The establishment of Yugoslavia: a case study of political symbols and their manipulation

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF YUGOSLAVIA:
A CASE STUDY OF POLITICAL SYMBOLS AND THEIR MANIPULATION

An Honors Essay
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Honors Study
In Contemporary European History

by
Robert Michael Gates
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I.
THE EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Habsburg Empire at the turn of the century was afflicted with a malignant tumor -- the problem of national minorities -- and the south Slav movement was the most prominent infection. Slovenia and Croatia were economically and politically dominated by the Habsburgs. Moreover, even their neighbor to the south, Serbia, though politically freer, was economically dependent on the Empire.

Croatia, an autonomous province within the Transleithanian (i.e. Hungarian) half of the Empire, was permitted a large degree of independence. Even though the Magyars increased their repression, the Croat nobles attempted to retain as much autonomy in their own affairs as possible, maintaining local authority and controlling their own landed estates.¹ In the attempt to maintain their autonomy, Croatian nobles even asserted a tradition of Croat national independence, based on the tradition of the Zwoinimin crown.² The political situation did not become critical until the change in Hungarian governors in 1903. During this time, Croatia, one of the most privileged nations in the Empire, was also one of the most loyal to the Habsburg rulers.

Conditions changed in 1903, when the semi-Machiavellian governor of Croatia began to repress the Croats and to encourage enmity between the Serbian sub-minority and the Croats. Because
of this treatment and the apathy of Vienna to Croatian complaints, the politically articulate element in the province increasingly lost confidence in the ability of the Imperial government to correct the abuses of the royal Hungarian government. The seizure of Fiume by Hungary inflamed the Croatian nationalists as they regarded the city as historic Croatian territory. As a result of the Magyar repression coupled with the apathy of the Imperial government, Croatian interests made common cause with the Serbian struggle for liberty and independence, a common goal. These Croatian interests were expressed through the formation of various political parties.

In 1900, Stepan Radich founded the Croatian Peasant Party. Its program consisted basically of liberation from Hungary and land reform. The major weakness of Radich's party was its seeming inability to do little but obstruct, and its reluctance to formulate clear and definite political goals. Another strong party within Croatia was the Independent Democratic Party, restricted to minority Serbs living within Croatia. This party collaborated with Radich's Peasant Party on several occasions. The third party was a form of Marxist party, under the influence of Central European Marxists and Anarchists. This party was severely repressed by the Magyars and had little influence in the south Slav area. Their program called for increased political freedom and the improvement of working conditions.

In 1908, the new royal governor, Paul Rauch, because of anti-imperial speeches and debates, dissolved the Croatian
legislative body, the Diet. New elections were held under regulations limiting suffrage in the extreme, but the results were unsatisfactory to him. The new Diet was dissolved and Rauch governed by decree for two years. Elections were held again in 1912, with the same result. The Croatian provinces were thus under complete domination of the Magyar executive official.

Driven together by Magyar injustice, the Serbian minority in Croatia joined the Croats to cooperate in the nationalist struggle. A council for independence as such did not exist in Croatia; instead, the political parties had a nationalistic point of view in their programs. Conditions in Slovenia differed markedly from those in Croatia.

Slovenia had a fortunate position within the Empire, living a contented existence under the Habsburgs. The Slovenes carried on a full and fruitful political and cultural life and local administration was frequently in the hands of Slovenes. They were a very highly educated people, some scholars quoting a 95% literacy rate. The "nationalist" goals of the Slovenes differed from those of the Croats. Nationalism manifested itself in Slovenia in a desire for continued and increased autonomy within the Cisleithenian part of the Empire, not independent national existence outside the boundaries of the Empire. Conditions within Slovenia were far different than in either Serbia or Croatia. Slovenia had no independent historical or political
tradition, but its national movement was based on ethnic grounds. As mentioned previously, most Slovenes wished only autonomy within the Empire.

The entire political life of Slovenia was marked by the struggle between Clericalism and Liberalism. As in Croatia, nationalistic desires were expressed through political parties. The conservative Slovene People's Party was a powerful political factor. Its leaders recognized the improbability of obtaining sweeping reforms from the monarchy, but hoped some small success could be achieved by allying with the conservative Catholic, anti-liberal trend. Slovenia was an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country, and at one time certain influential figures even proposed a Catholic union of states. Priests had long cooperated with the peasants; the Clerical Party used this as a basis for strong political power. The important fact however, is that the "distinct community of interests between Slovene conservatives and their Croatian kin turned Slovene political thought toward a concept of south Slav unionism."5

Serbia was by far the most liberal of the three states in the area of domestic political conditions. After the obliteration of the Obrenovich family in 1903, new elections were held for the Skupshtina or Serb legislative body. The Skupshtina reinstated the liberal constitution of 1889 and elected Peter Karageorgevich king. The next few years were marked by the growth of civil liberties and freedoms. In addition to the domestic changes, the
murder of the Obrenovich family was followed by a great change in foreign policy. Serbian government and politics became distinctly nationalistic and anti-Austrian. Serb antagonism toward Austria was heightened also by the redrawing of the Albanian borders, cutting Serbia off from the Adriatic Sea, and the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. From 1903 to 1914, economic and political conditions improved and the country enjoyed a general recovery.

Serbia, free of direct Imperial political control, was at that time nevertheless economically dependent on the Empire. This meant also political subservience to some degree. In 1901, Austria-Hungary accounted for over half of Serbia's imports and more than four-fifths of her exports. New Serb economic ties with Bulgaria and political expediency led to the closing of the Austrian borders to Serbian pigs in 1906. Serbia was forced to search for new markets, and found them. By 1910, Austria absorbed less than 33% of Serbian exports.

In Serbia, the land reforms of the more liberal King Peter foreshadowed a fundamental change in the power of certain parties. The Serb Radical Party is a good example of the new ruling elite. Their influence in the government increased with the passage of the new land reforms, accompanied by the decline in the power of the landlord class. A splinter party, originating from the Radical Party, gave itself the name Serb Democratic Party. Although the Radical Party gradually modified its program,
tending to a more urban approach, the Democratic Party retained its basic concern for the peasants.

Socialists were active throughout the period from 1900 to 1918, but particularly just before the war began. The major political parties in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia were peasants parties. Their leadership, centered in the cities, rested in the hands of business and professional men. Even though the vote was quite limited, the organization of the more liberal parties reached to every level of society. The growing influence of political parties, as well as the nationality problem, was in large part a result of economic and social changes. These increased the popular participation in the life of the state.

Serbian royalty was a very significant factor in encouraging Yugoslav unity. Because of the existing conditions, many Croat and Slovene political leaders felt a close kinship to the Serbs and sought a south Slav union. A Yugoslav Committee was organized in London 1915, having the support of various leaders from Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia.

In Serbia, the south Slav union idea had great support, particularly from the monarchy. Serbia became the heir to the Croatian south Slav movement when it became evident that such a union could never arise within the Empire. In the drive for a Greater Serbia, the Serbs also had received the support of the Russian Pan-Slav movement and even the Russian government. The victories of Serbia in the first Balkan War more than ever caused
Belgrade to become the center of south Slav agitation. This too was encouraged by the monarchy.

Because Slovene nationalism was directed toward autonomy within the Empire, and Serb nationalism sought a Greater South Slav Serbia, only Croatia had a truly pure nationalistic movement, emphasizing complete national independence. Even so, the vast majority of articulate Croats wished their state to form the core of a south Slav state. Unable to gain sufficient support, the Croats cooperated with the Serbs for such a union. Thus, south Slav attention focused on Serbia.

Although Serbia was able to break the Habsburg stranglehold on her economy, there was a more basic economic problem in all three south Slav states. In Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, one problem stood out above all others -- rural, agricultural overpopulation combined with low productivity and standards of living. In many cases, the economic backwardness was a result of foreign domination. The south Slav territories had become little more than agricultural colonies which bought the industrial products of the Austro-German regions.

A great problem, as elsewhere, was land distribution. In Croatia, 50% of the land belonged to great estates. Of 414,000 families, only 75,000 owned above 20 acres. Over 340,000 (two-thirds of the population) possessed only 7.3 acres. In 1900, ten out of thirteen million owned no land at all.
Serbia, the only one of the three states on which adequate statistics are available may, for our purposes, serve as a case study. Because of the tariff agreement with Austria, signed in 1881 under duress, Serbian industry was stifled and agriculture was dependent on Habsburg markets. The south Slav lands were plagued by the need for agricultural reform and their complete dependence on Austro-German capital for industrialization.

