). Because much of ethnic identity and nationalism is informally institutionalized -- and thus is not the exclusive province of any particular political party or societal organization -- these identities were able to survive the communist onslaught -- focused as it was primarily on destroying formal institutions that lay outside the control of the Party -- and became a natural rallying point and metaphor of opposition to the communist authorities who sought to diminish their influence.

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution against a leadership that even by comparison with other communist leaderships in the region was particularly determined to make a definitive break with national tradition; the success of the East European communist regimes in destroying independent societal organizations and initiatives and in creating new institutions based on competing concepts of identity (the agricultural collective, for example); and the simultaneous, if somewhat paradoxical scaling back of expectations regarding the potential for remaking identity ("socialist man") -- all contributed as factors to the tacit and carefully measured recall or "return of the nation" in communist rhetoric and ideology, and, to some extent, policy in Eastern Europe in the 1960s (the era described by Ken Jowitt as the era of "Inclusion," see Jowitt, 1992, pp. 88-120). The move from being a "party of the working class" to being a "party of the whole people or nation" -- ostensibly in part because the goals of the "socialist revolution" had allegedly been fulfilled -- was intended to reflect the communist regime's changing view of, and relationship, to ethnic identity and nationalism.

But if the growing acceptance of and accommodation with nationalism in party ideology and policy represented a stage in -- a reflection of -- the delegitimation of communist rule in general, such insights remain generally unhelpful in explaining for us the wide variations in the degree to which communist regimes embraced nationalism in the middle (1964-76) and late (1977-89) stages of communist rule in Eastern Europe. Mobilizing ethnic and national identity was only one of several alternative "elite survival strategies" that East European leaderships pursued in order to indirectly address their widespread illegitimacy with their populations and to insulate themselves, however imperfectly -- the instability of the interregnum of 1953 to 1956 had been enough to convince them -- from the power struggles and policy shifts of the Kremlin. The other primary models included a generally un-reformist "consumerism" -- financed by loans from Western governments and institutions -- or a continued pursuit of Stalinist repression and breakneck development policies -- political reform outside (post-1956) or inside (post-1968) the party having been eliminated as a practical option because of the Soviet response. In fact, most regimes tended to combine elements from each of these "survival strategies" but in different measures.

Nor was the nationalist option equally attractive or feasible for every communist leadership in the region. The approach to nationalism during the middle and late stages of communist rule in Eastern Europe varied widely, with Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania and "normalized" Czechoslovakia perhaps forming the two opposing poles of this approach. Nationalism in Romania allowed the continuation of "Stalinism in one state" -- as it did in Albania -- even when the Soviet Union itself opted, as under Nikita Khrushchev, and later Mikhail Gorbachev, to engage in de-Stalinization. One can argue, however, that the nationalist option was chosen by the Romanian leadership -- first by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and then by Ceausescu -- not solely out of the need to protect the party's development prerogatives, but because the "colonial" history of the Romanian nation and state (particularly as regards Transylvania) meant that the nationalist discourse could be woven into the official ideology without triggering major contradiction and ideological delegitimation. (By contrast, arguing that nation and oppressed class had overlapped in Hungarian history was more ideologically challenging.) Opting for the nationalist palliative to popular illegitimacy was thus conditioned by both the manner in which elites perceived prerogatives and by structural circumstances deriving from a people and state's history.

Nevertheless, in the cases of Hungary and Serbia -- the two cases in which history (pre-Trianon Hungary and Serbia's primacy in interwar Yugoslavia) was in theory arguably the most problematic for and seemingly incompatible with communist ideology -- communist elites did end up embracing the nationalist cause. The sources for this lay in the communist era itself. The early- and middle-communist eras in Kosova and Transylvania saw a period of ethnic supremacy for Serbs and Hungarians -- though it lasted longer for the former than it did for the latter -- followed by a steady decline in influence. During the initial period of ethnic supremacy, the comparatively favorable conditions for Serbs in Kosova and Hungarians in Transylvania combined with the strongly "anti-national" content of communist ideology dominant in Belgrade and

Budapest at the time to largely remove the issue of Kosova and Transylvania from the political agenda.

The shift in ethnic balance and power within Kosova and Transylvania changed things, however, both within these ethnic peripheries and within the kin state. The change in ethnic power spurred emigration where possible to the kin state -- although it was still relatively small at this point. The deteriorating ethnic balance and the nascent emigration it triggered inevitably began to bring "the problem" of Kosova and Transylvania home to the kin state -- "the problem" of which intellectuals there increasingly became aware and concerned.

Kosova, 1944-1968: Ethnic Domination Under The Auspices Of 'Yugoslavism'

In Kosova, the period from the origins of communist rule in 1944 until the removal from senior party and state posts in 1966 of Aleksandar Rankovic, the leading representative of Serbian hegemonism within the League of Yugoslav Communists, can be regarded as a period of Serb domination in the region. Significantly, as World War II drew to a close, and the Partisans extended their control over the territories of interwar Yugoslavia, Tito abandoned earlier pledges by the Yugoslav Communist Party to Kosova joining an independent Albania (1928, Fourth Congress) or gaining republican status (1940, Fifth Congress) when the communists came to power in Yugoslavia (Vickers, 1998, pp. 121-143). In late 1944 and early 1945, Tito and the Partisan leadership largely looked the other way as Serbs and Montenegrins settled scores with Kosovar Albanians and crushed an ethnic Albanian uprising in the region. Miranda Vickers characterizes this state of affairs as follows:

Because of their co-operation with Axis forces, the Kosovars were perceived as politically unreliable and thus a possible threat to the stability and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. Tito realized that only by retaining Kosovo within Serbia's borders could he hope to win over the Serbs to communism (Vickers, 1998, pp. 141-142).

Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform in 1948 put an end to the essentially open border policy between Kosova and Albania that had existed in the interregnum following the end of the war, when visions of an eventual Danubian confederation predicated upon the erasure of historic state boundaries in the region were still entertained. Enver Hoxha's decision to throw in his lot with Stalin and the Soviets in the Tito-Stalin dispute rather abruptly reinforced the perception that Yugoslavia's Albanian population was a security threat (Vickers, 1998, p. 149). The new 1953 Yugoslav constitutional law further codified this situation by amending the 1946 Federal Constitution's reference to autonomy as a federal matter -- the amendment therefore essentially made Vojvodina and Kosova ordinary districts of Serbia -- while simultaneously the Yugoslav government's Chamber of Nationalities was abolished (Vickers, 1998, p. 155).

During these first two decades of communist rule in Yugoslavia, Serbs and Montenegrins held a disproportionate amount of power and influence in Kosova in comparison to their

numbers. According to Vickers, in 1958, Serbs and Montenegrins comprised 27.4 percent of the population of Kosova but constituted 49.7 percent of local Party membership (Vickers, 1998, p. 156). Party documents released after the purge of Aleksandar Rankovic revealed that within the security services in Vojvodina and Kosova, there had been a systemic policy of discrimination against Hungarians and Albanians respectively: Not a single Hungarian or Albanian was employed by the republican secretariat of Serbia for security affairs and only one Albanian could be found in the secretariat for Kosova (Burg, 1983, pp. 34-35). Ramet cites Branko Horvat's figures as showing that in 1956 Albanians were 64.9 percent of the population but accounted for only 13.3 percent of security police and 31.3 percent of the regular police, while by contrast the Serbs accounted for 23.5 percent but held 58.3 percent of positions in the security forces and 60.8 percent of all positions in the regular police (Ramet, 1992, p. 188).

Marina Blagojevic has noted that census data from 1948, 1953, and 1961 indicate that during this period the proportion of Serbs in Kosova was relatively constant, at 23.6 percent, 23.6 percent, and 23.5 percent, respectively, and that fertility rates for Serb and Albanian women in the region were not sharply different at the time (Blagojevic, 2000, pp. 215-216). Nevertheless, there were concerted efforts by Serb authorities to dilute the Albanian presence in Kosova. A policy of "Turkification" that had been advocated by some Serbs (for example, the infamous Cubrilovic) during the interwar period was revived in the post-1948 Cominform climate when Albanians increasingly came to be seen as a potential fifth column. The policy saw not only the introduction of Turkish language schools in Kosova and pressure for Albanians to declare themselves as ethnic "Turks" -- of which there was still a very small population in, for example, Prizren -- but a campaign to encourage Albanian emigration to Turkey (Vickers, 1998, p. 149; 171). Vickers maintains that between 1954 and 1957 as many as 195,000 Albanians emigrated to Turkey (Vickers, 1998, p. 157).

The fate of Serbs in Kosova was not a galvanizing issue in Belgrade as long as Serbs dominated the region. That all changed with the removal of Aleksandar Rankovic -- he was head of the federal security services and vice president at the time -- in July 1966 at the famous Brioni Plenum. Rankovic's fall was welcomed enthusiastically in Zagreb, Novi Sad, and Prishtina and was interpreted by Serbs and non-Serbs alike as a defeat for Serbs (Burg, 1983, p. 35; Vickers, 1998, p. 163; Ramet, 1992, p. 91). Rankovic's dismissal rather rapidly unleashed a process of indigenization of the communist party "nomenklatura" and security structures in Kosova -- to the extent that an immigrant from Albania was appointed chief of police (Vickers, 1998, p. 163). 1968 was the 500th anniversary of the death of the Albanian national hero, George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, and saw a series of ethnic Albanian demonstrations in Kosova and in neighboring Macedonia. Constitutional amendments in December 1968 gave the renamed Socialist Autonomous Province -- the additional term "Metohija," considered offensive and a symbol of Serb hegemony by Albanians, was dropped from official usage thereafter -- representation in the federal parliament, and legislative and judicial authority was passed to the provinces (Vickers, 1998, pp. 169-170).

In January and February 1969, Kosova was able to pass its own constitutional law, and its

autonomy was further strengthened. 1969 also saw the creation of an independent University of Prishtina -- it had previously been merely a branch of the University of Belgrade -- and the rapid Albanianization of both faculty and student body (Ramet 1992, p. 191). The new Yugoslav constitution promulgated in February 1974 gave Kosova and Vojvodina substantial powers as autonomous provinces of Serbia: They were now full constitutive members of the federation; they were represented in the Federal Presidency (where they essentially could exercise veto power if they so chose), the Federal Assembly, and in the federal and constitutional courts; and the Republic of Serbia was forbidden from officially intervening in provincial affairs against the will of the provincial assemblies in Prishtina and Novi Sad (Vickers, 1998, pp. 178-179). The 1970s would see an intensification of this indigenization process and pressure -- both indirect and direct -- on Serbs that would lead many to abandon the province.

The Slow Marginalization Of Ethnic Hungarian Influence In Transylvania: 1944-68

Serb influence in Kosova during the first two decades of communist rule owed something to Tito's effort to mollify Serbs concerned that the concept of federal Yugoslavia was a conspiracy to dilute Serb power, and to fears of irredentist and hostile neighbors Albania and Bulgaria. By contrast, Hungarian political influence in Transylvania was widely regarded as the price Bucharest had to pay for having all of Transylvania returned at the end of the war and as a sop to communist leaders in Budapest who had to defend a deeply unpopular concession.

The Romanian Workers' Party did not deliver on its interwar promises of awarding parts of Transylvania to Hungary, but it also did not completely abrogate such commitments. Between 1952 and 1960 a Hungarian Autonomous Region (RAM) brought together three of the majority ethnic Hungarian counties -- according to one Hungarian populist scholar, thereby granting at least "some measure of symbolic self-government to the solidly Hungarian Szekely population" (Joo, 1994, p. 115). In 1960, the RAM was gerrymandered into the new Mures-Maghiar Autonomous Region, which diluted the proportion of ethnic Hungarians from 77 percent to 62 percent of the total population in the jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the majority Hungarian region existed until 1968 -- when, perhaps ironically, Nicolae Ceausescu's brief embrace of reformist policies and of overtures to the ethnic Hungarian community allowed him to argue that ethnic issues in socialist Romania had been superseded and the region's autonomous status was eradicated.

Unlike Serbs in Kosova, ethnic Hungarians did not rule in the Autonomous Region as a clear minority that disproportionately occupied the seats of political, security, and administrative power. The 1956 census showed that the region had a population of 731,387, of whom 77 percent were Hungarian, while statistics from 1958 claimed that 80 percent of the deputies to the people's councils and 78 percent of civil servants were non-Romanians, mostly Hungarians (King, 1973, pp. 150-152). Hungarians in the RAM constituted only one-third of the Hungarian population in Romania as a whole, and outside the region they had substantially less representation and influence in the structures of power than they had inside it. Moreover, it can be argued that because of the

relationship of religion and land to a dwindling ethnic minority, the state's moves against religious institutions -- especially the Catholic Church -- and collectivization were felt acutely by the Hungarian minority (Deletant, 1995, p. 109).

Nevertheless, as Robert King concludes: "the fact that most of the officials [in the RAM] were Hungarians was an important concession to the minority" (King, 1973, p. 150). Even Smaranda Enache, one of the leading proponents of interethnic harmony in Transylvania during the postcommunist era and hardly one who can be accused of being a Romanian nationalist, admits that in the RAM "it was a job to be a Romanian during that time" (Enache, 1991). As so often happens, ethnicity became intertwined with far-reaching social change -- in this case collectivization -- and in the minds of the Romanian peasant in the RAM, they were left with the bitter memory that "it was a Hungarian who came and took my land" (Enache, 1991).

