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Where is My State? Citizenship as a Factor in Yugoslavia's Disintegration

So, why did it happen?

The former Yugoslavia was one of those places that openly defied the 'Clinton happy years' and the superficial triumphalism of the capitalist West after 1989. Naturally, the media, politicians and the public at large required an immediate explanation for both Yugoslavia's disintegration and the ensuing violence. An enormous number of articles and books mostly focused on the period between Milošević's accession to power in Serbia in 1987 and 1988, the democratization of Yugoslavia in 1990 and the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Scholars competed with journalists in providing explanations, analyses of the conflicts and predictions.¹ Naturally, journalists had the ear of the general public and, sometimes, the governments. As for scholars, they often competed with one another to provide an original thesis to explain the Yugoslav disaster and often neglected alternative approaches in order to underline the novelty of their own interpretation and position themselves securely in the scholarly debate (for critical reviews of the literature on Yugoslavia's disintegration and wars, see Dragović-Soso 2008; Jović 2001b; Ramet 2005b).

I fully agree with Dejan Jović (2001b) and Sabrina Ramet (2005b) on the necessity of a multifactor analysis in order to understand Yugoslavia's 'disintegrative synergies' (Cohen 2008). Obviously, only a multifactor analysis or a combination of approaches could yield satisfactory results in explaining such a complex process that involved changes in the international order, the disintegration of a state, the creation of new states and dramatic political, social and economic mutations which were often followed by large-scale violence. In this chapter, I do not present an exhaustive literature review but concentrate instead on describing, commenting and criticizing some of the most important arguments, and especially those related to my own research on citizenship in Yugoslavia and its successor states. I therefore pay special attention to studies

dealing with institutional design, constitutional redefinitions of Yugoslav republics, socio-economic processes and the role of political elites. Finally, I present my own addition of the thus far neglected factor of citizenship to the list of multiple causes of Yugoslavia's disintegration.

However, it is important first to highlight the argument that should be rejected entirely. The famous 'ethnic hatred' argument, coupled with the now infamous 'clash of civilizations' that influenced the media, the general (and generally uninformed) public but also officials in international organizations and national governments, is generally dismissed as academically irrelevant and intellectually shallow. Nonetheless, it was probably, like in so many other cases, the most influential argument in the media and the favourite explanation of all those unfamiliar with the history of Yugoslavia but still determined to have a stance. It is said that one book in particular – *Balkan Ghosts* by journalist Robert D. Kaplan published in 1994 – had wide appeal and even convinced Bill Clinton not to intervene during the first phase of the Yugoslav war. The argument is simple: the Balkan peoples have hated each other throughout history but large empires and Tito's dictatorship kept these sentiments in check. Upon Tito's death these ethnic hatreds came to the surface. Moreover, the argument continues, the outcome is not surprising since this is a region of constant 'clashes' between Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam. Furthermore, there is something embedded in the character and the behaviour patterns of these peoples that cause them to cut each other's throats whenever they can.

Scholars spilled a lot of ink in rebuking this argument and in some instances the media's oversimplification of the Balkan conflict served as the primary motivation for them to write their studies (see, for instance, Gagnon 2004). In short, the 'ethnic hatred' argument only blurs the real causes of the conflict and more often than not serves the participants in the conflict by providing a justification or rationale for their violence. If ethnic hatred really governs these peoples' minds and actions, then everything is a matter of survival; if the war is just one episode in the centuries-long game of survival, then no one can be blamed for pulling the trigger first (after all, in history the 'other side' did the same).

One has to mention here that nationalists used one more argument that found many receptive ears in the West or created an even bigger confusion. During the 1990s the recognition of collective identities and of communities' rights to preserve their cultural specificity and self-govern themselves was understood as a basic human right. Mix it with democratization after the years of 'totalitarianism' in the East that allegedly was not allowing for full expression of ethnocultural

identities and you can be sure to gain some sympathies in the West (after all the 'West' is the only audience to which you actually speak and from which you expect recognition). I would suggest that nationalist arguments centred on identity politics played quite well with the proliferation of multiculturalist discourses and a general shift towards policies of recognition of specific cultural identities and their subsequent empowerment through various forms of autonomy. Add territorial claim to this in an ethnically mixed environment and you will soon have conflict and violence. In this regard, as Valerie Bunce observes, the exit from socialism was not only a matter of regime change or state rejection but also of national liberation (1999: 132). Democracy itself thus turned out to be one of the crucial tools for mobilizing ethnic populations around an agenda of final national emancipation.