The social structure reflected the economic problems. Even the Pig's War changed the peasant's life very little as only the market changed, and not any other part of the system. In 1910, 84% of the Serbian population was agrarian, 7% industrial, 5% governmental, and 4% engaged in trade. There was a huge population explosion (71.3% in 32 years) and no satisfactory emigration safety valve. This overpopulation led to great fragmentation of peasant lands. Where land reform did occur, the peasant, freed from ancient feudal obligations, was suddenly placed at the mercy of foreign and domestic markets.

Society was marked by an increasing gulf between the urban and rural populations. Class stratification within the village increased significantly. Oddly enough, there was a very close relation between the Habsburgs and the oppressed classes. The peasantry had often been protected by the Imperial officials from German and Magyar persecution.13 The Balkan peasant view was focused on his own interests: land, credit, and reduced taxes. "Docility became political apathy, and suspicion was directed at
town dwellers, officials, and politicians."\textsuperscript{14} All in all, the vast majority of south Slavs were primitive villagers, intensely religious and politically almost totally inarticulate before the war.

After a reign of sixty-eight years, Emperor Francis Joseph died in 1916. He was peacefully succeeded by his great nephew, Charles. The new Emperor felt the problems of the declining Empire could be solved. According to the biased accounts of his secretary, Charles wished to alleviate the general poverty in his lands.\textsuperscript{15} Unfortunately, by accepting the crown of Hungary, Charles made the solution of the south Slav problem politically impossible, swearing to maintain the integrity of the Hungarian lands. It must be said however, that the Imperial administration made great attempts to solve the nationalities problem. It was the Magyar's conservative narrow-mindedness which must bear the brunt of the blame for the destruction of the only reform plans for an Austrian federal system which might have proven workable. On October 16, 1918, Charles proclaimed a federal state. Faced with revolution, he signed a renunciation of the throne on November 10, 1918. The Empire had collapsed.

Almost a year earlier, in July, 1917, the Declaration of Corfu had been signed. This declaration proclaimed the new "State of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes." It was signed by the
Serbian Premier, Pasich, and Dr. Ante Trumbich, the Croatian President of the Yugoslav Committee. Radich, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, supported the declaration with some reservations. It was merely an agreement between the exiled Serbian government and the emigré leaders to form a Yugoslav state under the Karageorgevich dynasty. It is highly probable that the declaration was made at this early time in order to present a united and determined front to Italy, already demanding Dalmatia (promised in the Treaty of London in 1915). Thanks to the intervention of Woodrow Wilson and his refusal to recognize that treaty, Italy did not achieve her goal. Thus, Yugoslavia was born.

An attempted restoration of Charles to the Hungarian throne occurred in 1920. After the bloody seizure of power in January, 1920, by Admiral Horthy, elections were held to the Constituent Assembly. The results showed a remarkable monarchist majority as all leftists boycotted the election. Hungary reverted to a kingdom with Admiral Horthy as regent. Charles attempted twice to exploit the situation. The first attempt served only to harden anti-Habsburg sentiment. The second time, in an almost comical maneuver, Charles landed in the Burgenland in a small plane to claim his throne. Admiral Horthy refused to recognize Charles as the rightful sovereign and sent in a few troops to disperse the attempt. Charles, as usual, had been poorly advised. He and his wife, Zita, were deprived of their
dynastic rights in Hungary.

Essentially, then, in Croatia and Slovenia following the collapse of the Empire, a power vacuum existed. This presented the opportunity for the south Slav unionists to step in and achieve their goals. The political climate they encountered was one of apathy, not opposition. In order to fulfill their plans, these unionists had to change that condition.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


16 Jaszi, *loc. cit.*, p. 44.

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CHAPTER II
THE LEADERS

In the pre-war period in the south Slav areas, there were two basic groups of leaders. The first group were those of the Establishment, that is, the men who held the power before 1895. Their power was as varied in nature as their vocation, some wielding great economic power, either as huge landowners or industrialists. Several of the Establishment leaders controlled printed material -- books, newspapers, pamphlets, and so forth. The high-ranking clerics of the church and the royal family and nobles completed the membership of the Establishment leadership. These people were leaders, not by virtue of popular will, nor even personal ability, but because of incontestable influence based on position, wealth, or personal power over other leaders, i.e. a previously established value position. Although certain exceptions did exist, in general, the Establishment favored a slow-moving, semi-stagnant, society. It rarely advocated radical or extreme political points of view, and generally was to be found somewhat right of center.

The other leadership factor in the south Slav area was what may be called the popular group. Composed of men of basically peasant background, this factor relied on the popular support of the peasant masses for its influence. The men in this group possessed a certain degree of charisma, drawing the
peasantry to them, although no one individual became the "savior-symbol" for this class. Though there was a great variety in the degree of change they desired, and differences in the speed with which they wished to carry out these changes, all these leaders did favor, and called for, change in the existing conditions.

Both groups of leaders shared some characteristics. Among these was the fact that almost all had distinguished themselves in one field or another, in publishing, business, administration, organizing, and so forth. It was this distinction, among other factors, which made them leaders. Moreover, these men were extremely articulate, able to express well their desires, demands, requests, arguments, and programs.

One characteristic shared by most of the leaders, was a feeling of alienation from the society in which they had been born and lived. This alienation caused in these leaders a feeling of powerlessness, the idea that their actions or thought could not and would not determine the outcome of events; furthermore, the alienated leader was confronted with indecision as to what he was supposed to believe. Finally, a sense of isolation, of viewing as unimportant those goals or values which are regarded highly in the society from which he originated, had a deep impact on these individuals.

Of considerable importance in the selection of the leaders was the extent of information accessible for reference. The
specific examples that follow were chosen for their prominence within their own country. Each is, to a certain extent, representative of his type in that country. There is an effort made to present men who represent significant factions within the political spectrum and who exerted considerable influence in political life.

The most influential politician in Serbia in the post-1900 period was Nikola Pashich, born in Zajechar, a town about 110 miles southeast of Belgrade. Zajechar was a transportation center, and located quite close to the Bulgarian border. There is much coal in the area. Although little is known of his family, they were well-to-do peasants, perhaps gaining their wealth from coal mines on their property. Because of a good mind and the ability of his parents to pay, Pashich was given a good education, graduating in 1865 with high honors from the University of Belgrade. His degree was in civil engineering. His first assignment was to be sent for further study to the University in Zurich. After a short stay in Zurich, Pashich was appointed municipal engineer in Prajevach. In 1872, after political involvement, he joined the staff of the radical journal "Radnik." In 1878, he was elected to Parliament. Pashich founded and became the first president of the "Club of the National Radical Party." Pashich, arrested in connection with a peasant uprising in 1883, escaped, although many of his
colleagues were shot.

In 1889, he made a triumphal return and was elected President of the Skupshtina. Pashich was premier from February, 1891, to August, 1892, and served as ambassador in Russia during 1893 and 1894. From 1901 to the end of the First World War, Pashich served as premier, except for two years (1904-1905) as foreign minister. Under his direction, negotiations with the Yugoslav Committee were opened in 1915.

Pashich had great talents as a politician; he was grave, taciturn, and politically shrewd, with an uncanny ability to foresee trends and adjust his ideas and policies to them. While studying in Zurich, Pashich associated with many Serb exiles. At first, Pashich was greatly influenced by the Russian anarchist, Bakunin, although the two disagreed violently on one point. Pashich considered national liberation must precede social revolution. Although this disagreement was deep, Bakunin and Pashich remained good friends, Bakunin schooling the younger man in Russian radicalism, Western European socialism, and liberalism. Contact with Bakunin produced a great love and admiration in Pashich for both Russia and the Russian people.

In Zurich, Pashich and two other political unknowns joined Markovich to form a party "which would strike at everything old in Serbia, destroy the old, and lay foundations for the new edifice." From this statement alone, we can realize that Pashich had been deeply alienated from contemporary Serbian
socio-political life. To seek to destroy the past in a culture that is completely past-oriented represents a revolutionary movement indeed! The party association lasted until the death of Markovich. At that time, Pashich cut himself off from other radicals and socialists. In 1878, he and forty-three adherents were elected to the *skupshtina*. He further strengthened his political position by founding the Radical Party in 1881. Although he based the Radical Party on peasant reforms, as his influence increased and the party began to accept governmental responsibility, it was more and more allied with the urban middle class and professional classes. Pashich's foreign policy did not have the success however that his domestic programs enjoyed.

A devoted Russophile, Pashich's position was weakened by the death of the Tsar in 1917. Formerly backed by Russia, Pashich now negotiated with the Yugoslav Committee from a less powerful bargaining position. His political career culminated in his great influence at Paris in 1919. Pashich secured recognition of the new Yugoslav state and realized almost all of Serbia's territorial aspirations. Pashich, as many individuals of his origin, was intensely nationalistic, even to the point of changing socialist doctrine in order to achieve nationalist ambitions.