However unsatisfying and fictional aspects of the RAM, totalitarian rule and elite commitment to notions of "socialist internationalism" largely removed the diaspora issue from the political agenda in Hungary. According to Kurti: "During the 1950s and 1960s, themes of Magyariness and Transylvania were rarely found in artistic or literary works" (Kurti, 2001, p. 103). Schopflin writes: "In effect, during the period up to the revolution the issue of ethnic Hungarians all but disappeared from Hungarian public life, although it evidently remained beneath the surface" (Schopflin, 1988, pp. 2-3). Joo highlighted in 1988 the absurd lengths to which Budapest's denial of its coethnics extended during the early communist era:

The basically unaltered official position was that Hungary had nothing to do with the Hungarians of neighboring countries. Accordingly, press and educational establishments also remained silent about the issue. Even the sports celebrities and artists who were ethnic Hungarians had their names printed in the Hungarian press according to the rule of Romanian spelling (e.g. Iolanda Balas, Stefan Ruha), and Budapest newspapers employed the Romanian designation for centuries-old Hungarian settlements and towns of Transylvania (Joo, 1994, p. 98).

Ludanyi maintains that the situation of ethnic Hungarians in Romania began to deteriorate with the crackdowns that followed the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution (Ludanyi, 1995, p. 315). Even if ethnic Hungarians in Romania had not protested in solidarity with the aims of the revolutionaries in Budapest as they did, they were bound to be viewed with suspicion by the Dej regime in Romania that so obediently backed the Soviet crushing of the uprising. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Romania in 1958 -- in part, interpreted as an acknowledgement of and reward for Romania's fealty to the Soviet Union -- gave the Romanian leadership wider latitude in dealing with the minority question as it saw fit (Ludanyi, 1995, p. 315).

Nevertheless, indicative of just how much removed from the political agenda in Budapest was the issue of the Hungarian minority in Romania was the response to the events of 22 February 1959, when -- with then CC Secretary Nicolae Ceausescu presiding -- the

Hungarian Bolyai University of Cluj was merged with the Romanian Babes University and renamed Babes-Bolyai -- an event that initiated a process of Romanian schools absorbing Hungarian schools at all levels of education (Shafir, 1985, p. 160). Despite the subsequent suicide of the pro-rector of the Bolyai University, Laszlo Szabedi, Budapest was essentially silent over the event. Moreover, according to Joo, "when in 1962 a few Hungarian intellectuals protested at international forums against the merger of the Hungarian and Romanian universities of Cluj, the protesters were found guilty of violating state interests by a court of law in Budapest" (Joo, 1994, p. 98). As Joo describes, not even the comparatively more relaxed ideological atmosphere in 1960s Hungary had much impact:

The increased tourist traffic between countries of Eastern Europe in the early 1960s made it easier to strengthen family relations and friendship ties between Hungarians living in Romania and Hungary. Still, the existence of the more than two million strong Hungarian minority in Romania remained a taboo topic in Hungarian public discussions. Representatives of official (mainly cultural) policy manifest not only indifference but vehement opposition to any consideration of the problem (Joo, 1994, p. 98).

Those intellectuals who spoke up at this point on the diaspora question were few and far between -- essentially nationalist voices in what was then the political wilderness -- as we shall see.

*Author's Note: Spelling per editorial request.

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[Compiled by Michael Shafir](#)

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Part 2: DIASPORA POLITICS EMERGES FROM THE PERIPHERY

From the late 1940s through the early 1960s, nationalism was a bad word in the official idiom of communist Eastern Europe. It was rarely voiced openly by regime opponents -- when it was, it was in the context of a brief window of political liberalization, as occurred in Poland and Hungary in 1956 -- and was even rarer within the regimes. The reasons for this were multiple in the cases of Hungary and Serbia: Ethnic power and influence in Transylvania and Kosova* muted diaspora politics in the homeland, the regimes remained highly repressive against any type of dissent, and nationalism was effectively denigrated by its association with the interwar and World War II disasters of the region; for young people and students, and particularly regime members themselves, the concept was too foreign and taboo in the existing ideological hegemony.

Nationalist Voices In The Political Wilderness

During the 1960s and 1970s, the place of nationalism in communist Eastern Europe gradually changed. For one thing, the positions of Serbs in Kosova and Hungarians in Transylvania began to change and change for the worse, if slowly at first. The fact that intellectuals attempted to push the envelope with such criticism, and the sometimes muted criticism of the authorities, was indicative of the delegitimation of the ruling ideology and of the transition to a less repressive "post-totalitarian" regime (to use the categories outlined by Linz and Stepan, 1996). It is important to note, however, that such criticism appealed to the statist and centralizing instincts of communist elites, calling for more, not less, party and state involvement in the protection of coethnics who were minorities caught outside the homeland. Still, for those who came to attach great importance to the diaspora issue, these muted efforts by communist elites to incorporate a diluted nationalism came across as half-hearted, cynical, opportunist, and ultimately unconvincing.

In Hungary, the standard-bearer of the diaspora cause was Gyula Illyes (born 1902), a by-then-already-famous populist poet and writer who had been a representative of the National Peasant Party in the first postwar National Assembly until withdrawing from politics in 1947 (Reisch, 1983). Despite the populists' rapprochement with the Kadar regime after 1957 -- especially after Kadar's declaration of his "alliance policy" in 1962 -- Illyes broke the taboo on the diaspora issue in a 9 January 1964 interview with the French magazine "L'Express" in which he criticized the closure of the Hungarian faculty at Babes-Bolyai University. Illyes was severely reprimanded for this criticism (Schopflin,

1988, p. 3). He continued, however, to raise the issue of the Hungarian minorities in his novels "Hajszalgyokerek" (Root Branches, 1971) and "Itt elned kell" (Here you must live, 1976) (Schopflin, 1979, p. 177).

According to an obituary by a Radio Free Europe analyst, although Illyes did address the plight of Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, he did it less frequently and never with the same force that he did in analyzing the situation of Hungarians in Romania (Reisch, 1983). Illyes's most direct comments on the diaspora issue, and particularly the issue of Transylvanian Hungarians, came in a two-part article that appeared in the state-run daily "Magyar Nemzet" on 22 December 1977 and 1 January 1978, even though, as Schopflin points out, he neither mentioned Romania nor Transylvania by name (Schopflin 1979, p. 178). Indicative, however, of the regime's confused and contradictory embrace of nationalism at this juncture, in January 1978 Illyes's "Szellem es eroszak" (Spirit and Violence) was banned because of its focus on the national question and ended up being published abroad (in Munich) in 1980 ("Kronologia," 1978; Reisch, 1983). Thirty-thousand copies of the work had been printed and bound in Hungary in 1978 but were not distributed, and the Kadar regime did not permit Illyes to respond personally to Romanian criticism of his "Magyar Nemzet" articles (Lendvai, 1988, p. 31).

Kurti summarizes the catalytic role played by Illyes in the expression of nationalist dissent as follows:

"[Among those who did not opt to emigrate] some, such as Illyes or [Laszlo] Nemeth, helped pave the way for the establishment of their youthful alter ego, the neopopulists. The neopopulists, most notably Ferenc Juhasz, Laszlo Nagy, Istvan Agh, and especially Sandor Csoori, demanded attention by opening up a more relaxed political climate that encouraged mild criticism, experimentation, and diversion from the officially favored 'urbanist' (bourgeois humanist) and 'socialist' literary forms. But with the emergence of this group, there was another equally if not more significant literary direction led by those writers whose family and regional backgrounds were located in the geopolitically sensitive region of Transylvania -- Istvan Csurka, Ferenc Santa, Zoltan Jekely, and Zoltan Zelk" (Kurti, 2001, p. 101).

Nick Miller identifies the speech of Serb intellectual Dobrica Cosic at the May 1968 plenum of the Serbian League of Communists (SKS) as "the birth of Serbian dissent" on the national question in communist Yugoslavia (Miller, 1997a, p. 298). Miller has termed Cosic "the herald of the original antibureaucratic revolution" and affirmed that Cosic's speech "established the foundation for Serbian complaints about the devolutionary tendencies of Yugoslav communism for the following two decades" (Miller 1997a, p. 304; 298). Cosic asserted that history, not demography, should determine the character of Kosova, and he displayed obvious disdain for Albanians and fear of Albanian nationalism in his speech:

"We can no longer fail to recognize how much the conviction spreads in Serbia regarding the intensification of relations between Siptars and Serbs, regarding the feeling of endangerment of the Serbs and Montenegrins, regarding the pressures for emigration,

regarding the systematic removal of Serbs and Montenegrins from leading positions, regarding the desires of specialists to abandon Kosovo and Metohija, regarding inequalities before the courts and lack of respect for legality, regarding blackmail in the name of national identity" (cited in Miller 1997a, p. 298).

Cosic lost his position as a member of the Serbian League of Communists and resigned from the party three weeks later (Miller 2000, pp. 269-270 n. 7). A like-minded intellectual colleague, Jovan Marjanovic, also was excluded (Miller 1997a, p. 301). Significantly, however, Cosic's criticism lay outside the intellectual mainstream and was not taken up by reform Marxists or humanist intellectuals -- such as Mihailo Markovic and the scholars of the so-called Praxis group -- nor by the reformist wing of the SKS centered around Marko Nikezic and Latinka Perovic.

According to Miller, Cosic's speech in 1977 marking his admission to the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts "heralded the opening of the second front, the non-party, intellectual uprising against Titoism" (Miller 1997a, p. 304). Cosic characterized Serbian history as filled with division and betrayal -- both internally and at the mercy of foreign powers -- and claimed that "in Europe there is not a small nation which in the past two centuries, and especially in the twentieth, that has expended so much in the name of history...as the Serbian nation" (Miller 2000, pp. 274-275; Miller 1997a, p. 304). But as Miller admits, the time was not yet ripe for Cosic's form of dissidence, and "Cosic had little influence in Serbia until Tito died and Kosovo's Albanian population revolted in 1981" (Miller 1997b, p. 152).

A Slow, Timid, And Unconvincing Effort By Regime Elites To Appropriately Nationalism
The party in both Hungary and Serbia was slow to integrate and/or voice populist concern for the diaspora raised by the likes of Illyes and Cosic. In the Hungarian case, one can speculate that the Kadar leadership's desire to pursue internal reform -- whether by pursuing a more tolerant political line with dissidents or in implementing the changes of the New Economic Mechanism -- led it to tread carefully on a foreign-policy issue where expression of a nationalist claim might attract greater Soviet interest in Hungary's internal developments. In Serbia, the Rankovic purge, the constitutional amendments of 1968, 1972, and 1974, and finally the post-1972 purge of liberals from among the leadership of the SKS, muted the defense of the Kosova issue by party leaders.

According to a Hungarian populist source, June 1971 was the first time when a leader of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) -- Zoltan Komocsin -- publicly declared that Hungary was interested in the fate of the Hungarian national minority (Joo, 1994, p. 116). As George Schopflin writes:

"the existence of strong popular sentiments on [the Transylvanian question] could not be wholly ignored, and by the mid-1970s a gradual shift took place in official attitudes. [Thus, i]n a speech to the Helsinki summit in 1975 Kadar explicitly endorsed a kind of political and cultural nationhood that had positive features" (Schopflin, 1988, p. 3).

In a 1977 agreement with Romania -- the year when Kadar and Ceausescu engaged in

bilateral meetings in Debrecen and then Oradea -- reflecting growing sentiment on the diaspora question, Hungary incorporated the concept of national minorities as forming a bridge that unites different peoples (Joo, 1994, p. 99; Schopflin, 1988, p. 4). Nevertheless, as Joo writes, "during the 1970s and even into the 1980s, official Hungarian policy still reflected a great deal of hesitancy and uncertainty," while those "who demanded a more assertive policy were often regarded with suspicion" and "young people who regularly traveled to Transylvania faced the prospects of harassment by the [Hungarian, as well as Romanian] authorities" (Joo, 1994, p. 99). And, as Schopflin explains, "a communist leadership, especially one as professionally neutral on the subject as Kadar's, was hard put to portray itself convincingly as a credible spokesman for the nation" (Schopflin, 1988, p. 3).

If in Hungary the need to avoid alienating the Soviet patrons who had restored the Hungarian communists to power after November 1956 delayed and muted discourse on the Transylvanian issue, in Serbia the "normalization" of politics that followed the purge of the Serbian party leadership after 1972 delayed and muted discourse on the Kosova issue. Nick Miller claims, "Until the late 1970s, the Serbian party doctrinally ignored or persecuted those like Cosic who claimed anti-Serbianism was integral to post-1966 Titoism" (Miller 1997a, p. 303). Partly in an effort to balance his purge of nationalists from the Croatian leadership beginning in late 1971 (Miko Tripalo, Savka Dapcevic-Kucar, etc.), Tito struck against the reformist, although not necessarily nationalist, Serbian leadership in 1972, removing most notably the president and the secretary of the Serbian League of Communists, Marko Nikezic and Latinka Perovic, respectively (Benson, 2001, pp. 122-123). According to Benson, in the end the total number purged from the party in Serbia "very nearly matched that of Croatia" (Benson, 2001, p. 123). Pavkovic has estimated that approximately 6,000 of those deemed "supporters" of Nikezic and Perovic were purged from the Serbian party (Pavkovic, 2000, p. 68). The "normalized" Serbian party dutifully abided by Tito's constitutional changes giving Kosova the status of an autonomous province in 1974 -- a situation that would discredit the "normalized" party leadership in the eyes of many Serbs.