Relevant factors of Yugoslavia's disintegration

It's the economy, stupid!

Putting Yugoslavia in the perspective of global economic changes since the late 1970s seems necessary. The economic argument, coupled with an argument emphasizing the role of the international community, was strongly presented by Susan Woodward in her widely quoted book *Balkan Tragedy* (1995a). For Woodward the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia was 'the result of the politics of transforming a socialist society into a market economy and democracy' (1995a: 15). Woodward locates the causes in the economy in general and in the foreign-debt crisis in particular. For her, 'a critical element of this failure was economic decline, caused largely by a program intended to resolve a foreign debt crisis' (1995a: 15). John Allcock similarly sees a failure of Yugoslavia as a failure of a modernization process (2000). For Woodward, the conflict was only exacerbated by an inadequate Western response to the crisis and the general international context (1995a: 379).

By highlighting economic factors, Woodward and Allcock underline an important element in understanding Yugoslavia's disintegration. Although this was one of the crucial elements that affected the general political and social crisis in Yugoslavia in the late 1980s, it is not, in my opinion, the direct cause of the state's disintegration and violence. Woodward's insistence on the role of the international community, particularly Germany, in igniting the war is less convincing but consistent with her interpretation of Yugoslavia's disintegration

as mostly managed by foreign actors (little surprise then that her argument was widely praised by nationalists, especially in Serbia, since it shifted the culpability towards the international arena or at least to other actors such as economically 'egoistical' Slovenes). Concentrating only on the international community simply fails to grasp how local elites, those in power or eager to grab it, responded to the profound socio-economic changes and the announced incorporation into the global capitalist order. In other words, how existing elites attempted to use their political capital inherited from socialism for gaining the economic rewards and how rising elites understood the democratic process as political empowerment that could be easily translated into economic gains as well.

Although both the changes in international order and inadequate and incoherent Western responses influenced and sometimes exacerbated the conflict, they could not have put Yugoslavia on the road to war. Nor could they explain the course of the war itself or the extreme violence against the civilian population employed for control of the territory and its resources. A bad economy, induced by foreign debt and inadequate austerity measures championed by the IMF, as Woodward rightly argues, coupled with tectonic changes in the international order, and conflicting signals coming from world powers would shake any country, especially one like Yugoslavia, but they would not be sufficient to bring it to the brink of collapse and, a step further, into a bloody war. For that, people had to make concrete decisions and prepare a civil war by heavy employment of organized violence.

... but also the federal institutions

There *was* also something in Yugoslavia's socialist institutions themselves that made it difficult, though not impossible, to guarantee Yugoslavia's political existence after socialism. Valerie Bunce in *Subversive Institutions* (1999) describes their 'design and destruction' in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. As for the last, Yugoslavia's centrifugal federalism produced a confederal system of quasi-independent states that was hardly suitable for liberal democratic procedures for the reasons I enumerated in the previous chapter. Bunce sees a clear correlation between the collapse of regime (socialism) and the subsequent disappearance of the state in the USSR, the CSSR and the SFRY (1999: 5). But in this regard it must be said that the subtitle of her book – 'the design and the destruction of socialism and the state' – is misleading. What was actually destroyed was not the *state* – a strong unitary model of nation-state actually triumphed – but the *federations* of these states. The political space of

'really existing socialism' was fragmented according to nation-states that were intentionally created as such by socialist regimes. States that were already there got rid of the federal system they had been part of and through which they had been consolidated as states. The collapse of the regime was followed by the *national* unification of two Germanys, the democratization of mono-national unitary states and the disintegration – between 1991 and 1993 – of multinational federations into mostly unitary national states dominated by their ethnic majorities. We can thus conclude that the acceptable model for post-socialist democratic times was the unitary mono-national state. It is exactly what the former Yugoslavs tried and mostly succeeded in achieving in the 1990s and early 2000s. There where we can still find multinational states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the ethnocentric model has been transferred to the sub-state level.