Information concerning Dragutin Dimitrijevich is meagre. He first appears as a key figure leading the revolution in 1903 which resulted in the overthrow of the Obrenovich dynasty in Serbia.
The conspirators of 1903 banded together in an organization known as the "Narodna Obrana." A group of extremists within the "Narodna Obrana", led by Dimitrijevich, formed the terrorist society "Uyedinyenyi ili Smrt", (union or Death) or as Dimitrijevich referred to it, the "Black Hand." From the founding of the Black Hand in 1908, to the summer of 1914, Dimitrijevich's influence in high army circles increased. By June, 1914, he had placed members of the Society in all parts of the government, and particularly in the Serbian General Staff. Dimitrijevich informed Premier Pashich of a possible assassination in 1914, but included no details. When the time to act arrived, it was the military which prevented any strong civilian intervention.

Dimitrijevich was of peasant origins, but abandoned his family and friends for a military career. He engaged in secret activities and intragovernmental spying for his superiors and through their patronage rose to the rank of colonel, an unusually high rank for a person of his class origins. Dimitrijevich was known as a charming, ambitious, and intensely secretive person. In the army these talents were put to good advantage, as he was appointed head of Serbian Intelligence. A rabid Pan-Serb, he was passionately patriotic and won the devotion of the members of the Black Hand. He is representative of the extremists so prevalent in European, and particularly Balkan, politics at this time.

At Saloniki, in 1917, Dimitrijevich was arrested and a
charge of attempting to assassinate Alexander was placed against him. It is not clear whether the Black Hand conspiracy was destroyed by a rival army and political clique, the White Hand, or if they were felt to know too much about the Archduke's assassination in 1914.

As in the case of Dimitriyevich, information concerning the early life of Jovan Ristich is scant. When the new ruler, Milan Obrenovich, became king in 1872, Ristich was retained as regent. He was again appointed regent for Milan's son in 1889. He headed several cabinets during his career. Ristich joined and soon led the Serbian Liberal Party, representing a tacit alliance of the monarchy and the middle class. He took advantage of the surge of peasant's and radical parties in Serbian politics to bring together the monarchists and the liberals, both fearing the rising power of these lower class parties. The liberals represented the merchant and professional classes, a minority of the intellectuals, and the lesser civil servants. The policies Ristich followed were adopted by the party, that is, a laissez-faire economy and a semi-bellicose foreign policy.

Ristich was an extremely astute politician. Desiring the support of the Radicals in order to form a government, he released their leader, Markovic, from prison. Ristich's political strength was undermined for a short time in the 1880's, having
been associated with several bureaucratic scandals. He later served as premier three times. In terms of political maneuverability, Ristich may be considered a kind of Serbian Talleyrand. He had an extraordinary talent for bringing factions together. To many, he was not sufficiently anti-Austrian, although he pursued a "Greater Serbia" foreign policy. Confronted with an extremely unpopular monarch, Ristich tried every expedient to stave off revolution. If this included peaceful and friendly gestures to Austria, he was not hesitant to make them. Ristich balanced his actions in foreign policy, bellicose enough to satisfy the Pan-Serbs, and yet tactful enough to preserve peace. Ristich provides a good example of a capable monarchist toward the end of the nineteenth century, attempting to save an unpopular institution.

Bishop Joseph Strossmayer was born in Croatia in 1815. He achieved considerable fame through certain brilliant sermons given while court chaplain and rector of the Augustinian seminary in Vienna. In 1849, he was appointed Bishop of Djakovo, a small town in the mountains about 50 miles south of the Hungarian border, thirty-five miles west of Vukovar. In this town he built a majestic cathedral and dedicated it to union of the Eastern and Western churches.

Strossmayer had many political and religious contacts high in the Russian government and church. He went to Moscow on the
occasion of the millenary of the baptism of Orthodox Russians. A critic of the Papacy because of its narrowness in regard to church unity, he vigorously opposed and protested the Pope's anti-Russian attitude at the time of the war in 1877, and opposed the doctrine of papal infallibility.

Older than the other leaders discussed here, Turkish domination of the Balkans was more vivid in his mind. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was far more capable of preventing a Turkish return than small, individual Slav states. An alliance of Eastern and Western churches would immeasurably strengthen Christianity throughout the Near East where it was threatened, especially by the Turks and Arabs. In addition, a reconciliation of the Roman and Orthodox churches would have facilitated the union of, or at least closer ties between, Catholic Croatia and Orthodox Serbia.

An ardent Croat nationalist, Strossmayer made broad contributions to the development of education and literature in Croatia. He founded the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences as well as the Zagreb Art Gallery, not to mention numerous schools, museums, and other places of learning. In all his endeavors, Strossmayer attempted to give Croatia the leading role. Although his political theories were often unrealistic, he made great contributions to all Slavic cultural societies. He died in 1905.

Stepan Radich was born into a wealthy peasant family
living on a seven acre farm near Sisk in 1871. Sisk is on
the Sava River, south of Zagreb. It is a petroleum center, and
was a highly strategic area in the Turkish wars. The family
had eleven children. As in the case of Pashich, a good mind
and parental ability to pay assured a good education. Radich
was at home in every university and city. He wrote many books,
pamphlets, and articles. Banished from Zagreb because of
his political activities, Radich later returned to enter the
University. Here he organized nationalistically minded students,
was arrested, and again left the country. After a short stay
in Prague, he went to Budapest and entered the University there.
He was then twenty-four years old. In 1896, he entered the
University of Moscow, and shortly after transferred to Lausanne.

Radich was a powerful Croat nationalist. He constantly
feared the expansionist tendencies of the Serb dynasty, bureau-
cracy, and politicians. Thy party he founded worked diligently
to create an independent Croat Peasant Republic. The party
voiced well the grievances of the peasants and Radich's pacifistic
anti-militaristic views.

As a politician, Radich had an astonishing capacity for
changing his mind, and a complete inability to formulate clear,
concise demands. Because of his travels and varied education,
Radich was at ease when dealing with foreigners and accumulated
a broad awareness of the world beyond Croatia. This served him
well in political life. Radich persistently and resolutely
attempted to politically educate and mobilize the politically inarticulate masses slighted by the bourgeois parties.

Many scholars consider Janez Krek the most important and convincing political leader the Slovenes have ever had. It was his insight which perceived that any kind of Yugoslav solution would give Slovenia a better chance for national freedom than continued existence in the Empire. Very little is written about Krek. It is known that he was elected a deputy to the Imperial Diet where the Slovenes were allotted ten per cent of the seats. Their chief concern seemed to be the preservation of the Slovene national tongue. Krek, chairman of Slav Philology at the University, was particularly well qualified for this task, so important to the Slovenes.

In one of his speeches as a Slovene organizer, Krek expressed his desire for a south Slav union in this way: "All our rivers flow toward Belgrade, and on to the Black Sea. Not one flows toward Vienna. Follow the course of the river Sava! Down to the Black Sea, you will find peoples who are one with the Slovenes."

As one of the leaders of the Slovenes, Monsignor Korosec', a Clerical deputy in the Reichstag, was the first to question the right, publicly, of the Habsburgs to rule the Slav peoples. During the War, Korosec' energetically agitated against requisitions for food and war loans. "A friend of the Habsburgs is an
enemy to his own nation."

On May 30, 1917, Korosec' read before the Austrian Parliament a declaration that all Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes be united into one autonomous state. This text is known as the May Declaration or the "Majska Deklaracija." In 1918, when the national council of representatives of all Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary was organized in Zagreb, it was under the presidency of Dr. Anton Korosec'.

Apart from the discussion of Korosec', it is of interest to note that the agricultural cooperative system played an important part in the economic and political life of Slovenia. These cooperatives were controlled by the Slovene People's Party, and that in turn, controlled by the Catholics. This served as source of political strength to Korosec'.

From the discussion of these leaders, it is possible to make several generalizations. The leadership in these three states remained quite static from about 1890 to 1925. Change occurred only by death. In Serbia, Pashich succeeded Markovich in 1875, Korosec' followed Krek in Slovenia, and Radich was the political heir of Starcevich. Most of the leaders were well-educated. Several had attended various universities and had a broad educational experience. Many traveled a great deal in Europe, particularly to Paris, Moscow, and Zurich. These three
cities are particularly significant because they have been traditional centers of revolutionary leaders. Zurich is noted for its extensive freedom of speech. It is also important to grasp the significance of their enrollment in foreign universities. Universities in the south Slav area were, in general, conservative and rather narrow. Even in these educational institutions, freedom of speech was limited. Little opportunity for lively and critical debate existed and revolutionary groups were not permitted. Thus, for higher education, critics of the government and monarchy left the country.