The trinity of events that many Serbs increasingly came to believe marked their collective humiliation -- especially as regards Kosova -- during these years (Rankovic's purge in 1966, the purge of the Serbian party in 1972, and the 1974 constitution formalizing Kosova's autonomy) demoralized party members and had important structural consequences. Cosic castigated the "survivors" as characterized by "mediocrity and political cowardice" (Miller, 2000, p. 280). Miller writes of the purges:

"The LCS had been purged of its most capable leaders in 1972. The LCS had continued to resist changes to the constitutional status of Serbia after the purges, but they had robbed the party of much of its intellectual capital.... Today, there is significant support for the thesis that Serbia lost its best and brightest in 1972, leaving the field open to talents like Milosevic in the 1980s" (Miller, 1997b, p. 152; Miller, 1997a, p. 302).

Indeed, as Miller demonstrates, after rising from 69 percent to 86 percent from the 1950s to the late 1960s, the number of Central Committee members with higher education fell

back to 62 percent following the purges (Miller 1997b, p. 185n.10). The purge extended outside the party and eventually touched "Praxis" in 1975, when the journal was closed down and eight "Praxis" theorists -- including Mihajlo Markovic, Dragoljub Micunovic, and Ljubomir Tadic -- began being suspended from teaching at the University of Belgrade (Benson, 2001, p. 128; Grunewald, 1992, p. 178). According to Leonard Cohen, the "crudely managed repression of neo-Marxist dissidents and other political nonconformist Serbs in the mid and late 1970s" further weakened the republican leadership's political position (Cohen, 1997, pp. 319-320).

Slowly but fitfully, however, the Kosova issue worked its way into official discourse. In 1977, a party working commission under the guidance of Serbian President Dragoslav Markovic gathered arguments against the enhanced autonomy of Kosova since the 1974 constitutional changes, but the so-called Blue Book was too politically sensitive and thus was never publicly discussed. (Vickers suggests that the "Blue Book" was craftily modeled on the "Blue Book" printed for the 1899 Peace Conference in The Hague that detailed Albanian violence in Kosova [Vickers, 1998, p. 183 n. 29].) That such views remained officially proscribed was clear at the 15th Session of the SKS Central Committee in April 1978, when Mirko Popovic and other speakers inveighed against the Serbian chauvinism that Popovic maintained had become more serious "in the last year or two" and was tendentiously attempting to exploit every friction (Ramet, 1992, p. 199).

Grounds for Consensus and Activism: The Slide toward Second-Class Citizenry (1968-81)

The greater concern of the Hungarian intelligentsia for Hungarians in Transylvania reflected a response to the deteriorating situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania as the 1970s wore on -- an issue that became all the more galling and beckoned for attention as a result of the favored role of Romania in Western capitals because of Nicolae Ceausescu's sometimes anti-Soviet foreign policy decisions at a time when, at least in the foreign-policy arena, Hungary continued to toe a reliable Soviet line.

The Deteriorating Situation Of Transylvanian Hungarians

The decision in 1968 to gerrymander out of existence the Mures-Maghiar Autonomous Region merely formalized the process of the jurisdiction's dwindling significance as a distinct entity over the preceding years. However, even in the early 1970s, the Ceausescu regime was still careful to offer ethnic Hungarians piecemeal concessions -- in part because, in the immediate wake of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the Romanian regime seemed to interpret this as a way to deny the Soviets a vulnerability that they could potentially exploit to divide and weaken the regime. In 1969, the University of Bucharest reopened a department of Hungarian literature and philology and the Kriterion publishing house for minority languages, while in October 1970 the Hungarian weekly "A Het" (The Week) was allowed to begin publication in Bucharest (Joo, 1994, p. 116).

Matters began to change, however, as the 1970s progressed. An educational decree law in 1973 established a minimum number of students requirement for the teaching of minority languages, with no such minimum established for Romanians (Joo, 1994, p. 117). Also

around this time, a decree reduced the size of newspapers and number of pages per publication -- ostensibly because of an emergency paper shortage. Although both Romanian and Hungarian-language papers were initially equally affected, while Romanian-language papers were eventually returned to their original sizes, Hungarian ones were not (Deletant, 1995, p. 125). On 9 December 1974, a law came into effect that prohibited Romanian citizens from hosting foreign visitors in their homes -- inevitably this was to have a disproportionate impact upon ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania hosting relatives from neighboring Hungary ("Kronologia," 1974).

As Dennis Deletant suggests, Helsinki changed the equation somewhat:

"By committing Romania to the Helsinki Agreement of 1975, Ceausescu opened the door to international scrutiny of the regime's treatment of the Hungarian and German minorities in Transylvania and the Banat and at the same time offered encouragement to those governments who wished to press the matter to do so.... A second development was the opportunity afforded by the Helsinki Agreement to the Hungarian minority to release its pent-up anger at what they regarded as discriminatory policies.... A string of protests began to be heard from Transylvanian Hungarians in the spring of 1977" (Deletant, 1995, p. 121).

For example, there was the 1975 case of Janos Torok, a textile worker from Cluj who complained at a factory meeting on behalf of worker and Hungarian minority rights and was detained while speaking, severely beaten by "Securitate" officers, and then interned at a psychiatric hospital, where he was injected with large doses of drugs (until his conditional release in 1978) (Deletant, 1995, pp. 121-122). Or the cases of Lajos Kuthy, a Hungarian teacher from Brasov who had been collecting signatures for a petition to set up Hungarian classes and was found shot dead in a forest near the city in 1976, and Jeno Szikszai, another Brasov teacher who was arrested by the "Securitate" in spring 1977 -- for allegedly encouraging parents to send their children to schools with Hungarian sections -- beaten, and then committed suicide upon his release (Deletant, 1995, p. 122).

1977 also saw a series of memorandums and letters from senior ethnic Hungarian officials of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) criticizing the deterioration of the cultural and educational situation of the Hungarian minority. A memorandum from Lajos Takacs -- a former rector of Babes-Bolyai at the time of the 1959 merger -- detailed how decreasing opportunities in Hungarian-language instruction had led to a sharp decline in the number of ethnic Hungarians attending universities or with the possibility to do so (Deletant, 1995, pp. 122-126). Karoly Kiraly, who had resigned as a candidate member of the PCR Executive Committee and first secretary of Covasna county in 1972 -- officially for "personal" reasons but in actuality to protest discriminatory policies against ethnic Hungarians -- outlined in three letters to senior party officials how in leadership positions at major industrial plants and cultural institutions -- even in areas with significant Hungarian populations, such as Targu-Mures -- ethnic Hungarians were systematically being replaced with Romanians (Deletant, 1995, pp. 126-128). As Kiraly noted, the Hungarian State Theater in Targu-Mures had a Romanian director who did not speak Hungarian, the mayors of the largely Hungarian towns of Sovata and Targu-Mures had

Romanian mayors, and bilingual signs and the designation of place names in Hungarian on maps were rapidly disappearing at this time. Kiraly was briefly arrested in early 1978, and the "Securitate," according to Deletant, turned "hundreds of homes belonging to members of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania" upside down in search of copies of Kiraly's letters (Deletant, 1995, p. 129).

Finally, between 1981 and 1983, Hungarian intellectuals in Transylvania attempted to produce their own "samizdat," exposing the Romanian regime's treatment of the Hungarian minority. Nine issues of the publication "Ellenpontok" (Counterpoints) appeared between December 1981 and January 1983, when the editors were detained, beaten, and expelled to Hungary (Deletant, 1995, p. 131; Kurti, 2001, p. 109). A second samizdat publication "Erdelyi Magyar Hirugynokseg" (Transylvanian News Service) appeared first in May 1983 and then on an irregular basis thereafter.

The Deteriorating Situation Of Kosova Serbs

The deterioration of Serb influence in Kosova was arguably more dramatic and deeper than the corresponding situation of Hungarians in Transylvania. Ethnic Albanians in Kosova and many outsiders saw the Albanians as the victims -- and they undoubtedly were -- of the 1981 violence that seized the province and over time spilled into neighboring Macedonia and Montenegro (as in 1968). Serbs, on the other hand, saw these events as the last straw, as the clearest evidence that their cession of power and influence in the province was leading to the very demands -- Albanian autonomy -- that they feared most.

The impact upon Kosova of the founding of the Albanian-language university in Prishtina in 1969 was extraordinary. By the 1981/82 academic year, the university had over 20,000 students, or nearly one out of every 10 adults in the city (Mertus, 1999, p. 29). Kosova, thus as Mertus notes, "had the dubious honor of having the highest ration of both students and illiterates in Yugoslavia" (Mertus, 1999, p. 29). At university, many students would focus on the liberal arts -- especially Albanian language and literature -- rather than technical subjects, reinforcing their chances of unemployment upon graduation, particularly if they were to leave the republic (Mertus, 1999, p. 28). This intellectual proletariat -- now with heightened expectations and hopes, and with a more developed sense of self and national identity -- looked to the republican bureaucracy as essentially its sole outlet for employment. According to Fred Singleton, there were few jobs outside of "the inflated administrative machine and in the cultural institutions which had also been the recipients of [federal] funds which ought to have been spent on projects of greater economic relevance" (cited in Mertus, 1999, p. 28). Seventy percent of those unemployed were under the age of 25 (Poulton, 1991, p. 60). At the same time, the situation for non-Albanians at the university had become inhospitable: "at Pristina University and in high schools students boycotted non-Albanian classes, ostracized 'hostile' teachers, and refused to study Serbo-Croat" (Vickers, 1998, p. 188).

According to Vickers, the 1974 constitution "began the virtual Albanianization of public life in Kosovo." The constitution "caused 'positive discrimination' in favor of the Albanians in Kosovo: bilingualism became a condition for employment in public

services; four-fifths of the available posts were reserved for Albanians on a parity basis; and national quotas were strictly applied when nominations were made for public functions" (Vickers, 1998, p. 180). Between the end of 1974 and 1980 alone, the proportion of Albanians employed in the so-called "social sector" increased from 58 percent to 92 percent, while that of Serbs declined from 31 percent to 5 percent -- far below the proportion of Serbs in Kosova's population as a whole (Ramet, 1992, pp. 192-193). By 1981, over two-thirds of party members in Kosova, and three-quarters of provincial police and security-service personnel, were ethnic Albanian (Malcolm, 1998, p. 326). Vickers concludes that "during the years 1971-1981, Kosovo's administration operated with minimal restraint from either the Federal or the Serbian Republic government" (Vickers, 1998, p. 183).

The apex for Kosova Albanians -- and in many ways, from the perspective of the Serbs, the corresponding nadir -- must have been the joint celebrations launched in 1978 between Yugoslavia and Albania to mark the centenary of the founding of the League of Prizren, the historic watershed of Albanian national revival in the 19th century (Magas, 1993, pp. 38, 11; Vickers, 1998, pp. 187-188).

On 24 September 1984, the Belgrade weekly "NIN" reported that between 1961 and 1981, 112,600 Serbs and Montenegrins left Kosova (Benson, 2001, p. 143). According to Malcolm, such numbers are generally confirmed by 1981 census statistics on the number of people in Serbia proper who declared themselves as having come from Kosova (110,675, of whom 85,636 had come between 1961 and 1981) (Malcolm, 1998, p. 330). The proportion of Serbs in Kosova, which had stayed relatively constant at about 23 percent between the late 1940s and early 1960s, fell to 18.3 percent in the 1971 census and 13.2 percent in the 1981 census. More alarming still from the Serb perspective was that, in absolute terms, the number of Serbs had dropped between 1971 and 1981 by over 18,000 (Ramet, 1992, p. 198). Indicative of the contingent and historical character of why particular diaspora issues become politically predominant instead of others is the fact that, according to Malcolm, Bosnia saw an outflow of 111,828 Serbs over this same period, one that was proportionately greater than the outflow of Serbs from Kosova (Malcolm, 1998, p. 330). Whereas in 1961, Serbs had made up 43 percent of Bosnia's population and Muslims 26 percent, by 1981 the figures were 32 percent and 40 percent, respectively (Benson, 2001, p. 144). Yet, as we know, the diaspora issue of greatest concern for Serbs during the 1980s was Kosova, not Bosnia.

Writing in the summer of 1983, RFE's Zdenko Antic identified the growing spread of Serbian nationalism and concluded, "If anything provoked this new wave of Serbian nationalism it was the Kosovo events [of 1981]" (Antic, 1983). What began as student demonstrations by ethnic Albanians in Prishtina in March 1981, turned into protests for republican status for Kosova, and then rapidly spread throughout the province in the weeks that followed, eventually spilling over to the ethnic Albanian populations of Macedonia and Montenegro (Ramet, 1992, pp. 195-197). The response of federal officials, spearheaded by Stane Dolanc (a Slovene), was a brutal crackdown -- administered by the federal arm of the state-security services and military counterintelligence -- and even by Dolanc's own account resulting in 1,500 arrests for

serious crimes against public order and 4,500 for "lesser offenses" (Benson, 2001, p. 136). The climate between the remaining Serbs and Albanians inevitably worsened, and Serbs continued to stream out of the province primarily for economic reasons, but also because they felt increasingly the subject of indirect, and in some cases, direct, pressure (Malcolm, 1998, p. 331).

*Author's Note: Spelling per editorial request.

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[Compiled by Michael Shafir](#)

NATIONALISM IN LATE COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE: COMPARING THE ROLE OF DIASPORA POLITICS IN HUNGARY AND SERBIA (Part 3)

By Richard Andrew Hall

A CRITICAL STAGE: REGIME OPPOSITION COALESCES

Just as the regime policy of differentiating and segregating opposition to the regime was critical to the success of the Hungarian and Serb communist parties in undermining opposition during the 1970s, so events or changes in regime behavior that brought together or enabled different parts of the opposition to coalesce proved significant in altering the regime-opposition dynamic in the 1980s. As is often the case, interaction and collaboration on one set of issues "spilled over" and set the stage for future interaction and collaboration -- even where there was little direct relation between the earlier and later issues and even where the earlier projects had been viewed as comparatively apolitical. In both Hungary and Serbia, the convergence of populist and liberal dissidents on the nationalist issue was an evolutionary and initially independent process, but it was given impetus and encouraged by unprecedented cooperation between the two camps on other issues.