There is also an important difference between, on one hand, the Soviet Union – whose very name designated it as an a-national ideological union of ethnonational states – and, on the other, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia that were – as their names suggest – created as the 'national homes' of the culturally related South Slavs and Czechs and Slovaks respectively. The disintegration of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia could also be seen as a failure of bi-national and multinational integration respectively. But were these really failures? Were citizens completely disenchanted with these federations at the moment of the regime's collapse? Democratizing a (con)federal system entailed the empowerment of the republican elites who were to negotiate the end of these federations often in spite of popular will. The Czechoslovak 'peaceful divorce' was staged by political elites in spite of the fact that a huge number of Czechs and Slovaks were in favour of maintaining a common state. One could say the same for Yugoslavia before 1990 (not anymore after that year), although Yugoslavs were divided as to what form their union should take. However, they did not have a political platform from which to express this shared desire to live in a common state and this possibility definitely vanished with the first violent clashes breaking out, organized and instigated by republican or local political elites (for a graphic illustration of organized violence see the BBC documentary *The Death of Yugoslavia* from 1995).

The federal institutions already in place were another critical element. Stepan claims that the 'activation of federalist structures in a context where they had previously been *latent* rapidly creates "political opportunity structures" and new forms of "resources mobilization" possibilities' (2004b: 347). However, by putting all of these federations into the same category, Stepan overlooks the fact that in Yugoslavia republics were not autonomous only 'on paper', but were

already experienced ‘institutional veto players.’ One could even adopt Stepan’s expression ‘moribund federal institutions’ (2004b: 348) to describe, not facade federalism but a centrifugal federal system that empowered constituent units to the point where it began losing its own autonomy.

When it comes to the differences between these three federations one also needs to state the obvious: the Soviet Union was composed of fifteen republics with the Russian Federation being territorially, politically, economically and culturally dominant within a largely centralized federation; Czechoslovakia was after 1969 a bi-national federation of a senior partner (Czechs) and a junior partner (Slovaks); Yugoslavia, on the other hand, was composed of six institutionally equal units. This created completely different internal political dynamics. It is not surprising then that the Soviet republics united against the federal centre and got rid of it. Yugoslavia’s republics turned against each other or formed opposing coalitions between the republics, whereas Czechoslovakia’s survival was played out in negotiations between two partners.

Yugoslavia’s internal structure and the relations among the republics as defined by its system of centrifugal federalism, as well as its position outside the Soviet bloc, made it a unique case among socialist federations. As mentioned before, Sabrina Ramet described socialist Yugoslavia as a balance of power system (1992: 4). The fundamental principle of the balance of power system is that no single actor has sufficient power to dictate terms unilaterally to the others and that no unit, regardless of its size, is deprived of equal status. This theory is compatible with Henry Hale’s claim that the absence of a ‘core ethnic region’ guarantees equilibrium, equality and stability of ethnofederations (2004: 165–193). Hale argues that the collapse of a multinational polity is more likely if it has a ‘core ethnic region’ and less likely if the dominant group is territorially divided. According to Hale’s criteria of what constitutes a core ethnic region – in which either the unit constitutes a majority of the whole population or it makes up at least 20 per cent more of the whole population than the second largest group – the USSR (Russia), Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic) and Yugoslavia (Serbia) also had core ethnic regions (2004: 169–170).

However, until 1989, Yugoslavia was, in my view, a country without a ‘core ethnic region’ capable of precipitating ‘ethnofederal state collapse’ since the only region capable of acting as a core ethnic region (Serbia) was *de iure* divided internally into Serbia proper (which could not qualify as a core ethnic region), autonomous Vojvodina and autonomous Kosovo. However, it was divided *de facto* after the constitutional reforms carried out between 1967 and 1974. Serbia was *re-unified* under Slobodan Milošević after the abolition of the provincial

autonomies in 1989, and this is what transformed Serbia into the core ethnic region in Yugoslavia during the crucial 1989–1991 period. Re-centralisation of Serbia consequently radically altered the existing balance of power. In addition, the dependence of Montenegrin elites on Belgrade reinforced Serbia's position as the core ethnic region of Yugoslavia.² When he consolidated Serbia's position within Yugoslavia, Milošević was attempting to re-centralize Yugoslavia as well. Faced with resistance from other republics, the core (ethnic) region abandoned the project of re-centralizing Yugoslavia altogether and focused instead on the ethnonational unification of Serbia, Montenegro and ethnic Serbs in neighbouring republics. This, in turn, gave a strong impetus to secessionist movements in Slovenia and Croatia. Nevertheless, the core ethnic region would have never had the same leverage over the others without the tacit and later overt support of the federal army (JNA), the majority of whose personnel had an ethnic Serb background or was originally from Serbia itself.