Slovenia was an exception to many of these generalizations. This state, having no real historical tradition, had also no significant political leaders. On the other hand, it did have an old and well-developed language and culture. This was reflected in its leaders, most of whom were philologists or clerics. Party development was unusually weak and leaders had influence because they were well-known to the people, not because they were organizers.

Each leader was passionate in his cause, and most were prolific pamphleteers and writers. These characteristics hold true for the political elites in all three states, and tended not to change during the period concerned. The leaders, most of whom were of peasant origin, represented the middle income and wealthy peasant classes, but for practical reasons allied with other segments of society.
The leaders of peasant's parties were of peasant origin themselves. Having left their country for education, they returned to organize the peasants politically. In general, they were intensely nationalistic, whether Croat, Slovene, or Serb. Their chauvinism strongly influenced their party programs.

"Left-socialist" leaders did not, as in other countries, formulate their own programs or theories, but traveled to other European countries where leftist-radicals gathered and merely copied their ideas, thoughts, and plans. There was little or no independent and original Marxist-radical thought in the south Slav area during this time.

The small faction of merchant and professional classes, "the white collar workers," and their leaders allied with moderate and progressive monarchists. Although these leaders were also nationalistic, they were not averse to south Slav union, if their national customs and traditions -- and their own power -- could be preserved.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II


5 McClellan, loc. cit., p. 195.


CHAPTER III
SYMBOLS

For political scientists or historians, the language of symbols is of great assistance in studying the power structure of a specific society. The existence of certain recurring, or key, symbols is an aid in identifying a political atmosphere. All symbols are focal points for the crystallization of sentiment. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the political atmosphere in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia was saturated with the emotion of nationalism. In the struggle for independence, each of the south Slav nationalities turned to their past to recreate the greatness which they again sought. What existed, then, in the south Slav areas, was a culture essentially historical in nature, with its greatest symbols oriented around the past.

The past provided numerous symbols which were fitted to the purposes of the political leaders. These included memorial days, public places, songs, statuary, music, newspapers, folklore, literature, and memorials. These were supplemented by constitutions, party platforms, literature, and poetry.

When first examining symbols in post-1900 south Slav culture, one is confronted with a large number of universal symbols; that is, symbols which appeal to all elements of the society. Among these were flags, monuments, certain popular songs, poems, and so forth. In addition to possessing universal
appeal, the above symbols are universally communicable. Popular, even illiterate, participation and involvement with them is high. A second, smaller category consisted of specific symbols which were generally communicable to the educated element of society. Within this group were those symbols such as many poems, policy statements, constitutions, and stories which were popularized through newspapers or similar media. Universal symbols are associated with the general mass of the people, whereas specific symbols relate and apply to the literate, educated segments of society.

Several other factors must be taken into account in the study of symbols. Distinction can be made between animate and inanimate monuments; a further distinction between living and dead animate monuments; and finally, the positive or negative aspects of the symbols. The latter differentiation requires explanation. A positive symbol is one which, when applied, evokes emotions of love, patriotism, warmth, devotion, pride. A negative symbol, on the other hand, calls forth just the opposite emotions -- hate or fear. Generally, groups supporting an existing system use positive symbols and those seeking to overthrow it use negative symbols.

The choice of symbols may be based on prominence, origin, or type. The relevance of symbols as groups must be considered as well as the order and limits of the groups. This includes symbol users, i.e. political or class parties, and the political
limits. In measuring the significance of symbols, the intensity of symbol utilization in a definite interval must be considered, as well as the relative importance of the symbol. Finally, the scope of distribution or effectiveness of the symbols should be measured. Also, in the identification of symbols, the extent of participation in symbolic action is to be studied. Those effected and the extensiveness of popular involvement are concerned here. The relation of symbols and their use to the local culture is important.

There are, in the south Slav countries, several significant inanimate monuments or symbols. Serbia offers three examples, all of which mark the great push to the southeast by the Slavs, particularly after liberation from the Turks. The cathedral at Kraljevo was built in the twelfth century. One of the most beautiful monuments in Serbia, it was built at the height of the old Serb empire by Stephan Nemanja, who later became St. Simeon. The birthplace of Constantine the Great is a second great Serbian shrine. The city of Kragujevatz holds special significance for the Serbs as the first capital of Serbia after the liberation from the Turks in the middle ages.

A fourth symbol, and probably the most universal, was the Serbian flag. The flag from 1867 to 1903 was a tricolor theme backed by the Obrenovich family crest. The double headed eagle is symbolic of the former ties to Austria, and the white cross
is the papal cross awarded to St. Stephen for his assistance. Again, the emphasis is on the past.

Slovenes were one of the first of the Yugoslavs to create an independent state. The ancient city of Blatnigrad became a symbol of that early independence. The installation of the Duke on the Gosposvetskos field served to recall the ancient practices and glories of the Slovene state. The Duke's chair remains on the field as a monument.

In addition to the symbols of cloth and stone, were those of flesh and blood. Many men, though long dead and forgotten, came into prominence again in this period of intense nationalism. A great Serbian symbol in the struggle for political and clerical independence was the Patriarch Bogdanovich. He committed suicide when the constitution of the Serbian Orthodox Church was abolished in Hungary. Another Serb monument was Ivan Mestrovich, a sculptor. This man became a leader of his race, even a demi-god. In his work, he stressed the Serbian nationality struggle in the face of Austrian tyranny. He chose historical subjects for his works. Among his works are statues of Marulic in Split, and Kraljevic in Belgrade. A third Serb was Vuk Karadzic, the creator of a Serbian literary language and orthography. In Slovenia, legendary King Mathias continued to exist as a symbol of Slovene independence. The Hungarian governors of Croatia, known as Bani, were continuous examples of repression
and Hungarian domination. Finally, the Croat, Ljudevit Gaj (1809 - 1872), turned the idea of Illyrianism into a Croat ideal, in opposition to Magyar policy after 1825.

In the pre-war period, men became monuments to their own followers, or opponents, as the case might be. In Slovenia, the Roman Catholic priest, Janez Krek, had a tremendous role, not only in the nationalist movement, but also in the economic and social work of the nation. The Croatian bishop, Joseph Strossmayer, not only was a leader, but a symbol for the idea of a Croatian state as the core of a south Slav state. He dedicated his life to this cause. Finally, two Serb assassins, Tukich and Princip, became beloved symbols in the struggle for freedom.

There were also men who were negative symbols, who called to mind tyranny and fear. In Croatia, Banus Paul Rauch came to represent all the cruelty, stupidity, and narrowness of the Hungarian government. General Varesanin, who kicked the corpse of a young man after an assassination attempt, also became a negative symbol. Even Count Michael Karolyi became a symbol, one of betrayal to all south Slavs.

The significance of a symbol is dependent on the way it is used. The symbols mentioned previously were stationary, known to most citizens only by word of mouth or through literature. The most effective symbols are those reaching the largest
body of people. This chapter is a study of prominent examples of symbols and the means of communicating them with maximum impact.

Symbols may be communicated in two general ways, the first involving personal communication. This includes every means of oral transmission between one man and another, one man and a group, or two groups. Major public pronouncements, party platforms, debates, speeches, and rumor are all means of oral-personal communication which utilize symbols to achieve their purpose. The second method of communicating symbols is the printed word.

All these methods were used in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. Because of the lack of modern means of communication, public speeches were the most widely used means of personal transmission. Speeches by Tresic Pavicic, recorded in "The New York Times," described Austro-Hungarian atrocities -- such as people digging their own graves. Bogdan Popovich, a professor at the University of Belgrade, spoke many times of the lack of understanding of Austria toward the south Slavs and particularly toward the Serbs. Father Nikolai Velimirovich preached and lectured on the sacrifices of Serbia over the centuries so Europe could develop undisturbed by the Turks. Speakers and other communicators sometimes consciously used words like Magyar or Kossovo or autonomy to incite the people. At
other times, similar terms such as Catholic or Turk or Constitution would be used.