The Hungarian Opposition Comes Together

Rudolf Tokes identifies the funeral of the legendary writer and historian Istvan Bibo -- and the 1,001-page tribute including the contributions of 76 different authors, "Bibo Emlékonyv" (Bibo Memorial Book, 1980), that followed -- as a critical juncture for opposition to the communist regime: "The death of Istvan Bibo in April 1979 became the defining event that helped reshape the dissident movement from a loose intelligentsia network into a new coalition of democratic opposition in Hungary" (Tokes, 1996, p. 184). Indeed, a report prepared by the Central Committee's Department for Science, Education, and Culture recognized the volume's potential, stating, "[I]t is suitable for the building of a kind of consensus among various strata of the intelligentsia" (Tokes, 1996, p. 186). The "samizdat" publication brought together what the report identified as eight different types of regime opponents, ranging from populists such as Gyula Illyes to members of the "democratic opposition."

The Bibo "samizdat" project undoubtedly set the stage for the collaboration of the populist and democratic opposition camps that occurred with the publication of Hungary's first regular "samizdat" journal, "Beszelo" (Speaker), beginning in December 1981. According to Tokes: "From 1983 on, every issue of the journal gave prominent coverage to matters of Populist interest and paid substantial attention to regional concerns... [C]overage of the Transylvanian scene w[as] [a] major confidence-building step toward the forging of a political alliance between the Hungarian urban and rural

critical intelligentsia" (Tokes, 1996, p. 189). Of course, although both sides were defined by a change in their willingness to work more closely with one another, the change in interest in the diaspora issue was primarily one of the liberal intelligentsia.

Prior to the signature by 34 Hungarian intellectuals of the Charter 77 manifesto in January 1977, Janos Kenedi, one of the most active organizers of "samizdat" projects at the time, maintains that "the dissidents had struck outsiders as a clannish lot intent on recruiting people to support noble causes abroad but oddly disinterested in social problems at home and in Hungarian ethnic minority rights in Romania and Slovakia" (cited in Tokes, 1996, p. 184). The Helsinki accords, with their stated commitment to the defense of minority rights, and the increasing recognition by members of the liberal opposition that commitment to the preservation of individual rights necessitates that they take an increasing interest in the fate of the Hungarian minority -- particularly in Romania, where those rights appeared to be diminishing -- clearly contributed to this turnabout in the focus and interest of the liberal opposition in the diaspora issue. According to George Schopflin, populists and liberals came to the diaspora cause from different philosophical perspectives, but they were nevertheless drawn together: The liberal approach focused on "human rights and the democratization of communist political systems as the means of ending national oppression"; the more emotive populist worldview on "the Hungarian nation's right to define its identity and objectives" (Schopflin, 1988, p. 4).

One might add here, however, that the appearance and rising prominence of representatives in the liberal opposition who had come from or had deep roots in Transylvania also played a role -- most notably, perhaps, the case of Gaspar Miklos Tamas, who had come to Hungary from Romania in 1978. In the 1980s, Tamas would be joined by other Transylvanian intellectuals, who were expelled by the Romanian authorities and consequently sought to publicize the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania upon arriving in Hungary -- including Attila Ara-Kovacs (1983) and Geza Szocs (1985) (Kurti, 2001, p. 109; Joo, 1994, p. 118).

In the wake of the disappointing 13th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) in March 1985 -- at which the aging and increasingly intransigent Janos Kadar retained the top party post -- and the first parliamentary elections with two or more (party-nominated) candidates per district on 8 June 1985 -- which saw 154 "spontaneously nominated" candidates and 35 of them end up in parliament -- the "democratic opposition" gathered together 45 intellectuals from across the political spectrum, including populists and reform socialists, at a three-day conference at a campsite in the Budapest suburb of Monor from 14-16 June 1985 (Tokes, 1996, pp. 273; 238; 189-190; Ash, 1985, pp. 149-150). The conference convener, Ferenc Donath, suggested that fear of a political crisis because of declining living standards and intractable economic problems -- read, in part, Kadar's continued stewardship of the party and intransigence -- had instigated the conference (Tokes, 1996, p. 190). One of the organizers told Timothy Garton Ash in 1985 that "the idea [behind the conference] was [to bring together] a kind of popular front" (Ash, 1985, p. 150). Among the populists, Sandor Csoori and Istvan Csurka spoke and focused on the need for moral renewal, the

preservation of the national cultural identity, and heightened awareness of the sufferings of ethnic Hungarians beyond the national boundaries. Csoori argued that the latter question had not yet surfaced because "the vocabulary of socialism seems to lack the words" for doing so (Koppany, 1986). Janos Kis, the de facto editor of "Beszelo" and a chief representative of the liberals criticized the populists for their seeming tunnel vision on these issues and lack of attention to broader issues of social welfare and human rights, but admitted the political crisis necessitated cooperation and bridge-building (Tokes, 1996, p. 190).

Writing in late 1985, Timothy Garton Ash concluded: "What emerged from Monor is not -- or not yet -- something one could call a united, let alone a popular, front.... But there was at least common debate" (Ash, 1985, p. 150). Ash recognized, however, how central the diaspora question -- and specifically Transylvania -- was to the coalescing -- even if fitful and imperfect -- of the Hungarian opposition:

"Perhaps more than anything else it is the direct persecution of Hungarians in Romania that has catalyzed this convergence: the kind of persecution that, as it were, "evades" the Hungarians in Hungary. Nicolae Ceausescu as the godfather of Hungarian intellectual life -- what an irony! Deeply unreliable rumor in Budapest has it that when Kadar went to see Gorbachev in September, the Soviet leader asked him: 'What's this I hear about your intellectuals gathering together at Monor?'" (Ash, 1985, p. 150)

The European Cultural Forum held in Budapest in the fall of 1985 -- the first Helsinki follow-up meeting held in a Soviet-bloc country -- gave a boost to further opposition cooperation but also served as something of a watershed in the degree to which representatives of the Hungarian regime voiced the issue of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. Opposition cooperation gained a boost in large part because the regime ensured that they were barred from the official forum (Tokes, 1996, p. 188). Once again, populists and liberals came together, and much of their attention at their parallel unofficial symposium focused on the situation in Transylvania (Ash, 1985, pp. 152-156).

A secret 1 July 1986 MSZMP Politburo report on regime opposition that was leaked abroad gives evidence that the regime itself recognized and believed that the opposition was coalescing and broadening (J.R., 1987). The document observed that although the core of people in opposition had not grown since 1982, the opposition's "influence has broadened and the volume of illegal publications increased." As of 1986, political dissidence in Hungary had ceased to be merely "oppositional" but now was considered a "hostile" antiregime movement (Tokes, 1996, p. 195). The report differentiated what it called the "nationalist radical tendency" (i.e. populist) from the "bourgeois radical group" (i.e. "democratic opposition"), with the former focusing "on problems of the Hungarian minorities and accusing Hungarian authorities of 'criminal neglect.'" The report acknowledged how during the early and mid 1980s the various strands of opposition opinion in Hungary had coalesced, how the question of the Hungarian diaspora was THE issue fueling populist dissent, and how regime opposition as a whole was allegedly taking advantage of the "worsening situation of the Hungarian minority in neighboring states."

The 30th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution in October 1986 led to a joint statement signed by 54 Hungarian dissidents, including members of the populist and liberal oppositions, some of whom had participated at Monor. Alfred Reisch concluded at the time that the joint statement was evidence that "the Monor initiative does, indeed, now seem to have been followed up" and that "the recent and remarkable coalition of the various Hungarian oppositionist groups and individuals that began at Monor has held together, despite the variety of concerns and interests involved" (Reisch, 1986). The appeal significantly included "a statement to respect the rights of all minorities," a clear bow to the importance and unifying character of the diaspora issue within the Hungarian opposition.

Serbia's Path to Opposition Symbiosis

If in Hungary the coalescing of populist and liberal oppositions to the regime derived largely from events such as the Bibo memorial or an increasing convergence of concern (on the issue of Hungarian diaspora), in Yugoslavia regime actions played a much greater role. Specifically, an ill-fated crackdown in 1984 brought populist and liberal branches of the Serb opposition together. In January 1986, they would collaborate on a groundbreaking Kosova* petition. In March 1986 -- therefore before Milosevic's ascendancy to the helm of the Serbian party and prior to the release of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) memorandum -- Ramet noted how "the mood in Yugoslavia today is increasingly reminiscent of that of 1970-1971," only that the Serbs were now playing the role of the Croats then and the impediments to nationalist excess were weaker than in 1971 (Ramet, 1986). By early 1986, the Kosova issue had been percolating in Serbia for at least half a decade. Nick Miller writes:

"In the course of the period from 1981 to 1986, an opposition to the way the Serbian party dealt with Albanian nationalism would coalesce around several specific points: the fact of Serbo-Montenegrin outmigration; the immense economic drain that Kosovo represented; and the alleged revisitation of ancient crimes (rape, murder, and even impalement) against Serbs perpetrated earlier by Turks, now by Albanians" (Miller, 1997, p. 305).

The growing popular appeal and potential of Serb nationalism -- and of the centrality of Kosova in its renaissance -- was on display at the funeral of Aleksandar Rankovic in 1983. As many as 100,000 people may have witnessed Rankovic's burial -- clearly the largest societal action in communist Serbia to that point in time. Leslie Benson, who was there to witness the event, memorably describes it as follows:

"Rankovic became the posthumous champion of the Serbs, who had kept the Kosovar Albanians in their place. Although Rankovic's death was given little coverage in the media at the time, the bush telegraph brought out thousands of mourners to follow him to his grave (20 August 1983), many sporting the traditional Serbian peasant cap and singing patriotic songs, interspersed with shouts of 'Kardelj stitched him up' (Kardelj ga namestio)... Rankovic's obituary notice in 'Politika' was relegated to second place on a page which also reported, more prominently, the death of Milos Minic, the organizer of the Seventh Congress. It was still too soon for a Serbian nationalist rehabilitation of

Rankovic in public" (Benson, 2001, p. 143; p. 188 n.10).

Indeed, the soon-to-be head of the League of Communists of Serbia (SKS) and Belgrade city chief at the time of the event, Ivan Stambolic, was defensive on the subject: "All across Yugoslavia they criticized me for not controlling it -- should I have put tanks round the cemetery?" (quoted in Silber and Little, 1996, p. 36n8). Dobrica Cosic himself identified Rankovic's funeral as "above all a nationalist demonstration. It was a true, widely effective gesture, a real nationalist uprising [of] solidarity with a noted Serbian communist who was the victim of a great injustice" (quoted in Miller, 2000, p. 281). At this point, however, one can say, many intellectuals continued to lag the crowd, and it would only be in later years that Serb popular sentiment, particularly over Kosova, became more strongly articulated by the broader Serb intelligentsia.

Robert Thomas writes that "the 1980s saw increasing moves towards collective organization among Serbian intellectuals" (Thomas, 1999, p. 40). In what Leslie Benson colorfully describes as "the dying roar of senescent Titoism, which for all its quasi-democratic trappings abhorred all talk of 'bourgeois rights,'" the League of Communists of Yugoslavia led by the Croatian Titoist ideologue Stipe Suvar launched one last-gasp effort to slow the progression of the federation's burgeoning centrifugalism and save what was left of the now-threadbare doctrine of "Yugoslavism" (Benson, 2001, p. 145). The Sarajevo Winter Olympics (February 1984) now firmly behind them -- and thus the international spotlight turned away, too -- in May 1984 the Commission for Ideological Questions and Information met in Zagreb with Suvar leading the ideological charge against the growing trend in the country toward "abuse of freedom of creativity" (Grunewald, 1987, p. 524).

The regime actions that followed were heavy-handed, vindictive, and seemingly arbitrary, however. Twenty-eight participants at a meeting of the so-called "Free" or "Flying" university in a private apartment -- ironically, to discuss the national question in Yugoslavia -- were arrested in Belgrade on 20 April 1984 (Magas, 1993, pp. 89-91). Four of them were physically assaulted while in police custody, and one of them -- a 33-year-old worker, Radomir Radovic -- disappeared after a second arrest and release and was found dead on 30 April. In May, the authorities swooped down and arrested a series of intellectuals, including Vojislav Seselj (who had participated in the 20 April meeting) in Sarajevo and three former leaders of the 1968 student movement in Belgrade (Magas, 1993, pp. 102-103). The show trial of the "Belgrade Six" from August to November 1984 backfired and succeeded in bringing together the divergent strands of the Yugoslav -- but primarily, the Serb -- opposition. Led by Dobrica Cosic, a Committee for the Defense of Freedom of Thought and Expression (CDFTE) was founded on 10 November 1984. The CDFTE, which was founded explicitly to defend the rights of those who had been unjustly imprisoned and offer support to their families, echoed similar-type organizations that had preceded it in Poland (Workers' Defense Committee, KOR, founded in 1976) and in Czechoslovakia (Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted, VONS, founded in 1978). Helsinki, in a manner of speaking, had finally come to Yugoslavia.