... with a help of constitutional engineering

Even before the final disintegration of the federation, the Yugoslav republics rushed to reinforce their statehood by introducing significant constitutional changes. This sometimes involved the constitutional redefinition of the republics as the national states of their ethnic majority, a practice that Robert Hayden called 'constitutional nationalism' (1992). In fact, all of them with the exception of Bosnia had already been defined as the national states of their titular nation. However, there were some important qualifications. Croatia, for example, was defined as the state of the Croatian people and the state of the Serbian people in Croatia. Constitutional changes emphasized the ownership of the state by the titular nation, except in the curious case of the Serbian new constitution. 'A system of constitutional nationalism thus institutionalizes a division between those who are of the sovereign nation, ethnically defined, and those who are not. The latter may hold citizenship but cannot aspire to equality' (Hayden 1999:15). Hayden also sees 'constitutions as configurative of conflict' (1999: 11). New citizenship policies are inseparable from 'constitutional nationalism', which had been the prominent feature of democratization in post-communist Europe.

Hayden claims that Slovenian constitutional amendments from November 1989 'destroyed the federal structure of Yugoslavia'. I agree that Slovenia's 'unilateral' (as I called it above) attempt at decentralization was a blow to Yugoslavia as defined by the 1974 Constitution. However, to claim that this 'destroyed' the Yugoslav federation is an exaggeration. It ignores the fact that Serbia's earlier

unilateral abolition of the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo in March 1989 was an equally serious attack on the SFRY constitution and, moreover, Tito's legacy, and that Slovenian attempts at reinforcing their sovereignty were directly related to Milošević's aggressive attempts at re-centralizing Yugoslavia. A number of constitutional amendments had limited the autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo resulting in a centralized Serbia. By the same token, the Serbian government challenged the federal system by appointing its own foreign minister (Malešević 2000: 157).

Interestingly, Hayden sees Serbia's new 1990 constitution as an example of constitutional nationalism but reduces it to a platform for the one-man rule of Slobodan Milošević (Hayden 1999: 73) rather than seeing it as an attempt to consolidate an ethnocentric Serbian nation-state. Even if we grant that the new constitution helped Milošević strengthen his power, this was hardly the only reason behind the constitutional re-design of Serbia. The most important feature of the new constitution was the confirmation of the abolition of the provincial autonomy of Vojvodina and Kosovo. This move suited the political goals of nascent Serbian political parties – no major party would ever oppose Milošević's re-centralization of Serbia – at the very moment Serb nationalism was reaching its peak. Belgrade's intention to abolish the autonomy of these provinces, to codify this change in the new constitution and to suppress any opposition, primarily in Kosovo, by the massive deployment of the police and army was also perceived by ethnic Serbs and non-Serbs alike as a first step towards realizing the nationalist objective of bringing 'all Serbs into one state'. If we take into account the general political context and subsequent events within Yugoslavia at the time, as well as the suppression of the provincial autonomies which had guaranteed equality within Serbia to ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and to the multiethnic population of Vojvodina, the very wording of the constitution could be seen as a move to enhance the position of the Serb majority within a unified and ethnically heterogeneous Serbia and by doing so strengthen Serbia's own position within a failing Yugoslavia.