Finally, party platforms and the debates of deliberative bodies communicate symbols. Sometimes their mere existence, or absence, may serve as a symbol in itself. The speeches and debates of Ante Trumbich and M. Hinkovich in the south Slav Diets are representative of this means of communication. 10

The most effective means of communicating symbols are words. Words and phrases become highly representative, giving rise to extremely high emotions. The question of how much significance there is in any word, slogan, or sentence should be investigated. In all these forms, in the attempts to sway opinion and popular sentiment, symbols are utilized. As stated earlier, symbols crystallize sentiment and give rise to great emotions and acts. Newspapers played perhaps the most important role in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. There were five important newspapers in the south Slav area in the pre-war era: "Srpska Rije" in Sarajevo, "Dubrovnik" in Ragusa, "Otadzbina" in Banjaluka, and "Narod" and "Musavat" in Mostar. All five of these newspapers were particularly revolutionary. The papers were filled with poems and exhortations, "imploring the people to free themselves from the yoke of the foreigner. Now is the time to die for the holy cause of liberty." 11

Not only were south Slav newspapers communicators of symbols, but foreign newspapers also. As an example, essayist
Tomo Surgentich wrote many articles for foreign newspapers, one of which was "The New York Times." Note the flavor of his writing: "Little Serbia will be found shedding its last drop of blood for free democracy, a democracy that will never die, for it is the mighty sovereignty, the will of the people." 12

Finally, the most effective media for the communication of symbols was poetry and literature. The poetry was both ancient and contemporary. Florence Earle Coates, although a native American (Philadelphia Mainline), wrote one poem about Serbia which was widely syndicated by the British. In close liaison with the Yugoslav nationalists, it is probable that the British urged its printing in the Serbian newspapers because of its great propaganda value and its appeal to the Serbs themselves. These lines are from the poem "Serbia":

"Thou central martyr of the Monster-Crime,
Who kept thy soul clear of the ooze and slime --
The quicksands of deceit and perjury...

Even now, the thorny round that binds thy
Bleeding brow is as a crown irradiating light!" 13

Much of the symbolism in these lines are recurrent themes in Serbian history. The martyr idea is very strong in Serbia. It was common feeling that only by Serbia's heroism and sacrifice was Europe allowed to develop free from external invaders. Serbia was protection from the Turks, Serbs dying in the holy name and cause of Christianity.

Thus, in this poem the idea is continued -- Serb versus
Monster, the monster being at once Turk, German, Austrian, or pagan. The poem not only calls attention to Serb martyrdom, but its central position among all martyrs -- truly God's own chosen. Symbolism in this poem makes the Austrian invasion not only a military act -- but a monster crime -- against an innocent and unprepared state. Serbia, Defender of the Faith, is dragged from her pedestal by the monster crime, into the "slime and ooze, the quicksands of deceit and perjury." Thus, the war becomes, in this poem, a holy war. As in centuries past, Serbian blood flowed to protect Christian civilization. The final testimony of her martyred fate is reference to the "thorny crown that binds that bleeding brow." Innocent of crime and perjury, removed from slime and ooze of European diplomatic machinations, condemned by the Austrian pharisees, Serbia is sacrificed. However, there is, as always, the great Serb resurrection -- "Always there will be dawn." Serbia will again arise: strong, triumphant over an eclipsed Austria. This martyr symbolism occurs frequently in Serbian literature and poetry. Symbols relative to this south Slav complex are calculated for maximum identification and response.

In Milan Rakitch's poem, "The Deserted Shrine," once again the pathos of the martyr state expresses itself in the symbolism of the church. Among the nations, Serbia stands alone, "and while gradual darkness falls on every side, with a swarm of nightbirds, on their prey intent." The will of the people is unity
to fight the war. Class antagonisms are minimized, peasant joining noble in the national struggle. "Gifts of old tie lords and pious populous." To Rakitch, speaking of swarms of night-birds and vampires wheeling around, Serbia lies prostrate, dying, and helpless. Serbia herself is the deserted shrine; in essence, Christ upon the cross. The symbols again are of martyrdom and suffering for a holy cause. The shrine is an ancient one, reminiscent of the long historical past of Serbia, a past in which this same fate befell her. Unlike the previous poem, in this example, there is no symbol, no suggestion of resurrection. Serbia is "gone, defeated." "Endlessly awaits the flock that ne'er is sent." 

The incredible pathos of "The Deserted Shrine" is contrasted by the hope and unconquerable spirit expressed in "The Song of the Dead." After opening with several verses on the transitory nature of life -- and hardship, those who have died look back at Serbia and the people left alive. The dead, speaking, symbolize not just the past generations, but also very ancient past generations. "For thou art our fruit." All the past generations come forward symbolically to sustain and comfort the present generation. Mindful of vast changes in life, the dead cry out -- "With the past do not strive." 

Finally, in an effort to wage the struggle against the evils besetting the country, the present suddenly symbolizes all the generations who have fought the holy struggle in Serbia.
"Each step thou takest, beside thee we stay. Unnumbered to conquest we bear thee along."

Another Slovene example of the use of symbolism through poetry is the "Sonnet of Unhappiness," written at a time when the idea of the Illyrian state was still vivid. The suffocating effect of foreign military, political, cultural, and economic domination on everyday existence is the theme. "Life is a jail" and "time the grim warden there." This poem, by France Presern, symbolizes the desperation, the hopelessness of life in Slovenia, its grief, its barrenness.

"Sweet death, 0 do not long forebear, Thou key, thou portal, thou entrancing way That guideth us from places of dismay.

Yonder where wages no pursuing foe, Yonder where we elude their evil plot, Yonder where man is rid of every woe."17

The foremost example of symbols regarding Serbian national aims and goals, as well as traditions, is "The Battle of Kosovo," an epic ballad. This ballad is nationalistic in the extreme. "There resteth to Serbia a glory, a glory that shall not grow old." The symbolism is not necessarily in the meanings of words or sentences, but in the total effect, particularly of the last stanza. It commemorates all who have died for Serbian goals and aims in the course of years.

"Or resteth a man in the land, so long as a Blade of corn shall be reapt by a human hand, So long as the grass shall grow on the mighty Plain of Kosovo.

So long, so long even so, shall the glory of Those remain who this day in battle were slain."18
In songs, constant reference is made to Turks, symbol of the great hatred and fear existant in these people. The national anthem of Serbia is a connecting bond between the old and new Serb empire. An appeal to God, it begs release as in the past, from oppressors. "Hear thy Serb children's voices, be our help as in the past." In this song, Serb extends not only to nationality, but even to race. As so often in Serbian poetry and literature, the martyr idea appears in symbol. As the reader envisions the hordes of Austrians descending upon Serbia, we hear "from the slough of direst slavery, Serbia anew is born. All our kin to God deliver." Thus, the God who will surely free Serbia as well as the other Slav states, must soon come.

There are three characteristics of almost all south Slav poetry and songs. The first of these, already discussed at length, was the martyr syndrome which rested on and within their culture. It is an integral part of the south Slav culture to consider that it was Slav sacrifice which protected all Western Europe. Another prevalent area of symbol emphasis was the connection with the past. In poetry, literature, and songs, there were allusions to former south Slav empires and great men, former great sacrifices, great events of the past. In writing at a time of serious peril to their native lands, the south Slav poets and composers made a positive symbol of the past, planting in the minds of the people
Finally, the third category is the symbolization and reference to the identification of the peasant with the land. In almost every poem consulted, nature in the native land is idyllic, the bluest water, greenest grass, and so forth. The manner in which this means of communication is used makes it apparent that in the minds of the poets, the peasant class was not alienated from the land itself, or from agricultural existence, but only with repression, cruelty, and lack of a coherent agricultural policy by the government.

It is possible that the intellectuals were creating a dream world for one reason or another, and that these word pictures they painted were not reflections of reality. The motives of the poets seem unimportant however, because when these poems were utilized for their symbol content by the politicians to sway the local social, religious, and economic leaders to the nationalist cause, it was the picture which was involved, not the motives of the poet. By using such poems, the urbanized political leader reaffirmed to the peasant leaders his interest in the peasant, the land, and natural beauty -- thus re-establishing an important link.

In brief, three effective symbol categories have been discussed. The symbols these categories represent will serve as examples in the next chapter. Symbols in all their forms are the
tools with which leaders build a workable political framework in a country and maintain it. The choice of symbols is sometimes deliberate, often not. Those symbols which persist or are not integrated are those which are effective, and lend themselves most easily to manipulation.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

13. Florence Earle Coates, Literary Digest, June 8, 1918, p. 35.
14. Milan Rakitch, Literary Digest, June 8, 1918, p. 36.
15. Svetislav Stefanovitch, Literary Digest, June 8, 1918, p. 36.
16. Ibid.
17. France Preshern, Literary Digest, June 8, 1918, p. 36.
18. Owen Meredith, Songs of Serbia (Boston, 1877), p. 49.
THE DESERTED SHRINE

By Milan Harich

Christ upon His cross lies in the ancient shrine,
Dear is His even blood and His blooded face;
Dead His eyes and pale and cold, Death's very slave;
Washed silver weaves a halo o'er His face.

Gone are the gold birds and placid poplars,
Dated in His chest, linked as a necklet, shine:
The frame of purest silver whereon he lays,
And the frame was cast by Smith of Hebron's race.