The CDFTE became a template for future opposition collaboration in that it brought

together nationalists like Cosic but also the critical marxist "liberals" of "Praxis," such as Mihailo Markovic. According to Thomas, "despite dealing with such 'heroic' national material and his split with the League of Communists, Cosic continued to consider himself to be a man of the 'left' maintaining close links with members of the 'Praxis' group" (Thomas, 1999, p. 40). Markovic termed the founding of the CDFTE "the first successful breakthrough of civil society in Yugoslavia since the war" (cited in Grunewald, 1992, p. 182). Oskar Grunewald recognized the significance of the founding of the CDFTE for the Praxis group and regime opposition as whole as follows:

"But it is only following the death of Radomir Radovic that Mihailo Markovic ignored his own advice concerning permissible 'limits' for a critically minded intellectual and signed the first ever petition in postwar Yugoslavia calling on the interior minister to account for an unexplained death or accept responsibility for it and resign from office" (Grunewald 1992, p. 182).

Next, in May 1985, an event occurred that was to inflame Serb passions on the Kosova question and contribute to the further convergence of opposition in Serbia. Ivo Banac summarizes the incident and issues it raised as follows:

"And then in 1985 came the bizarre case of Djordje Martinovic [a 56-year-old Serb peasant], who was (or was not) impaled (or abused himself) with a broken bottle (or a bottle that broke in his anus) by two Albanians (or by Albanians of his own invention). At stake was the veracity of Kosovar authorities (who argued that Martinovic was in effect a pervert) and the Serbian authorities and public opinion (who were convinced that Martinovic was a victim of violence and a crude cover-up). At stake, too, was the autonomy of Kosova, since it appeared that even the purged ranks of Albanian communists were [following the riots and crackdown of 1981] were unreliable, while the Serbian investigatory agencies were constitutionally prevented from acting in the province" (Banac, 1992, p. 176).

The impact of the Martinovic affair on Serb consciousness as a symbol of Serb suffering in Kosova could be seen in Mica Popovic's 1986 painting "1 maj 1985," which depicts the fictional crucifixion of Martinovic. According to Nick Miller:

"Popovic chose, not only to render the scene, but to render it as the martyrdom of the Serbian peasant, standing in for the nation as a whole. All of the elements of Serbian subjugation in Yugoslavia are present -- white-capped Albanians hoist Martinovic onto the cross; the bottle waits; the blue-uniformed policeman, the ubiquitous watchman of the Titoist regime, stand guard over the ceremony" (Miller, 1999, p. 530 -- see photo of painting on p. 532).

Julie Mertus writes that "[t]aking advantage of the public uproar caused by the Martinovic case, Kosovo Serbs created a petition to the assemblies of Serbia and Yugoslavia in October 1985" (Mertus, 1999, p. 108). This was the second petition of Kosovar Serbs and contained the signatures of 2,011 Serbs and Montenegrins. The first petition had been circulated in early 1982 and carried the names of 79 Serbs. In the wake

of the 1981 events in Kosova, Kosovar Serbs who had left the province began to tell their stories to the Belgrade press -- encouraged to do so by Dobrica Cosic and like-minded intellectuals and prompted by their perception of the unreceptivity of Kosova's predominantly Albanian authorities to their plight (Silber and Little, 1996, pp. 34-35; Mertus, 1999 pp. 97-98; Thomas, 1999, p. 35). Kosovar Serb activists Miroslav Solevic, Kosta Bulatovic, and Bosko Budimirovic proclaimed in the first petition what was to become the slogan of their movement: "This is our land. If Kosovo and Metohija are not Serbian then we don't have any land of our own" (Silber and Little, 1996, pp. 34-35). According to Silber and Little, Cosic has admitted a role in encouraging the movement -- "they complained about their position and I advised them to write a petition and to put forward their demands," they quote him as saying (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 35).

Just as in Hungary it was more a case of the "democratic opposition" coming to the nationalist cause, so it was with Serbia's "liberals" -- the critical marxists of the "Praxis" group -- though perhaps even more belatedly. In January 1986, 212 Belgrade intellectuals -- many of them prominent and including 52 professors and 34 members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts -- sent a petition to the Yugoslav and Serbian national assemblies decrying the treatment of Serbs in Kosova (Stankovic, 1986a). According to Mertus, the petition echoed the October 1985 petition in blasting Serbian and Yugoslav leaders for failing to take action in defense of Kosovar Serbs faced with a looming Albanian-administered "genocide" (Mertus, 1999, pp. 135-136). Its language was emotive and highly charged, speaking of "old women and nuns being raped, youngsters beaten up, cattle blinded, stables built from gravestones, churches and old shrines desecrated" and warning that "no nation will give up its right to exist, and the Serb people are not and do not want to be an exception.... [If Kosova were to become] ethnically pure, this would inevitably lead to fresh national and international conflicts" (Mertus, 1999, pp. 135-136).

Branka Magas, writing in late 1986 in the "New Left Review" under the pseudonym of "Michelle Lee," recognized the groundbreaking nature of the January 1986 Kosova petition -- and its implications for the character of opposition to the communist regime in Serbia -- as follows:

"Particularly surprising was the fact that the January petition was signed by three former editors of 'Praxis': Zaga Golubovic, Mihailo Markovic and Ljuba Tadic -- joined subsequently by Milan Kangrga, another well-known former 'Praxis' editor, who gave an interview to the Belgrade literary and oppositional journal 'Knjizevne novine,' once again overtly anti-Albanian in message. This unexpected, indeed astonishing, alignment of 'Praxis' editors with nationalism has aroused considerable dismay among their friends and sympathizers, for it delineates a complete break with the political and philosophical tradition represented by the journal.... The appearance of 'Praxis' signatures on the Kosova petition, signaling a de facto absorption into the nationalist bloc, thus represents not only the final denouement of the 'Praxis' venture but also a generational rupture with Yugoslav Marxism" (Magas, 1993, pp. 52-53).

Nick Miller characterizes it this way:

"The other half of the non-party opposition consisted of members of the Praxis group. Their position outside of the party had been long-established. Yet their opposition to the party had always been essentially Marxist. The fact that they now joined a nationalist consensus is thus intriguing and somewhat shocking. Four members of the group, Ljubomir Tadic, Zagorka Golubovic, Mihailo Markovic, and Milan Kangrga had signed the January 1986 petition that first labeled Albanian behavior in Kosovo as genocidal. Their gravitation from Marxism to nationalism was abrupt. Their anti-Titoism was of long pedigree, and their democratic inclinations were well-publicized. Their transition can be explained in two ways: their democracy, like that of other Serbs (and Croats, as well as others) was not rooted in a belief in individual liberties, rather it was founded on a collective conception of society and rights; and they found it easy to move from one homogenizing, collective ideology (class-based Marxism) to another (cultural-based nationalism). By the early 1990s, Markovic was Milosevic's intellectual alter-ego" (Miller, 1997, p. 308).

In the months that followed the groundbreaking January 1986 Kosova petition, here again opposition convergence on the Kosova question was accompanied by continued collaboration in defending intellectual victims of the regime's wrath. From February to early April 1986, the Serbian Writers' Union held weekly literary protests with lectures on repression and creativity in support of Dragolub Petrovic, who had been sentenced on 3 December 1985 to 60 days' imprisonment for questioning official historiography (Grunewald, 1987, p. 518). Attendance began at 200 people on 10 February and had grown to over 1,000 by 3 March. Cosic called openly at these meetings for civil disobedience, strikes, and petitions as legitimate means to protest the authorities (Grunewald, 1987, p. 518). Similarly, the firing of Dusan Bogovac as chief editor of "Komunist" for having invited Seselj to publish in the pages of his journal, and for his own writings on Serb migration from Kosova, led 91 journalists to start a so-called Solidarity Fund on May Day 1986 (Grunewald, 1987, pp. 525-526). Journalists themselves had held a protest on 13 March 1986 against a ban on coverage of Yugoslav National Assembly President Ilijaz Kurteshi -- an ethnic Albanian (Stankovic, 1986b).

Meanwhile, the protests by Kosovar Serbs were gathering steam. In February 1986, 95 Kosovar Serbs representing 42 towns and villages in the province braved bitter cold and marched to the Federal Assembly in Belgrade (Vladisavljevic, 2002, p. 772). The arrest of one of the organizers in early April led to a vigil of several thousand outside his home, a futile effort of then Serbian party leader Ivan Stambolic to quell the crowd's spirits at Kosova Polje, and another march -- this time by 550 Kosovar Serbs, led by an 80-year-old farmer -- to Belgrade (Vladisavljevic, 2002, pp. 772-773). In what Silber and Little maintain was a "key moment" after which "no longer would the movement be confined underground," the leaders of this group were met by the dissident nationalist writer, Vuk Draskovic, who in turn brought them to an emotional Cosic (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 35). Cosic reportedly phoned Dusan Ckrebic, the then Serbian president, who supposedly advised the protesters the next morning: "This is where you should be. Not where you were last night." With help from a self-proclaimed "Committee of Serbs and Montenegrins" from Kosova, a petition in the latter's defense would garner over 50,000

signatures during 1986.

*Author's Note: Spelling per editorial request.

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[Compiled by Michael Shafir](#)

NATIONALISM IN LATE COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE: COMPARING THE ROLE OF DIASPORA POLITICS IN HUNGARY AND SERBIA (Part 4)

By Richard Andrew Hall

The Symbiosis Of Serbian Opposition (Continued)

Benson, for one, expresses skepticism regarding the timing of the publication of the now infamous Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum in late September 1986 -- "since it had been in circulation for well over a year" (Benson, 2001, p. 146). SANU had appointed a committee in June 1985 to formulate a memorandum to "raise the most important social, political, economic, educational, and cultural problems." What they came up with instead was a nationalist screed that claimed Serbs were the targets of "neofascist aggression" and of "physical, political, legal, and cultural genocide in Kosovo." (It is worth noting that such hyperbolic and ultimately abusive treatment of the term "genocide" also characterized Hungarian discussion of the plight of Transylvanian Hungarians.) Serbs were portrayed as the victims of a monstrous "anti-Serbian coalition" consisting of the leaderships of Croatia, Slovenia, and Vojvodina (Thomas, 1999, p. 41; Mertus, 1999, pp. 137-141). A media campaign after the leaking of the divisive document lasted from autumn 1986 through spring 1987 and called for the SANU leadership and, in particular, its vice president, the writer Antonije Isakovic, to resign (Thomas, 1999, p. 41).

Bennett maintains that whereas Ivan Stambolic, then president of Serbia, and Dragisa Pavlovic, head of the Belgrade League of Communists, denounced the memorandum publicly, condemnation of the document by the Central Committee of the Serbian League of Communists was "suppressed at the insistence of its President, Slobodan Milosevic" (Bennett, 1995, p. 82). Milosevic had acceded to that position in May 1986 according to the rules of rotation of office that prevailed at the time and with the help of his longtime political benefactor Ivan Stambolic. However, Cohen claims that as late as 4 June 1987 -- and thus three months after Milosevic's public nationalist epiphany at Kosovo Polje (Fusha Kosova) in April 1987 (discussed below) -- Milosevic used a closed meeting with Communists from the Federal Secretariat of Internal Affairs to launch an "uncharacteristically impassioned attack on the infamous Memorandum" (Cohen, 1997, p. 326). As Cohen observes, "Only a short time after making this speech, Milosevic would begin appropriating and encouraging viewpoints that he had earlier condemned as examples of the darkest nationalism" (Cohen, 1997, p. 326). Within a year he would also co-opt many of the memorandum's authors and supporters as an intellectual brain trust.

As is well known, the defining moment of Slobodan Milosevic's political career -- his personal "epiphany" or "moment of truth" -- occurred in Kosovo Polje on 24 April 1987

when he addressed a crowd of 15,000 Serbs beaten back by a mainly ethnic Albanian civilian police force. "No one should dare beat you, no one has the right to beat you," he told them. The crowd began chanting in response, "Slobo, Slobodo" -- a play on Milosevic's nickname and the word for freedom in Serbian -- and Milosevic responded: "You should stay here. This is your land. These are your houses. Your meadows and gardens. Your memories." Eric Gordy has perhaps captured best why Milosevic's behavior and style of interacting with the crowd at this event -- no matter how rehearsed or staged-managed as has been alleged -- was so groundbreaking:

"This was one of the first instances in which a leading politician had spoken in public and offered an idea that everybody could understand and who went so far as to encapsulate the message in a single comprehensible sentence. After years of progressively more incomprehensible and dense babble purporting to explain Yugoslavia's unnervingly opaque system of 'workers' self-management,' such an event was beyond memory for people who opposed Milosevic as well as those who supported him" (Gordy, 1999, p. 26 No. 6).

The so-called Night of Hard Words -- Milosevic would listen to the grievances of a delegation of Kosova Serbs in a meeting that lasted 12 hours! -- would end with Slobodan Milosevic a changed man. With the Belgrade media on hand to capture and later replay the moment over and over, Milosevic's "promise" to protect the Serbs rapidly became the stuff of popular legend in Serbia (Silber and Little, pp. 37-39).

Hungary: Leadership Succession, Struggle, And Opposition Fragmentation

The process of opposition coalescence that had developed in Hungary over the course of the early and especially mid-1980s began to fray in 1987. On the one hand, the banning of the provincial (Szeged) periodical "Tiszataj" in July 1986 for "nationalist material" and the measures taken against Istvan Csurka and Gaspar Nagy, who had written that material in its pages, had become mainly the focus of populist angst -- as exhibited at the Hungarian Writers' Union congress in late November 1986, the first such meeting since December 1981 (Pataki, 1986). Jenkins notes too that although Csoori, Csurka, and Sandor Lezsak had signed the October 1986 joint appeal with members of the "democratic opposition," they pointedly stayed away from a ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of the 1956 Uprising, in part because they did not wish to jeopardize the gains they had wrested from the regime as a result of their ability to establish influence in the Writers Union (Jenkins, 1992).