... and under the control of political elites

The constitutions are important but the scrutiny of concrete events shows that politicians were the primary players in the Yugoslav drama. Among them, Slobodan Milošević reserved the central part for himself with supporting (though crucial roles) played by, in order of importance, Franjo Tuđman, Milan Kučan and Alija Izetbegović. In this respect, it is not surprising that Milošević

is the subject of the majority of journalistic and scholarly works dealing with Yugoslav political elites (see Gordy 2008). After the first democratic elections, these elites firmly established a monopoly over the political arena, the economy, the media and the security apparatus of their republics and, in the case of Milošević, over the federal army as well. The future of Yugoslavia was to be decided thereafter among the leaders of the republics. The Yugoslav public watched helplessly as the leaders were meeting at various places throughout Yugoslavia in 1990–1991, failing each time to reach an agreement. In the meantime, violence broke out, very often orchestrated by those same political elites as a tool in the power struggles between them and within their republics. That the political leaders undoubtedly held the political destiny of Yugoslavia in their hands was later confirmed by reports on several secret agreements that were made at this time (see Little and Silber 1995). In January 1991, for example, Milan Kučan met Slobodan Milošević at his presidential villa in Karadjordjevo (Vojvodina). At this meeting, Milošević allegedly agreed that Slovenes had the right to an independent state, while in turn Kučan agreed that Serbs too had the right to live in one state. Two months later, Tudjman joined Milošević again at Karadjordjevo. There, they supposedly agreed on the partition of Bosnia, a deal that was never officially confirmed, unless we count what happened on the ground in Bosnia subsequently as proof.

V. P. Gagnon claims that conservative elites in Croatia and Serbia employed violence and images of a threatening enemy in order to *demobilize* those pushing for political, economic and structural changes that would have endangered the elites' position and power. By creating political homogeneity in their republics, these elites also managed to keep control over the existing structures and to convert by various means previously socially owned property into private wealth that was to serve as the basis of their power within a newly introduced free market economy. Gagnon further argues that war and violence were not the expression of a population's sentiments. Rather they were imposed from outside on plural communities by political and military forces (Gagnon 2004: xv).

Although I do agree with Gagnon's general argument concerning the crucial role played by elites in managing Yugoslavia's disintegration and violent ethnic conflicts, I find the demobilization argument more problematic. Gagnon, in my opinion, does not pay sufficient attention to the strategies of both mobilization and demobilization. It was important to *mobilize* the population around an ethnonationalist agenda; strategies that had been employed by elites in Croatia in 1990 and 1991 and in Serbia between 1987 and 1991, but also to *demobilize* the political opposition in Croatia and in Serbia starting already in 1991. In

Gagnon's analysis, there is a tendency to mirror the events in Milošević's Serbia (1987–2000) against those in Tudjman's Croatia (1990–1999) and to blur some important differences both in the sequence of events and in their respective elites' strategies within their particular context.

Furthermore, these strategies cannot be understood without bringing into the picture other interconnected players in the Yugoslav drama, namely the Slovenian leadership, the JNA, the federal Prime Minister Ante Marković and the separate nationalist elites in Bosnia. Gagnon thus overlooks the fact that even before the first democratic elections that legitimized Milošević's power and brought Franjo Tudjman to office, both the incumbent elites and up and coming nationalist elites used nationalist rhetoric to effectively *mobilize* their populations.

In the case of Croatia, they continued to do so both prior to and during the war in order to secure strong support for Croatian independence and national unity. A large political *demobilization* of the population in Croatia was carried out successfully during the war years and Tudjman's party managed to consolidate power and used similar methods of demobilization again when opposition to his reign started to show signs of political recovery after the war in 1996. In Milošević's case, it could be said that he played the ethnonationalist card before the outbreak of war to *mobilize* Serbs around his programme for the recentralization of both Serbia and Yugoslavia and to portray himself as the only one capable of building a Greater Serbia on the ruins of Yugoslavia. By doing so, he effectively tried to *demobilize* a strong nationalist opposition that seriously threatened his power in March 1991. Being a symbol of the old communist regime, the conservative nationalist opposition perceived Milošević as, at best, a tool to be used for implementing the nationalist agenda. In 1996 and 1997, massive anti-Milošević protests erupted at which he was accused, not only of being authoritarian and 'communist' but also of losing wars fought for the unification of Serbs. In other words, at that point Milošević had become an obstacle rather than an asset for the achievement of nationalist goals.