Thus in the lonely church doth Christ abide,
And all around darkness falls on every side
With a swarm of night-birds, on their prey intent.

In the lonely shrine, where shadows wheel around,
Christ with hands outstretched, hummed and bowed bound,
Endlessly await the shroud that never is sent.

Steindam Stepanovich (born 1877) gives us this song of sublime and unconquerable hope:

THE SONG OF THE DEAD

By Steindam Stepanovich

We have perished, "He said, and now are no more...
Ruthlessly all life hears away,
Over our homes the days that are over,
And all that is left—a mere vanishing spot.

But we are at better, and smile at the face
Of things that live, Man, a momentable,
We know them, wouldst dream that thy life's fleeting span
Was inscribed from heaven itself in thy side.

But let it be that I gave thee thy hair;
And mark thee, thine eyes, were they some time not mine?
With my lips thou the mind of a maid didst marry,
Thy youth within thee doth blossom and bloom.

From us thou hast all that is much thy delight,
For thou art our fruit. With the past do strive,
Because upon tomb thy tears burn bright:
We are not in the tomb—we are in thee, alive.

Each step that thou hast, beside thee we stay,
And behind thee, as true as thy shadow we throw,
With space and with time thou waging the fray,
Unnumbered to conquer we bear thee along.

SERVIA

By Florence Earle Coates

When the heroine deities that mark our time
Shall, in far days to come, record it, we,
Men, much forgetful, shall remember thee,
Thou central wraith of the Monster-Curse,
Who kept the soul clean of the war and slimes.

The quicksands of death and injury—
A Rising thing, uncomplored still and free,
Through superhuman sacrifice sublime.

O Servia, may the ruin stand, Love is immortal; there's an end to hate,
Always there will be love, in the dark the night,
Look up, thou truest Tibby! Even now,
The thorny round that binds thy bleeding brow
Is as a crown burning bright!

DALMATIAN NOCTURNE

By Alexander Shantich

Sea by night gleaming,
Dreaming:
Chill darkness earthward falls,
The last red glimmer
Dimmer
O'er blackened ridges crawl.

And chimneys are drowsing,
Mooning,
Trembling where rocks arise;
Prayers have ascended,
Blinded
With poor men's long-drawn sighs.

Before God's altar
Falter
This waiting, bared-broad brood,
But never is spoken
Token
By God upon His road.

And dreams are nearer,
Closer:
Chill darkness earthward falls,
The last red glimmer
Dimmer
O'er blackened ridges crawl.

"Sonnet of Unhappiness"

France Presher

Life is a jest, and then grim wonder there,
Sorrow the bride made young for him each day;
We and desolate faithfully serve his way,
And rue, his watchword with unwared care.

Sweet death! O do not everlong forbear,
Think, then, let portal, then enthralling way
That guideth us from place of desolation,
Tour where molder knows the yews we wear.

Tour where ranges no pursuing foe,
Tour where we elude their evil plot,
Tour where man is rid of every wo.

Tour, where bedded in a murky grove,
Sleepes whose legs him there to sleep below,
That the shrill din of griefs awakes him not.
POETRY.

THE BATTLE OF KOSEO.  
(A SERBIAN BALLAD.)

[The great battle of Kosovo, or the Blackbird Field (June 20th, 1389), lives in history as the Helen of the Balkans. In it the Serbian Tsar Lazar perished, and with him the mediatorial Serbian Empire. Miloš Obilić, the prince of the Blackbird, is the first named of three famous Serbian malcontents, falsely accused of treachery by real nobles, forced his way to the presence of the Sultan and slew him with his own hand. The Serbian ballads are printed and written for mediatory purposes. The following version carefully preserves the essence which gives character to the whole, but is of course only a faint echo of the original.]

MILAN camped on the Field of Blackbirds,  
And then a letter did he write,  
And to the fortress of Knjaževac sent it:—  
"To the knees of Lazar, Prince of the Serbs!  
O Prince Lazar, Head of this bond,  
It never was known, and it never can be,  
That in one Empire two should rule,  
And that the liege should doubly be taxed.  
We cannot both of us bear the yoke.  
Send to me then the keys and the taxes,  
The golden keys of each strong place,  
And the taxes for seven years,  
And shouldn’t then decline to send them me,  
Then let us meet on the Field of Blackbirds,  
And with our sabres divide the Empire."  

When Tsar Lazar received this letter,  
He read it through and bitterly wept.  
Oh if some one could but have listened,  
To hear the deep woes of the prince,  
"He who does not come to the Field of Blackbirds,  
Let nothing prosper in his hands,  
Neither the gold-white wheat in the field,  
Nor the vine on the mountain side,  
Nor the children playing at home."  

Then Tsar Lazar kept his name-day  
In the silent fortress of Knjaževac,  
At his rich table he seated his guests,  
All his lords and noble courtiers.  
On the right sat the old Jug Bogdan,  
At his side the nine Jugović brothers;  
Vuk Branković, on his left,  
And the other lords in their due order.  
But facing him was Miloš seated,  
And beside him two Serbian Vladirovićs—  
Ivan Kosandić was the one,  
And the other was Milan Toplica.  
The Tsar lifted the brimming goblet,  
And thus he spoke to his noble guests:—  
"To whom shall I quaff the brimming beaker?  
If it be age that should decide,  
Then I must pledge the old Jug Bogdan.  
If it be rank that should decide it,  
Then I must drink to Vuk Branković.  
If I may follow the voice of feeling,  
Then may the cup fall to my wife’s dear brothers,  
To my wife’s brothers, the nine Jugović.  
Should many beauty prescribe my choice,  
Then the cup is the prize of Kosandić,  
And if height is to decide  
Then the cup is Milan Toplica’s.  
But if hero’s prowess decides my choice,  
Then I drain it to Miloš the Volvoda;  
To no other may it be pledged.  
To the health of Miloš Obilić!  
Thy health, O Miloš, loyal and true—  
First loyal to me and at last to me false.  
To-morrow thou wilt in battle betray me,  
Wilt pass over to Murad’s army,  
Thy health, O Miloš, and drain the beaker;  
Drink, and keep it as a gift."  

Up to his feet sprang Miloš Obilić,  
Then to the black earth down he bowed.  
"Thanks to thee, most gracious Tsar Lazar,  
My heartfelt thanks to thee for thy toast:  
For thy toast and for thy present;  
But no thanks for such a speech.  
For—else may my faith undo me—  
Never unfaithful have I been,  
Nor have I been, nor ever shall be.  
But I am resolved on the field to-morrow  
For the faith of Christ to give my life,  
But faithless sit at thy feet in vain  
And drink the wine from his silk-draped glass;  
He, the accursed, the traitor Branković,  
On the sacred Vidor-day to-morrow  
We shall see on the Field of Blackbirds,  
Who is faithful and who is faithless.  
But by God the Almighty I swear it,  
To-morrow I’ll go to the Field of Blackbirds,  
And there I shall kill the Sultan Murad,  
And plant my foot upon his throat.  
Should God and fortune grant to me  
My safe return to Knjaževac,  
Vuk Branković shall be my captive,  
And to my variance I shall bind him,  
As a woman the sis to her apron,  
And shall drag him thus to the Field of Blackbirds."  

R. W. S. W.
Ensign and Coat of Arms of Serbia 1867 to 1903:

SERVIA.

Ensign.

Note. The Merchant Flag bears the Pennon on it, placed in Centre of Blue Strip.

Coat of Arms.
Numerous symbols are present in any given culture, but unless utilized, they realize only a small part of their potential significance. Symbols realize this potential when employed in the process of political manipulation. Symbols achieve their full potential when affecting individuals -- and masses -- through conscious and subconscious hopes, fears, and emotions. This process of communicating symbols to an individual or group of individuals with the purpose of persuasion may be referred to as symbol manipulation.

The manipulator strives to create an artificial mental environment in which individuals will form opinions and think in accordance with his wishes. To achieve this goal, the manipulator may sometimes employ the consistent exploitation of half-truths, the exposition of any plausible lie, repetition, limitation of available information, and argument simplification. The manipulator is concerned with the multiplication of stimuli best calculated to evoke desired responses and nullification of stimuli likely to instigate the undesired responses.¹

This was the task confronting the south Slav political leaders in 1915. Two segments of society were the objects of propaganda, the elites and the apolitical masses.² It is important to bear in mind the political status of the masses in the south Slav lands. The term politically articulate indicates
an individual who has some interest in the affairs of the
government, who participates in some fashion in the political
life of the state, and in most cases, is literate. To say that
even a bare majority of the peasantry in the south Slav lands
was politically articulate would probably be inaccurate. In
Serbia and Croatia, the number of illiterate peasants was be-
 tween 45 and 55 per cent. The majority formed their opinions
more through blind faith in their leaders than on any other
basis. These people were just one generation removed from
the centralized, autocratic, monarchial government of the Austro-
Hungarian Empire. In 1915, Croatia and Slovenia still remained
under the aegis of the Empire. The autocratic Obrenovich dynasty
had not been overthrown in Serbia until 1903. For the most part,
less than fifteen years had passed since all of the peasants
had been governed by governments in which they had almost no
voice. Taking into account the lack of extensive development of
communication and the general inability of the peasantry to
read, it would be a gross inaccuracy to claim that they were
politically articulate. Given this situation, the importance
of the local leader, whether political, social, economic, or
religious, was greatly increased.