After all, despite their struggles with the authorities -- a struggle made clear at the 1986 Writers' Union congress when party ideologue Janos Berecz launched a stinging indictment of intellectuals who did not toe the party's line in their work -- the populists did have something to lose. In response to a letter in late 1984 by Zoltan Biro and 18 of his populist colleagues, they had been allowed to establish the Gabor Bethlen Foundation to cover the plight of Transylvanian Hungarians (Jenkins, 1992; Tokes, 1996, pp. 196-197). Then, in April 1987, relations with the "democratic opposition" were further soured when the cultural monthly "Mozgo Vilag" published a poem by the urbanist Gyorgy Spiro in which he referred to the populists as "scum." As Judith Pataki describes, "many

populist authors felt insulted and [thus] asked the Hungarian Writers' Union to refer the poem to its Committee on Ethics" (Pataki, 1987).

Against this backdrop came the so-called "Beszelo" affair surrounding the publication of the "Tarsadalmi Szerzodes," in which Janos Kis and two co-authors argued that it was time for Kadar to exit the political scene and for "radical political change" to renegotiate the "social contract" of the Kadar years (Tokes, 1996, p. 201). The populists were furious. It did not matter that the document, in Tokes's words, reflected the views of the "Beszelo" editors and not the broader "democratic opposition," and thus, "devoted considerable attention to the issue of Hungarian ethnic minorities" (Tokes, 1996, pp. 201-202). What mattered was that in "early 1987 the Populists [had] made another attempt to resume cooperation with the 'Beszelo' group by way of holding a 'Monor II' conference later in the year," and now instead the "democratic opposition" was attempting to impose their more radical agenda on the populists without consulting them (Tokes, 1996, p. 197).

Tokes argues that at the time the document was exceptionally courageous, but that it was the product as much of new pressures as new opportunities (Tokes, 1996, p. 200). In June 1987, Karoly Grosz had succeeded to the post of prime minister in what Tokes identifies as "the beginning of the endgame for the Kadar regime in Hungary." "The still loosely organized dissident movement was in danger of losing momentum or worse -- succumbing to offers of co-optation by the regime or by its 'human face,' Imre Pozsgay," head of the People's Patriotic Front-organization (HNF) since 1982 and already well known as the most prominent advocate of reform among the post-Kadar generation in the party's higher ranks (Tokes, 1996, p. 200; 239).

Clearly jockeying for power in advance of the succession struggle that would inevitably follow Kadar's eventual resignation, Pozsgay appears to have played an important role as godfather of the conference of 181, mostly populist intellectuals at Lakitelek on 27 September 1987, that saw the founding of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF). The site of the conference was the home of the intellectual Sandor Lezsak in the village of Lakitelek, some 90 kilometers southeast of Budapest. The contrast with a previous meeting of young authors at the same location in May 1979 -- when authorities shut down proceedings after only two days -- could not have been greater. This time, not only did the authorities stay away, but a senior official (Pozsgay) spoke at the gathering (Pataki, 1987).

As Tokes points out, Zoltan Biro, still a party member at the time, was a friend and associate of Pozsgay's while at the Culture Ministry in the 1970s and had since at least the late 1970s constituted a link for Pozsgay to the provincial cultural and educational elites who formed the backbone of the populists (Tokes, 1996, pp. 204-205). Tokes maintains that as one of the conveners of Lakitelek, Biro was clearly serving as "Pozsgay's political emissary." Pozsgay himself attended the meeting -- ostensibly to convey Prime Minister Grosz's greetings -- and delivered a sharp indictment of the contemporary political situation in Hungary, calling for a "new national coalition" for a "democratic and socialist" Hungary. In case there was any doubt that the MDF was a "stalking horse" for Pozsgay, on 14 November 1987 the founding statement of the MDF was published in the

HNF newspaper "Magyar Nemzet" as part of an interview with Pozsgay, the HNF head. The article came six weeks after the conference, but significantly only two days after a stinging address by Grosz in Győr about the "extremist elements of the opposition trying to compromise and discredit the leadership" (Reisch, 1987).

Conspicuous by their absence at the Lakitelek conference were representatives of the "democratic opposition." Judith Pataki noted at the time, "György Konrad was the only 'urban' author invited to the meeting, indicating the split that exists between populists and 'urban' writers, which the regime has sought to capitalize on in order to divide the opposition" (Pataki, 1987). In fact, Konrad objected to the nascent communist-populist condominium being advocated by Pozsgay and most of the populist speakers, claiming that it was antithetical to the multiparty system that had prevailed in 1947-48, before the communists extinguished official political differentiation (Tokes, 1996, p. 198). László Lengyel, a reform economist, did not abstain from highlighting that the conference was not representative of the Hungarian opposition: "Where are those who for years had spoken up for the cause of Hungarian democracy and the rights of Hungarian citizens? Where are the János Kís? I miss them!" (cited in Tokes, 1996, pp. 198-199).

The absence of representatives of the "democratic opposition" from Lakitelek was not accidental. Asked several years later why, at the famous founding meeting of the MDF at Lakitelek in September 1987, representatives of the "democratic opposition" had been conspicuously absent, Zoltán Bíró recalled what he claims was the poisonous fallout of the "Beszelo" affair:

"The whole thing went to pieces with the appearance of the special 'Társadalmi Szerzodes' edition of 'Beszelo.' With this they went ahead of the events, since the goal of the organizing council should have been exactly the acceptance of such a document. I cannot help but conclude that such a gesture was a breach of trust. They didn't say a word about any of it. Csóori, Gyula Fekete, and I were sitting on the terrace of the 'Europa presszo' [cafe], when Fur and Csurka returned from a preparatory session with the news: 'Social Contract' had been published. It was then that we decided that we can't go on like this [with the "democratic opposition"], we have to arrange our own meeting (Bíró, 1993, p. 96).

Tokes discusses the groundbreaking significance of the Lakitelek conference for regime-opposition relations in Hungary as follows:

"The Lakitelek conference was a landmark event: the public renegotiation of the terms of the Kádár-Aczel-Populist compromise of 1958-1962. The old regime had defaulted on its commitment to Németh, Illyés, and their ideological heirs. This, in turn, presented the reform communists, particularly Pozsgay, with the opportunity to revise the terms of the relationship to their political benefit. The recruitment of Populists for participation in a 'democratic socialist' partnership with political incumbents was an example of communist 'rearguard Realpolitik' at its best. The Populists' enthusiastic endorsement of the terms of Grosz's proposal helped drive a wedge between the democratic opposition and the nationalist intelligentsia. As the populists saw it, Pozsgay's involvement as a trusted

middleman between the regime and the intellectuals committed to values of 'people and nation' held the promise of a Popular Front-type 'democratic socialist' party pluralism. Prospects of peaceful power sharing by emerging constituencies, such as new clubs and associations, with the regime's PPF seemed irresistible to the 'founding fathers' of the HDF in the fall of 1987. The pact, such as it was, helped upgrade the Populist politicians' status from that of powerless petitioners to politically sheltered auxiliaries of the ruling party's nascent reform wing" (Tokes, 1996, p. 199).

As Kurti has suggested, as emigration from Transylvania increased, the issue of the fate of the Hungarian diaspora became more concrete for Hungarians: "The very presence of 'Transylvanian Hungarians' gave an impetus to the public discourse on the problems of Hungarian minorities living in the neighboring successor states, especially in the fight for human rights in Czechoslovakia and Romania" (Kurti, 2001, p. 111). In this way, Hungary mirrored Serbia, where the exodus of Kosovar Serbs and their presence in Belgrade had placed the issue in the popular conscience and forced its way onto the political agenda.

Although the role of changes in Hungarian regime policy toward East German "tourists" and refugees is well known in the history of the collapse of communism in 1989, the impact of Hungarian regime policy on the Transylvanian question in Hungarian politics and upon Hungarian-Romanian relations is generally not. Between August and October 1986, for example, the number of Romanian passport holders exiting Hungary for Austria without the requisite valid Austrian entry stamp doubled (Pataki, 1988a). Whereas in 1986 3,284 Romanian citizens had requested Hungarian residency, in 1987 that number doubled to 6,499 -- with fully 95 percent of the total being Romanian citizens of Hungarian ethnicity (Kurti, 2001, p. 110). By early 1988, there were an estimated 10,000 new refugees from Romania living in Hungary -- even though one-quarter of those trying to enter Hungary were still purportedly being turned back at the border and there were isolated instances of Romanian border guards gunning down would-be refugees (Pataki, 1988b). The resettlement issue in general, and the return of ethnic Hungarians to Romania by the Hungarian government specifically, were issues that, according to Kurti, "so galvanized the Hungarian opposition elite that by the beginning of 1988 it dared to speed up its open confrontational manner against both countries' regimes" (Kurti, 2001, p. 124).

As Kurti observes, "Mostly formed by populist writers, filmmakers, poets, university teachers, and artists, the Democratic Forum was organized with the central goal of helping the Transylvanian cause" (Kurti, 2001, p. 129). Although in late January and early February 1988, there was a coordinated multi-country effort by dissidents across Eastern Europe -- including representatives of Solidarity in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia -- to protest Nicolae Ceausescu's oppressive rule in Romania, the Democratic Forum was undeniably the engine of sustained efforts to highlight the transgressions of the Romanian regime -- but primarily with regard to the treatment of the Hungarian minority. A 30 January 1988 gathering of some 500 people sponsored by the Democratic Forum -- but also including the attendance of Gyorgy Konrad and Janos Kis -- in the Jurta Theater -- Budapest's only large privately owned theater at the time -- had

drawn up an appeal for political reform that was promptly ignored by official Hungarian media (Reisch, 1988a). However, the MDF's third meeting, on 6 March 1988 in the Jurta Theater, was devoted to formulating a statement on the Hungarian diaspora, and attracted 730 people to the 330-seat theater -- attendees were asked to donate 100 forints for rent, because the regime was applying financial pressure to shut down the Jurta Theater (Reisch, 1988b). In attendance this time were not only populist mainstays such as Csoori and Csurka and many others, but nonpopulist Transylvanian emigres such as Gaspar Miklos Tamas and Geza Szocs, as well as a series of increasingly prominent Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) members who were shortly to be expelled from the party (Reisch, 1988b). In his remarks, Szocs assailed not only the Romanian regime but the "lameness" of the Hungarian authorities. Undoubtedly responding to the increasing flow of refugees from Romania and the pressure now publicly assumed and exerted by the MDF, and attempting to carve out a more autonomous role in the rapidly evolving political climate preceding Kadar's succession, on 17 March the National Assembly -- with only 12 votes against and 10 abstentions -- voted for a resettlement fund for the refugees in the amount of 300 million forints (Reisch, 1988b).

The MDF's existence as the first and essentially sole organized representative of civil society at this juncture, the prominence it gave the Transylvanian question, the growing tide of ethnic Hungarian refugees from Romania, and the politics of Kadar's potential successors staking out their ground in the run-up to the special party conference scheduled for May, conspired during this period to give the national question, and specifically Transylvania, a primacy in Hungarian domestic politics. Indicative of the fact that some within the party leadership were fearful of the growing influence of the MDF, and of how it was potentially serving as a stalking horse for Imre Pozsgay within the context of the succession struggle, four reformers within the party were expelled in early April 1988 for violating party discipline by articulating "views at variance with the party's policies...for some time at nonparty forums" (Tokes, 1996, p. 202). Not surprisingly, one of the four expelled was Zoltan Biro, who had played a key role at Lakitelek and in the founding of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and was widely seen as Pozsgay's bridge to the organization.

But the decisions taken by the Romanian regime at this juncture also played a key role in forcing Transylvania to the front of the Hungarian political scene. In April 1988, the Hungarian media reported that even minority language newspapers in Romania were now required to use only Romanian-language place names for cities and villages, regardless of the location or ethnic makeup of the place in question. More damaging still was Ceausescu's announcement to reenergize his so-called "systematization" dream, that called for the elimination of up to 10,000 villages by the year 2000, and that Hungarians believed would disproportionately affect them given the increasingly precarious long-term prospects for Hungarian culture and identity in Transylvania.

The Romanian regime's decisions loosed a veritable avalanche of articles, statements, and protests from individuals and organizations inside and outside the Hungarian party-state. Demonstrations in Western capitals against the Romanian regime's policies, and in particular the systematization project, were covered by the Hungarian media. The

Hungarian Architects Association, the Hungarian Musicians Association, the Hungarian Musical Council, the Hungarian Lawyers Association, the Hungarian Writers Association, the Institute for Literary Theory of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Association of Hungarian Film and Television Artists, the Hungarian Association of Societies for the Technical and Natural Sciences, and many other official organizations launched appeals and protests against the systematization project -- frequently appealing for international intervention to prevent it -- in the weeks following Kadar's resignation from the post of general secretary on 22 May 1988 (for an excellent chronology of the protests, see Ionescu, 1988). The Hungarian media gave prominence to such developments. The Foreign Ministry took the occasion to openly criticize the Romanian authorities while putting translations of articles from the official Hungarian press critical of Romania's resettlement plans at the disposal of foreign journalists (Ionescu, 1988). Clearly, those in the party-state were taking advantage of the succession and Kadar's exit to promote and exploit the authorities' tacit approval of protests on the Transylvania question.