The citizenship factor

In the previous passages, I have underlined the factors I consider crucial to Yugoslavia's disintegration. The socio-economic situation in the second half of the 1980s is the key to understand why the Yugoslav self-managing socialism faced a rapid and widespread delegitimation as both a political and

socio-economic model. Foreign debt, inflation, IMF standby arrangements, austerity measures applied to unprofitable industries and public sector resulting in rising unemployment and massive workers' strikes in the 1980s (see Lowinger 2009; Woodward 1995a, 1995b), all contributing to open conflicts among republics over economic issues (culminating in mutually imposed economic sanctions between Serbia and Slovenia in late 1989), were among elements that corroded the Yugoslav socialist system and openly put in question the two precious wartime promises: national and social emancipation that were conditional upon one another. The economic crisis of socialism that was incapable of providing a certain socio-economic standard inevitably meant not only that a different economic model was needed but that such a model might need another political framework as well, a view strengthened by the paralysis of the federal institutions. The economic crisis itself was translated into inter-republican and inter-ethnic competition and growing mutually exclusive demands were undermining further Yugoslav self-management as a system incapable of delivering both higher standards of living and a solution to national aspirations acceptable for all. The existing institutions of centrifugal federalism were crucial in this process of both republican leaderships' internal quest for legitimacy and the inter-republican relations reassembling inter-state relations even before the first elections. In 1989 and 1990, the major republics (Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia) engaged in constitutional engineering to secure the internal legitimacy and a more independent position within the federation (even when this went against its Constitution). The democratization process was further entirely manipulated by these political elites, composed of either old or, mostly, a mixture of old and new political actors.

In this situation, competing visions of citizenship, I would argue, were one of the crucial factors that pushed the country towards disintegration and conflict. By late 1989 and definitely in 1990, it became clear that the republican centres had abandoned the Yugoslav federal citizenship as the framework of existing political community. However, they did not clearly opt, like in the Soviet sub-units, for the republican political communities. Instead, they positioned themselves as representatives of both their ethnic communities regardless of the republican borders and at the same time as representatives of their civic communities within their borders (that would not tolerate the disloyalty that they encouraged their ethnic kin to display in other republics). In other words, they acted as both the Zulu kings and the Dutch settlers and required the control of both their territory and of all members of the community that they saw themselves entitled to represent and to whom, often, these external members

pledged loyalty. However, if the Zulu kings were more interested in governing people than the territory, in Yugoslavia controlling external members meant aspiring to control the territory they inhabited as well. A glance over the ethnic map of the former Yugoslavia in 1991 is enough to understand that that was a recipe for an open conflict.

Therefore, the citizenship factor must be added to the multifactor synergy that sealed the fate of Yugoslavia. I claim that the fundamental questions of citizenship related to the very definition of membership in a political community as well as to citizenship contract by which a citizen exchanges his or her loyalty and duties for the rights and protection by his or her political community and its institutions (state) influenced critically the democratization process and Yugoslavia's disintegration. At the crucial junction, in the context of imminent redefinition and possible collapse of federal Yugoslavia, between early 1990 and early 1992, citizens were asking themselves these basic questions: *To what political community do I belong?, or, to whom do I owe my loyalty? And, finally, who (what state?) guarantees, or promises to guarantee my rights – starting with human, civic and political rights, employment and property... – and, last but not the least, protection?* If Yugoslav citizens were asking these basic citizenship questions, the answers to which determined the collective political outcomes and their personal destinies as well, one has to ask: how did they come to the answers to these questions? Did they ever have a choice, or did they have to deal with suggested answers (as during the various referendum and plebiscite practices) and, finally, *faits accomplis*? How did they make themselves heard or how they were silenced? To whom were political channels open and to whom were they closed? Citizenship thus turns into an explanatory prism through which we can understand an enormous political, social and economic transformation that wiped out Yugoslavia.

Generally, the democratization of Yugoslavia reinforced the factor of ethnicity, i.e. the citizen's identification with his or her ethnic group. The democratic elections confirmed the conflict (in case of minorities) or complementarity (in case of majorities) between the citizens' civic/republican and ethnic identities. The very fact that almost all republics were defined as the 'national homes' of their core ethnic group only underlined the primacy of ethnic identity even when the citizens themselves, regardless of their ethnic origins, rejected ethnonationalism and expressed a purely *civic* patriotism or loyalty to the institutions of their republics and of the Federation. These two political identities could only be easily reconciled if a citizen resided in his or her own ethnic republic and therefore belonged to its ethnic majority. However,

this was not the case for the considerable number of individuals who lived outside the 'national homes' of their ethnic groups, in republics to which they had historically belonged *civically* (as republican citizens), or simply as long-term residents, but not *ethnically*.