If the leaders of the peasants could be persuaded to
support the south Slav movement, the political leaders could al-
most certainly count on the support of the masses. There were
two approaches open to the nationalists. The first was an indirect
approach through newspapers, pamphlets, articles, and meetings. The second was more direct. By the use of universal symbols such as flags, poems, oratory, and others, large numbers of the peasants could be involved in mass meetings. The enthusiasm of the crowds at meetings during festivals could in turn be used as a further symbol in the effort to persuade the leaders. This enthusiasm in crowds probably marked the high point of "political articulation" for the peasants in the years 1915 to 1918.

The foremost goal of most political leaders in Serbia and Croatia was to achieve independence for their particular state or, at least, in the case of Slovenia, some sort of autonomy. Even those desirous of Pan-Croatia or Pan-Serbia recognized that independence from the Empire must precede such aims. A secondary goal, but closely related to the first, was the achievement of greater national glory.

To accomplish these goals, the political leaders of each state had to nullify or convert the opposition to such plans. The chief opposition was composed of loyalists to the Austrian Empire; however, the size of this group was extremely small. Very little open opposition seems to have existed toward the leaders and their individual nationalist programs. In Serbia, loyalty was directed at the Karageorgevich dynasty; in Croatia, at the Great Croat ideal. In Slovenia, a somewhat unique condition
existed. Having been extremely favored in the Empire, the Slovene people remained somewhat loyal. The leaders however, Korosec especially, were of the opinion that the possibility of achieving Slovene autonomy and cultural independence best lay within the context of the south Slav movement.³ Croat and Serb independence was the necessary precondition to the fulfillment of that goal.

Thus, south Slav leaders in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia had to mobilize the basically apathetic economic, religious, and social leaders into active support in order to gain the independence of their respective states from the Empire. For the accomplishment of this goal, the political leaders needed special tools, and these were symbols. The symbols discussed earlier had the potential to perform this function in the south Slav area.⁴ These words, poems, and monuments called forth emotion from the south Slav, appealed to his ancestors, his religion, and his patriotism. It had to be the task of the symbol manipulator to choose and employ those symbols which would elicit those emotions. This chapter is a brief examination of how these tools were employed. The fundamental premise from which the political leadership worked was an emphasis on the symbols of the long history and independent tradition and culture of the south Slav.

The primary means of direct propaganda in the south Slav
states in 1915 were newspapers. The newspaper industry in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia was well-developed in the pre-war years. The papers served as a government mouthpiece in Serbia and were controlled by the dominant economic interests there. Certain south Slav oriented newspapers existed in Croatia and Slovenia, owned by nationalistic Croats and Slovenes. Their approach, for the most part however, was considerably more moderate than the Serbian press due to the presence of Austrian and Hungarian censors. In Slovenia, the nationalist newspapers were small ventures, dependent on releases from Serbia and Croatia for foreign news. The bourgeoisie owners of the newspapers were influenced by these releases, but also by personal contact with cultural and political leaders who were desirous of autonomy or independence. For the literate south Slavs in Serbia and Croatia, newspapers were the sole source of reading material.

The newspaper industry in the south Slav area was characterized by certain outstanding features. These newspapers were devoted more to sensation than to careful examination and reporting of the facts or news. It is well to remember that, as elsewhere, the newspapers were commercial ventures and thus bound to favor policies friendly to the economic interests of the locality or nation. As commercial enterprises, they expressed the opinions of those men controlling the purse strings. South Slav editors generally had little control over editorial policy
which was directed by the dominant economic interests. These interests included the coal magnates from eastern Serbia as well as the great noble landowners throughout the three states. A third factor involved in the publishing of south Slav newspapers was their source of information. All but two or three of the papers were too small to maintain staffs in foreign countries or distant localities, so depended on the major papers in Belgrade for their information. These papers of course slanted their point of view in their releases. Thus, not only did control of the Belgrade press mean control of the press throughout Serbia, but also control of the anti-Imperial press in Croatia and Slovenia. The significance of this was not lost on the south Slav leaders.

The newspapers represented a prime channel to publish subjective opinion and views to the public; furthermore, editorializing was not confined to the editorial page. The papers utilized background material to imply things for which they had no real evidence. They quoted from the press releases of the enemy out of context, made appeals to legality, simplified arguments, and finally, made use of endless repetition to achieve their purposes. 5

The south Slav newspapers were constantly revolutionary in tenor, usually extremist on every conflict between south Slav and Austrian. In 1907, five large newspapers called for revol-

ution. The papers made constant use of poems such as those
discussed in the previous chapter, imploring the people to free
themselves from foreign domination. It is significant to note
that papers like *Srpska Rijec* and *Otadzbina* were actually the
property of the Serbian government. Their editors were always
Serbs and editorial policy was directed from Belgrade. All
of the Serbian press was directed from the propaganda office
in Belgrade. The government control of newspapers in pre-war
Serbia was absolute and during the war, the censorship of
news was more total than anywhere else in Europe.

If Serb newspapers were controlled by the government, it
is essential to remember that nationalists like Pashich
controlled the government. Thus, the content of articles and
editorial policy was quite Pan-Serb. Articles concerning events
of little real importance regarding Austrian success in any area
at the expense of Serbia or vice versa was exploited completely
out of proportion to the real situation. Feature articles on
events in Serbian history would appear, emphasizing the glories
of years gone by. Russia received extremely favorable coverage
by the papers. Logically, the control of the newspapers by
Pan-Serbs affected features, stories, and news presentation in
virtually every newspaper in Serbia, as well as many in Croatia
and Slovenia, all calculated to rouse an apathetic population
to a nationalist fervor. That particular quality of the Serbian
press, sensationalism, was put to great use.
Descriptions by prominent citizens, such as Dr. Tresic Pavicic, of atrocities committed during 1914 and 1915 by the Austro-Hungarian armies aroused sentiment. Father Nikolai Velimirovic wrote articles on history, relating how all nations were either saints or sinners, and it is not difficult to discover which category Serbia fit.9 The papers de-emphasized the importance of the outbreak of the typhus which nearly destroyed the Serb army, and instead reported that a strong Serb army faced only the remnants of those Austrians already once defeated.

Statistics on the size and circulation of the south Slav newspapers are scarce, but following are a few numbers indicative of not only the phenomenal literacy rate in Slovenia, but also of the typical size of such newspapers. By 1912, Slovenia already had 122 newspapers. One of the largest was a weekly, the Domolioub, edited for the peasants of Carniola, with a circulation of 50,000. Another paper published in Slovenia was the Slovenski Dom, with a circulation of about 28,000.10 These papers consistently advocated that the extremely high level of cultural and economic development of the Slovenes entitled them to the right of national independence.

Russia, even after the Revolution, due to its importance in all Slav affairs, received consistently uncritical praise from the south Slavs. The paper, The Balkan, was quoted as stating that "Russia, whether she be Tsarist or Bolshevik, is
for the Serbian people, for all Croats and Slovenes." This policy was not followed only in Serbia. In Zagreb, Rietch announced that "our people have always believed in Russia. We believed in Tsarist Russia. We still believe in Russia today, not because she is Bolshevist, but simply because she is Russia."

There were certain articles by well-known writers which appeared in almost all south Slav newspapers. The populist muckraker of the south Slavs was a Serb, Svetolik Rankovich. The favorite satirist, appealing to scientists and scholars, was Stojan Novakovich, while Bogdan Popovich was a popular literary critic. The essays by these men usually agitated for reform, and were quite often satirical.