The founding of the MDF, the regime's apparent grudging toleration of its existence (so long as it was a distinct entity outside the party and was not attempting to "steal" party members), and Pozsgay's call for a law on associations had unleashed a process in early 1988 whereby the formalization of what had been distinct, if informal, interest groups began to take place. Thus, on 30 March 1988, students founded the youth organization, the League of Young Democrats (FIDESZ), and a series of emergent interest groups joined together to form the Network of Free Initiatives (SZKH) on 1 May 1988. As Tokes suggests, the SZKH "was an unstructured discussion forum and, in a way, the 'Beszelo' circle's answer to the by then semilegitimate MDF" (Tokes, 1996, pp. 311-312). As Jenkins suggests, the members of the "democratic opposition" who founded the SZKH still, somewhat unrealistically perhaps at this juncture, seemed to harbor the expectation and hope that the MDF would join under the umbrella SZKH to form a united opposition (Jenkins, 1992). This did not happen. From March, the MDF had been setting up provincial branches, and throughout the spring and summer of 1988 this proto-party gathered momentum as an increasing force in Hungarian politics.

The response of Hungarian authorities to protests that occurred in the immediate wake of the special party conference in late May demonstrated even more clearly the lines between tolerated and unacceptable dissent and the regime's efforts to differentiate and drive a wedge between the two. On 27 May, for example, an unofficial gathering of 2,000 protesters demonstrating against the Czechoslovak Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam project was allowed to proceed peacefully and was covered by Radio Budapest, including a 20-minute press account the following day (Pataki, 1988c). A month later, on 27 June 1988, in the largest demonstration since the 1956 Revolution -- larger than any previous effort to mark the dates of 15 March, 16 June, and 23 October -- at least 40,000, and perhaps many as 80,000 people, marched through the streets of Budapest to denounce the planned Romanian project of "village systematization" and protest in general the lot of ethnic Hungarians in Romania. There was little police presence and both Hungarian television and radio covered the demonstrations (Pataki, 1988d). Moreover, it appears that although the party's politburo urged party and youth organizations to stay away from the 27 June

demonstration, nothing was said about party penalties for those who chose to join the protest march (Tokes, 1996, p. 486 n. 88).

By contrast, preventive detentions occurred in the days leading up to the 16 June 1988 demonstrations to commemorate the execution of Imre Nagy, and 19 were arrested and over 100 beaten as police brutally broke up the demonstration (Pataki, 1998c; Tokes, 1996, p. 287). What differentiated the repressed 16 June 1988 demonstration and the tolerated 27 June 1988 demonstration 11 days later was that the "democratic opposition" had a heavy presence at the former, while the latter was dominated by the populist Hungarian Democratic Forum (Schopflin, Tokes, and Volgyes, 1988, pp. 44-45). And what differentiated the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros and Transylvania protests from the Nagy protest was also that the former called upon (greater) regime action and intervention -- a call that could be potentially embraced by party cadres who did not support the cause of the demonstrations themselves -- whereas the latter was explicitly critical of the government.

The division and separation of the Hungarian opposition into distinct groups was cemented in the fall of 1988. A year after the famous Lakitelek conference, the Hungarian Democratic Forum officially declared itself a political movement on 3 September 1988. Among its founders were the core of populist dissent and thus it should come as no surprise that its founding statement stipulated that the diaspora was an "inalienable" part of the Hungarian nation (Reisch, 1988b). Significantly, the MDF announced that it was and intended to be a "movement that neither supports, nor opposes the government" (Reisch, 1988b). As Alfred Reisch noted, the MDF appeared to have been set up with "official acquiescence," as media coverage of the event was incomparably greater than that of the Lakitelek conference the previous year, and as government officials seemed to be "outright rejoicing" in their commentary on the party's creation (Reisch, 1988c). Indicative of the sea change in official regime attitudes that appeared to have followed Kadar's ouster was that the regime organ "Tarsadalmi Szemle," which had previously published criticism of the MDF, ran a six-page statement by MDF official Zoltan Biro, who had been expelled from the party in April for his participation in the MDF (Reisch, 1988c). In November 1988, some members of the SZKH (led by Janos Kis, Ferenc Koszeg, and Balint Magyar) chose to form their own rival political movement to counter the MDF, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ); by March 1989, their first party congress -- including Gabor Demszky, Gyorgy Konrad, Miklos Haraszti, and many other long-time members of the "democratic opposition" -- was launching a political program (Jenkins, 1992; Markos-Oltay, 1989). Hungary's future political party system was coming into existence.

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[Compiled by Michael Shafir](#)

NATIONALISM IN LATE COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE: COMPARING THE ROLE OF DIASPORA POLITICS IN HUNGARY AND SERBIA (Part 5)

By Richard Andrew Hall

Serbia: Leadership Succession, Struggle, and Regime-Opposition Symbiosis

Arguably as important during the course of 1987 as Milosevic's public conversion to the nationalist cause was his centralization and consolidation of power within the media and the structures of the party-state. On 18 February 1987, at a session of the Belgrade Party Committee, Milosevic announced what Aleksandar Nenadovic terms a "radical political and personal 'differentiation' in Serbian journalism" by declaring:

"The editor-in-chief of 'Duga' has been replaced, but the situation in 'Duga' will not change before we execute broader changes in the editorial staff of 'Duga.' We are talking about a new editor-in-chief of the weekly 'NIN.' Regardless of the solution we reach, we shall not solve the problem 'NIN' unless a serious reconstruction is carried out" (Nenadovic, 2000, p. 553).

Ultimately, "Duga," "NIN," and the rest of the Belgrade media would fall into line. Milosevic would capitalize upon the growing nationalist media hysteria over the Kosova* issue to seize control of the Serbian party by driving his two main political competitors, Dragisa Pavlovic, head of the Belgrade party, and Ivan Stambolic, the president of Serbia, out of their positions in the fall of 1987.

On 3 September 1987, in what came to be known as the "Paracin massacre," Aziz Kelmendi, a 19-year-old Albanian recruit, went on a shooting rampage in a barracks in central Serbia, killing four soldiers (two Bosnian Muslims, a Croat, and a Serb) and wounding five others before allegedly taking his own life. The funeral of the Serb recruit who was killed -- 10,000 attended -- became a political demonstration against the Kosovar Albanian leadership, even as his parents reportedly pleaded with the demonstrators not to abuse the death of their son (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 41). The reaction of the Belgrade media was also swift and hysterical, with "Politika" and "Borba" seeking to suggest that Kelmendi's shots had a broader target, Yugoslavia, and that his actions were part of a broader conspiracy (Mertus, 1999, pp. 145-146).

Interestingly, at this point -- as with Milosevic's pitch at the special federal party session on Kosova earlier in the summer, and perhaps reflecting the still not-fully legitimated character of the nationalist discourse -- the Serbian media expended greater effort in trying to demonstrate how the Paracin massacre had been directed at other nationalities, not just the Serbs, and thus at how Kosova was not just a Serb problem, but a Yugoslav

one. There thus appeared to be an attempt here to insinuate that anti-Albanianism could be a unifying factor for all south Slavs. It was clear though from the calls in the Belgrade press for the expulsion of the Kelmendi family from their home and for retribution against Kelmendi's home town, and the breaking of the windows of Albanian shops in Serbia by groups of youth singing Serbian nationalist songs, that this was, nevertheless, really a Serbian issue (Mertus, 1999, pp. 146-154).

Two weeks after the Paracin massacre, "in an atmosphere of hysteria and anti-Albanian propaganda," Dragisa Pavlovic gave a televised press conference in which he called on the media to tone down their nationalist excesses and in which he indirectly warned against Milosevic's role in fanning the flames (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 41). A blistering attack against Pavlovic, attributed to the editor but in fact written by Milosevic's wife (Mirjana Markovic) and accusing Pavlovic of destroying Serbian and Yugoslav unity, followed in "Politika Ekspres" (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 42). According to Silber and Little, Stambolic appealed in vain to the editor of "Politika," Zivorad Minovic, to allow him to publish a statement in defense of Pavlovic, but Minovic rebuffed him and ended up reprinting Mirjana Markovic's attack.

At the eighth session of the Central Committee of the Serbian Party that opened a week later and was skillfully and manipulatively televised by Milosevic's ally, Dusan Mitevic, Milosevic pilloried Pavlovic for being "soft" on Kosova and humiliated his former mentor, Stambolic, by insinuating that Stambolic had attempted to rally support for Pavlovic. Pavlovic was expelled from the party leadership on 23 September, and three months later, on 14 December, Stambolic was forced out of his post as president of Serbia. As Silber and Little argue, this unleashed a "purge of everything from the Belgrade media to the head waiter at the Serbian government villa" (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 47). Unfortunately, the comments of Stipe Suvar, Croatia's representative on the Federal Party Presidency by this time, demonstrate how tone-deaf to the nationalist threat much of the rest of the Yugoslav leadership was at this time -- so much so that they were actually relieved by Milosevic's victory:

"Stambolic was the most feared politician on the Yugoslav scene, so the grey bureaucrat Milosevic made us feel that we could control him. You must remember he was clearly not a nationalist -- everything he did was in the name of Yugoslavia -- and his argument that the Albanians were secessionists was basically right" (Silber and Little, 1996, p. 47).

Between 9 July and 19 November 1988 -- the crowning demonstration that would take place in Belgrade and consummate Milosevic's unchallenged authority -- there were an estimated 80 Serbian popular protests with as many as 3 million people taking part in all (Andrejevic 1988; Mertus, 1999, p. 177). They took place under the banner of "[Serb] Brotherhood and Unity," "popular forums," "happenings of the people," and "meetings of truth." They led to the fall of both the Vojvodina provincial leadership (the so-called Yogurt Revolution) and the leadership of the neighboring republic of Montenegro. Milosevic's so-called antibureaucratic revolution was eminently bureaucratic in its orchestration. "Parallel" societal organizations -- such as the Committee for the Defense of Kosovar Serbs, the Committee for Organizing the Transportation of Kosovar Serbs

and Montenegrins to the Protest Rallies Outside the Province, and the Association for the Return of Serbs and Montenegrins Exiled from Kosova ("Peony") (which operated directly within the framework of the SKS's front organization) -- played a prominent role at these rallies. They were now more powerful than official institutions, something Milosevic realized well. Whatever the level of spontaneity of their origins, by now they had also been effectively subordinated to Belgrade's will (Mertus, 1999, p. 177; Thomas, 1999, pp. 44-45). Belgrade's mass media -- including television and radio -- gave these events wide and sometimes hyperbolic coverage, and those in positions of control in the mass media used the size and intensity of the crowds to justify the homogenization of public opinion. As "Politika" Editor Zivorad Minovic announced: the media "has no right to think differently from the people" (Nenadovic, 2000, p. 550).

At this crucial juncture -- when Slobodan Milosevic was busily and effectively eliminating any and all potential checks on his power within republican party and state structures, and forcing leadership and policy change through the "pressure from the streets" -- Serbia's leading intellectuals were essentially missing in action. They were conspicuously silent, if not downright complicit in Milosevic's seizure and consolidation of ever-greater power. Just as Milosevic was not looking to institutionalize the political voice of those he was mobilizing, so Serbia's leading intellectuals were not looking to exploit this period of leadership succession and political change to pressure the party-state toward institutionalizing and legalizing civil society and political pluralism. During the period from 1987 to 1989, for all intents and purposes opposition in Serbia melted away -- in Branka Magas' characterization discussed earlier, "absorbed into the nationalist bloc." Because they so enthusiastically supported Milosevic's effort to eliminate Kosova's constitutional autonomy, they allowed themselves to be drowned out and become one with Milosevic's street theater. Many of them might have sincerely believed that they were only temporarily suspending the struggle for democratization, until the "security of the nation had been ensured," but by the time they reactivated that struggle -- after the constitutional changes of March 1989 that eliminated Kosova's autonomy -- it was too late to be able to mount a serious challenge to Milosevic's personal power (Pawlowitch, 2002, p. 204).

Returning from a visit to Yugoslavia in May-June 1988, Branka Magas reflected on how Mihailo Markovic had been quoted as having lauded Milosevic as "the best leader we Serbs have had since Rankovic" (Magas, 1993, p. 123). Markovic's fellow "Praxis" alumnus, Ljubomir Tadic, would come to oppose efforts to establish a dialogue with Kosovar Albanians criticizing "Serbian liberals who underwent surgery for the removal of every and all national feeling. They side with other nationalities when they claim that Serbia is threatening them. They are completely blind to the problems of Serbia" (Grunewald, 1992, p. 187). As Gallagher observes, "Victimization at the hands of Tito perhaps made it easier for Markovic and colleagues to reconfigure their dissent along nationalist lines" (Gallagher, 2001, p. 245). When multiparty politics finally did come to Serbia in 1990, Mihailo Markovic would become vice president of Milosevic's reprofiled SKS, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS); a fellow neo-marxist dissident, Ratko Markovic, would also be elected to the SPS's Main Committee; and Antonie Isakovic, who had played an important role in the drafting of the SANU Memorandum, would join the party

(Miller 1997, p. 155; Andrejevic, 1990). According to Pavkovic, in 1990, all of the once-suspended "Praxis" philosophers were "ceremoniously returned to their original university posts" (Pavkovic, 1995, p. 124). Perhaps not for nothing, Milosevic extolled the role of Belgrade's intellectuals at the founding congress of the SPS, praising them for their "most progressive and most critical spirit" (Andrejevic, 1990).