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia looming after the break-up of the LCY in January 1990, citizens began to wonder *how*, if at all, Yugoslavia would disintegrate. The obvious lines of separation were the republican borders, but the signal sent from the republican leaders and nationalist politicians suggested ethnic separation was the aim: the break-up of Yugoslavia presented an opportunity to redraw 'artificial' republican borders. In this context, constant communication via the republican-controlled media between the nationalist leaders and their ethnic bodies is essential for understanding the political dynamic of Yugoslavia's dissolution. The first democratic elections took place in an atmosphere of conflicting nationalist aspirations. It is not surprising, then, that the elections revealed strong backing for ethnic leaders and their parties whose message of ethnic solidarity traversed republican borders. They promised to 'protect' and guard the interests of their ethnically defined electorate³ in the inter-republic and inter-ethnic conflicts and in the case of Yugoslavia's disappearance.

I argue that the ethnonational conception of citizenship finally prevailed and fuelled conflicts over the redefinition of borders within which the ethnonational states were to be formed on the basis of absolute majorities of the core ethnonational groups. Democracy, on this view, was seen as workable only if it was essentially ethnonational. In other words, majority rule should not entail a division between an ethnic majority and an ethnic minority but rather should be practiced *within* the core ethnonational group with the majority/minority division formed on the basis of ideological preferences. In this sense, a projected ethnonational state, territorially expanded in order to include most if not all members of the ethnic group, could be truly democratic *only* if the core ethnic group had an absolute majority and ethnic minorities were reduced to an insignificant percentage of the population. This conception of citizenship, coupled with the new democratic order, in the context of the rapid delegitimation of the Yugoslav socialist heritage, only gave boost to extreme nationalism as well as to revisionist rehabilitation of right-wing nationalist and fascist political programmes from the period of the Second World War.

Needless to say, not every Yugoslav succumbed to a programme of ethnic homogenization and territorial redefinition of Yugoslavia's successor states. However, those who did oppose it – and who advocated instead either the continued existence of the federation or its peaceful dissolution into civic and

ethnically heterogeneous states – did not have a political platform from which they could articulate their views and discontent or engage in concrete political action.

With the progressive disappearance of the federal state, citizens were left with only their republican citizenship. In the context of the federation's immanent dissolution, many simply refused to be loyal to their republics, which they perceived as another ethnic group's national home. On the other hand, in these republics, the ethnic majority often succumbed to the temptation to re-define the republic as being exclusively its own state. (The multinational character of the Bosnian state was, in a similar fashion, rejected in favour of ethnic partition.) In both cases, citizens simply switched their loyalties to whatever they considered their ethnic 'state in the making'; a state that would ideally also include their homes within its new borders. If this scenario failed to materialize, an individual was faced with an alternative: either a forced or a (to varying degrees) voluntary migration to their ethnic homeland and, in so many cases, abroad, or the acceptance of minority 'second-class citizen' status.

Nationalist elites attempted to reduce ethnic heterogeneity and to create 'pure' ethnonational states, the territorial shape of which was to be decided either militarily or by mutual agreements between these elites. This was confirmed through the practice of constitutional nationalism and through citizenship legislation (see Chapter 9). This process was intimately related to electoral democracy itself and to the fact that only citizens would be invited to participate in the political arena and, ultimately, allowed to vote. Therefore, the inclusion of the core ethnic group's members, regardless of their places of residence (inside or outside state borders), and the parallel exclusion – as much as possible – of members of other ethnic groups was one of the strategies most crucial to the transformation of Yugoslavia's multinational space into a series of ethnically homogenized democratic states and sub-state territories. The citizenship factor thus played one of the pivotal roles in bringing Yugoslavia, upon its democratization, to the brink of political collapse. Moreover, it was one of the triggers of violence that would seal its fate.