Leonard J. Cohen credits Milosevic's "political pragmatism and nonideological style," as well as the links established by his wife, Mirjana Markovic, at the university, for his success in gaining the support of the Serbian intelligentsia:

"Milosevic's appeal to the communist and neo-Marxist intelligentsia was clearly enhanced by the political role of his wife. Mirjana Markovic's well-known communist family background, and her orthodox Yugoslav communist views, provided a natural bridge to sections of the intelligentsia who had remained suspicious of Slobodan Milosevic's break with Titoist policy on the national question, and uncomfortable with his unconventional populist tactics.... Thus, well-known and vocal Belgrade University professors such as Mihajlo Markovic and Svetozar Stojanovic -- whose espousal of participatory forms of socialist democracy and ideological distance from the Tito regime had made them the darlings of the neo-Marxist community around the world -- decided (like the SANU intellectuals who had broken completely with the League of Communists in the 1960s and 1970s) that Milosevic's creatively mixed cocktail of skin-deep socialism and Serbian patriotism justified their return to the mainstream of what was still a one-party regime" (Cohen, 1997, p. 336).

Intellectuals whose credentials were traditionally more nationalist than they had been socialist were also seduced. Poet Matija Beckovic, who had been the subject of harassment because he was the son of a Chetnik, became president of the Serbian Writers Association in 1988 and the following year would praise Milosevic for having reversed 600 years of Serbian history in Kosova (Thomas, 1999, pp. 38, 43, 49). Writers such as Cosic did eventually call for greater democratization, but their focus was so narrowly national that by the time they did so it was far too late -- they had missed the window of opportunity. For example, Cosic waited until after Milosevic's constitutional coup in March 1989 eliminating the autonomy of Kosova and Vojvodina before declaring in April 1989 that "Serbia's intellectuals support Milosevic and his efforts to reunite Serbia, but he must now address the question of democracy, which is essential to the Serbian people" (Andrejevic, 1989). In 1992, with Milosevic's backing, Cosic, by then a member of the SPS's Central Committee along with Markovic, would assume the new presidency of Yugoslavia -- with a "Praxis" member, Svetozar Stojanovic, as his personal adviser (Pavkovic, 1995, p. 124; Magas, 1993, p. 263).

Conclusion

This article has attempted to analyze nationalism in late-communist Hungary and Serbia -- and specifically the issue of their respective ethnic diaspora in Transylvania and Kosova -- in the broader context of a political system in transition. The primary lesson that this comparison leaves us with is that the broader context of regime-opposition dynamics proved crucial to how the issues of ethnic diaspora and nationalism played out in each

case. The prevailing models used to understand the transitions from communist rule in Eastern Europe are simply too reductionist to explain the difference in outcome between Hungary and Serbia. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan substantially improved upon earlier models of transitions from authoritarian rule by suggesting that differences in pre-existing regime type are critical. Linz and Stepan argue that these differences determine if there exist the political actors -- moderates in both the regime and opposition camps -- necessary for a negotiated or so-called "pacted" transition (Linz and Stepan, 1996, pp. 55-65). But for Linz and Stepan, the issue that determines what makes regime and opposition moderates prospective partners is their willingness to talk to and work with the opposing side in order to bring about regime transition.

On the basis of Linz and Stepan's criteria, the character of the transition and the outcomes it produced should have been roughly the same in Serbia and Hungary. In Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic clearly looked to mobilize those who up until that time had been viewed as regime opponents in order to win a succession struggle for control of the SKS and later to consolidate and enhance his personal power. That willingness to appeal to dissidents differentiated him from others in the SKS leadership -- perhaps in particular Stambolic himself -- who for the most part continued to view the party as the only legitimate forum and player in politics. Among regime dissidents, Milosevic found a host of intellectuals who were more than willing to work with the regime. In Hungary, in the mid-to-late 1980s one found Imre Pozsgay seeking to mobilize regime opponents, in large part also to enable him and those around him to eventually succeed the aged Janos Kadar and consolidate power. Just as Milosevic appealed to nationalism and won over members of the opposition, so Pozsgay wooed Hungary's populists with nationalist appeals and a willingness to give them some say and influence in the country's future evolution.

As is well known, however, in Serbia the outcome of the rapprochement between elements of the regime and opposition was very different from Hungary. Neither Linz and Stepan's revised version of transitions, nor other, far more reductionist models, render an explanation for this difference. The reason for the failure, I believe, is to be sought in the inadequate attention that has been paid to the particular context in which regime and opposition actors operated. The existence of liberalizers in the regime and moderates in the opposition is not enough to determine the type of transition that will follow and its outcomes. One needs to understand the motivations that drove the sides toward cooperation; in other words, one has to inquire into how regime liberalizers and opposition moderates perceived themselves, perceived the other side, and how they valued key principles, such as commitment to interest group and organizational autonomy and, more generally, to the values of political pluralism.

As this study has demonstrated, in Hungary regime liberalizers and opposition moderates were ready to cooperate and to exploit each other's strengths and weaknesses; but neither side lost sight of its own, separate identity and ultimately different end-purpose. Furthermore, neither the regime liberalizers nor the opposition moderates envisaged merging forces into a joint, single organization. This was the legacy of the evolution of regime-society relations over the years during which the Kadarist compromise came into

being. The compromise, as Jenkins suggests, made it possible for informal organization to take shape before the transition began, and "meant that informal political groupings and emergent organizations were defined around ideological and interpersonal questions rather than in terms of a unifying struggle between ruling elite and its opposition" (Jenkins, 1992). As this study has shown, the very policy of "divide and conquer" pursued by the regime, and the regime's own "differentiation" among opposition types, contributed to the diversification and internal differentiation of the opposition. The populists of the MDF had for many years demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with the regime, but they placed a value on their autonomy (both vis-a-vis the regime and vis-a-vis the rest of the opposition). Ultimately, this ensured that they would not allow themselves to be merely subsumed by the Pozsgay faction into the MSZMP, but would work to set up their own organization and, later, political party. As for Pozsgay, he recognized that the populists were probably far more useful and controllable outside the MSZMP than would be the case if they were absorbed into the party.

By contrast, in Serbia Milosevic would not merely content himself with using the opposition for his own personal ambitions, as Pozsgay did in Hungary, but would aim at fully enveloping it. Just as Pozsgay's decision to move toward formalizing ties with the opposition outside the party was a comparatively radical step geared at strengthening his position in the party itself, so in the Serbian context Milosevic's willingness to mobilize the population for use in an internal party power struggle was a break with precedent. Milosevic, however, was intent on delaying the institutionalization of this popular participation, and he saw in the regime's intellectual opponents potential followers and agents rather than partners. Had Milosevic confronted an opposition bent on preserving its own identity and autonomy, a rapprochement between regime and opposition might have played out differently. Instead of meeting resistance to his efforts geared at enveloping the opposition, Milosevic's attempts were in fact warmly welcomed by Partisan intellectuals, who appeared to have longed for the day of reconciliation and reacceptance by the party.

Part of this outcome might simply have been due to a generational "divide" and to the individual and collective life experience of Serbia's dissidents. Like Cosic, Mihailo Markovic and Ljubomir Tadic had participated directly in the wartime Partisan struggle -- for them "Praxis" was less an abstract intellectual concept than the essence of their lives (Thomas, 1999, pp. 33, 40). To paraphrase Jowitt, one could wonder whether their "Yenan-like protective/interactive experience," had rendered the members of this "cohort group" ready to eagerly dream of recreating the mythical consensus and unity of their earlier lives -- even after ideological differences had drawn them apart (Jowitt, 1992, p. 295). The response of the "Praxis" scholars also might owe something to the informal web of friendships and ties forged within the intellectual community from Belgrade's universities and research institutes. According to Pavkovic, by 1984, as a result of sustained left-wing pressure in the West, all of the "Praxis" scholars who had been suspended from their university posts in 1975 had been rehired at such institutes (Pavkovic, 1995, p. 123). Moreover, Leonard J. Cohen argues that when Milosevic was still an ideologically colorless protege on Stambolic's team, his wife, Mirjana Markovic, "was ambitiously laying the groundwork in Belgrade's political circles for her husband's

political involvement" (Cohen, 1997, p. 342, No. 39). Mirjana Markovic herself claims that as of November 1984, her "Belgrade circle of left-wing intellectuals" began their "just and fine struggle for the national affirmation of all the interests of the Serbian people in Yugoslavia" (cited in Cohen, 1997, p. 342 n. 39).

The findings of this study thus also question the progressive and teleological assumptions concerning the role played by Marxist revisionism in communist Eastern Europe. It might indeed be true that where Marxism was rejected outright and therefore genuine, neo-Marxist, revisionist debates never really developed -- most notably in Romania, where, in the memorable words of Tismaneanu and Pavel, "it was as if the warm winds of 1956 and 1968 had never affected the Romanian intelligentsia, whose celebration of historical materialism was nothing but a perfunctory ritual" -- the process of regime evolution from totalitarianism was delayed and consequently distorted (Tismaneanu and Pavel, 1994, p. 412). It might also be accurate to emphasize that (particularly in Poland's and Hungary's cases), the existence and evolution of Marxist revisionism played an important role in the delegitimation of the communist regime and the transition away from totalitarianism, and, eventually, out of post-totalitarianism/authoritarianism.

Nevertheless, Serbia/Yugoslavia is proof of the limits of such assumptions about Marxist revisionism. After all, Yugoslavia was the communist state in which Marxist revisionism -- "socialist humanism" -- gained its first institutional expression, with the establishment of the journal "Praxis," founded in 1964. Yet over the long haul, intellectuals in Yugoslavia, but particularly in Serbia, progressed far more slowly down the revisionist road than comparable intellectuals in Poland and Hungary -- many of whom ended up abandoning Marxism and socialism altogether. In Serbia, however, commitment to the values of individual and group differentiation and autonomy never became deeply entrenched and was never internalized by the regime's neo-Marxist dissidents. As Pavkovic notes, even during the university sit-ins of 1968 or later on, there was no demand by Belgrade's neo-Marxists for a multiparty system (Pavkovic, 1995, p. 124). It also meant that in Serbia -- as in Romania, but unlike in Poland or Hungary -- nationalism became part of the "left" and of "socialism," and not of a populist "right." Serbia's Marxist revisionism in essence became "frozen" at an early stage.

The seemingly perplexing behavior on the part of "Praxis" scholars can thus partly be explained by the peculiar -- remarkably myopic and self-serving -- conception of "nationalism" held by many Serbian -- especially leftist Serbian -- intellectuals. Writing about the liberal intellectuals that signed the January 1986 petition, Mertus concludes that "[s]o deeply ingrained was the sense of injustice that most Serbs felt regarding Kosovo that they failed to make a connection between Serbian claims to Kosovo and Greater-Serbian nationalism," and that they viewed the petition as being primarily "just a freedom of speech issue" (Mertus, 1999, p. 136). Advocacy of the cause of the Serbian diaspora in Yugoslavia was regarded by leftist Serb intellectuals as "patriotic," and thus as inherently compatible with socialist principles and antithetical to "nationalism" or "chauvinism" that were allegedly only Albanian or Croatian "sins."

Just like Markovic and Tadic, Cosic significantly continued to consider himself as

belonging to the "left" and never rejected "socialism" (Thomas, 1999, pp. 33-40). Whereas in Hungary it was a populist intellectual (Illyes) whose nationalist roots lay in the interwar period who became the standard-bearer of the diaspora cause when the topic was still taboo, in Serbia it was a former Partisan commissar (Cosic) who became disenchanted with the system he helped put in place. Miller explains Cosic's unexpected qualities as follows:

"Surprisingly, one searches in vain for any meaningful reference to the battle of Kosovo in Cosic's written record. Also absent is religion, any substantive mention of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Cosic's fratricidal system is rooted entirely in the modern history of the interplay of nationalism and communism" (Miller, 2000, pp. 283-284).

To a certain extent, then, it turns out that in order to adequately account for the differences in the core-values of dissent in communist Serbia and Hungary, we must reach farther back in time. I shall close therefore with a cursory and necessarily preliminary attempt to do so.

In his seminal application to Eastern Europe of Barrington Moore's model of the social origins of modern political systems, Gale Stokes portrays 19th- and early 20th-century Serbia as being a remarkably homogenized, essentially "undifferentiated peasant society," even in comparison with its Balkan neighbors (Stokes, 1989, p. 235). Despite, or perhaps because of, Serbia's comparatively early achievement of statehood, from its inception the Serb left was distinctively nationalist in its orientation, as Viktor Meier has argued (Meier, 1999, pp. 44-45). And according to Rothschild, Serbia's interwar university graduates, whether of the right or of the left, were united by their radicalism, their etatism, and their assumption of, and desire for, "unity" (Rothschild, 1974, p. 277). Finally, it should be borne in mind that Yugoslavia's, and in particular Serbia's intelligentsia had paid a heavy toll in World War II and its aftermath. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that these intellectuals had been displaced and the intelligentsia had to a large extent melted away. A combination of factors, beginning with the war itself, postwar emigration and demographic developments, reprisals meted out by the Partisans against the Chetniks and against the intelligentsia of other nationalities in Yugoslavia, had each contributed to forge this situation. In a nutshell -- Serbia simply did not possess an intellectual noncommunist elite capable of significantly opposing the regime, and thus intellectual dissent could only emerge from within the party-state itself.

By contrast, one can argue that Hungary's more diversified, if deeply inequitable class structure, eventually translated into the evolution of a more diverse and well-defined ideological and political spectrum among its intelligentsia during the interwar period. The comparatively far-weaker popularity of the Hungarian communists -- seen as a clear extension of Moscow's will -- the relatively early explosion of social discontent in 1956 -- less than a decade into communist rule -- and Kadar's "divide and conquer" rather than simply "conquer and obliterate" policy in its wake, are all factors that contributed to the survival of the interwar populist current that would eventually reclaim first intellectual, and ultimately also political influence. Nationalism in Hungary, unlike Serbia, was thus an "old" nationalism, not a direct product of the communist era.

Ultimately, however, a satisfactory answer to this question must await further research.

* Spelling per editorial request.

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