The newspapers were the prime users of symbols. By the use of word symbols such as Turk, Constitution, Austrian, Independence, Napoleon and others, the editors could appeal to and arouse the emotions of the reader, playing on his fears and affections. Features and stories on anniversaries of great victories [or defeats] and articles on great monuments could accomplish the same purpose. Celebrating the creation of Illyria, which marked at least partial national and political unification and emancipation, a monument was built to Napoleon in Ljubljana. On it was inscribed the following: "Beneath this stone we have placed Thy dust, Thou unnamed soldier of Napoleon's army, that Thou mayest rest in our midst. Having gone into battle for the glory of thy Emperor, Thou hast fallen
for our liberty." Newspapermen embodied current, contemporary events in the appropriate symbols and achieved the aim of the owner or editor. Also, many times in relating an event, writers imposed value judgements; for example, in reference to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, when speaking of the assassin, the paper might refer to the patriot, Princip. This type of phrase implied that not only was Princip a symbol of resistance to Austria as a patriot, but also that what he did was a patriotic deed. In times of hardship, the people were rallied by references to places of great tribulation such as Kossovo, to Napoleon, to former great heroes or men who acted with great bravery in difficult times. All these methods involved the manipulation of symbols in newspapers.

The newspapers played the most essential role in gathering popular enthusiasm for nationalistic undertakings, especially during the war years. The papers themselves reinforce the accuracy of their writers simply by printing what they had to say. Many newspaper readers considered that, if it was in print, it must be true; moreover, the reader had a sense of universality as he realized that just as he read that paper, so did thousands of others. Finally, a newspaper can constantly repeat items to reinforce already mentioned ideas.

Other means of manipulating symbols existed, but played only a minor role in the national struggle of each of the three states. In general, these would have appealed only to the small
group of literate individuals. Among these were arts, theatre, rumors, billboards, placards, and magazines. All of these means of communication applied only to that group of literate; other means were necessary to reach the ignorant and illiterate peasantry.

In order to communicate symbols and gain the support of the peasantry, universal symbols and appeals to the peasants were mobilized on major holidays and festivals to stir nationalistic enthusiasm and recall old glories and triumphs. Perhaps the most important means of communicating universal symbols in the south Slav lands was the ballad.

Because of its importance in the life of the south Slav peasant, the role of the ballad must be discussed further. The tradition of Serbian balladry was of great importance as a means of communicating universal symbols. Largely because of the tremendous conflicts and migrations throughout Serbian and south Slav history, since the thirteenth century, this area developed an independent culture which was most vividly expressed in its ballads. The transitory, struggling and nomadic life of medieval Serbia made the development of a sheltered written language and literature difficult. The poet-balladier stood beside the mountain chieftain, always prepared to praise the hero, condemn the traitor, and lament the dead. Their songs were all the history the people could expect -- legend and
Thus began in the middle ages the traditional oral expression so characteristic of the south Slavs.

"There is a sad, simple and beautiful grandeur in the cycle of Kossovo which causes that group of poems to stand out as a supreme moment of European balladry."

It was the Kossovo disaster in 1389 which opened the period of great Serbian balladry. The first purpose of the Serb ballad, as seen in this cycle, was that of an oral newspaper, a characteristic evident even in the modern verses quoted previously.

In addition:

"It is in these ballads that the Serb nation truly lives; and the peasant soldiers who crossed the plain of Kossovo with reverent awe in 1912 were completing a ritual begun by the self-sacrifice of Tsar Lazar."

These ballads and verses were a ready-made means of communication, naturally traditional, and so rich in symbolism. In the twentieth century, ideas, causes, news, and courage were transmitted to the peasant in basically the same way that they had been passed on for six centuries.

There were three great festival days for the south Slavs; the 28th of June was the Vidov-Dan, the greatest national festival, the symbol of Serb hopes. Here the peasants wore small crosses made from certain trees in order to bring them freedom and ward off evil foreigners. A second great day was St. George's Day, on April 24th; the third was St. Barbara's Day. At all these events, traditionally three toasts were made -- to the glory
of God, to the Holy Cross, and to the Trinity. In the post-1900 era, a fourth was added -- a toast to freedom. At these festivals, the peasants wore the costumes used during the time of the great Serbian Empire of the middle ages -- for men, white pleated skirts and short braided jackets. Women wore white kerchiefs attached to their heads by a narrow dark band. The peasants danced the national dance, the "kola," a serpentine formation, hand in hand, twisting and turning, in and out.

These festivals provided an excellent opportunity for political agitation and meetings. A large body of mainly illiterate peasants gathered together to celebrate an event of national or religious importance. This gathering provided a chance for singing nationalistic songs and hymns, for reciting traditional ballads. In this way, political articulation, in its crudest form, was extended to the peasant.

We may speculate on the course of such a meeting on a festival day, using those tools suggested above. The peasants would all gather in the village square; while waiting for the mayor or some other notable to speak, the crowd passed the time by singing -- probably songs about their homeland, their nation, or perhaps their ancestors. Someone might have stood and recited lines from a traditional ballad or poem. The speaker would arrive late, speak too long -- berating those who made life hard for the farmer, i.e. the Austrians, and others -- and dwell on the greatness of the nation. Finally, after he finished, more songs, ballads,
and poems would follow until all became tired and the meeting broke up. As we have seen, the leaders had consciously manipulated symbols in such events.

In the effort by the leaders to arouse enthusiasm for the separate nationalist movements, two basic segments of society were approached. The first were the literate, educated upper-class man and the middle class bourgeoisie; the second comprised the superstitious, illiterate peasant. It was not opposition in either group which the leaders sought to change, but only their apathy. In view of the distinct division between the groups, two different types of symbol manipulation were employed. For the literate, newspapers and other written material were the primary means; the illiterate were approached through meetings, festivals, and other social events.

In the south Slav countries, the nationalist leaders were in control of the political [popular] structure and parties in each of the three states in 1912. Thus, all the means of symbol manipulation were at their disposal. In Slovenia, because of its autonomy, and in Serbia, this meant control of the press. In Serbia, Slovenia, and especially Croatia, men like Radich made use of public meetings and festivals. In part motivated by hatred of Austria, Serbia gave secret assistance to Croatia and Slovenia. By control of every source by which the citizen could be informed in the south Slav area, nationalists achieved the
ultimate goal of the symbol manipulator -- the creation of an artificial mental environment. By the successful manipulation of symbols, the political leaders convinced the economic, social, and religious leaders, as well as the masses, to support nationalistic programs and goals. A detailed examination of the gradual success of this effort from 1915 to 1918 is difficult, but certain observations are possible. The leaders did not become quite active in promoting nationalism until the Balkan Wars beginning in 1908. The strength of the nationalists increased steadily in south Slav Diets and Skuptchinas from 1908 to 1914. Symbol manipulation from 1914, to the liberation of the south Slavs from Austrian occupation in 1918, was carried on either outside those lands by foreign nationalists, or exiles, whether individually, or as a provisional government. Some small meetings were in all likelihood conducted in the small villages and towns. The success of the nationalist leaders previous to 1914 and then covertly during the war, was manifested in the popular support which existed in 1918 for the first time, a south Slav union.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV


2 The elites were themselves manipulated by the political leaders as a means of reaching the peasants and further convincing them.


4 Chapter III

5 Doob, loc. cit., p. 340.


8 Ibid., December 22, 1917, p. 3.


12 Ibid.


15 Ibid., p. 321.

16 Ibid., p. 325.


18 Ibid.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that in the south Slav lands the danger of a restoration of the Austrian crown after the war was minimal; indeed, there was very little fear of such an event. The south Slav leaders recognized the Empire had collapsed because of its inherent economic, political, and social deficiencies. Thus, it is quite clear that the formation of Yugoslavia was not a consequence of a persistent fear of Habsburg restoration.

Another important factor was that neither the United States nor Great Britain would permit Serbian territorial aggrandizement in conflict with previous treaties and agreements. It was not a fear of Habsburg restoration which motivated the south Slav leaders, particularly Serbian, but the fear of Italian territorial aggrandizement as promised in the Treaty of London in 1915. Without the aid of Russia at the council table, some kind of united south Slav image was necessary to prevent such action by Italy. Pashich, in Serbia, was only half-heartedly interested in a south Slav union. For more favorable to a Pan-Serb state, he did not make any significant effort for a Yugoslav state until Italy had announced her intention to carry out the annexation of the territories she had been promised in 1915.

Serbia could, through a south Slav union, not only prevent Italy from gaining certain territories, i.e. Trieste, but could claim such areas for itself, based on ancient Croatian
claims. For purposes of aggrandizement and to prevent Italian expansion, Serbian leaders, near the end of the war, pressed strongly for a union. The predominance of Serbia at this point became evident in the 1920's when strong independence movements arose in both Slovenia and Croatia. The idea of autonomy and independence which these two states had envisioned was frustrated by the predominant strength of Serbia.

Having discounted interference from the former rulers of any significance, we must turn to the events and movements within Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia as an explanation of "why Yugoslavia?". These countries, even in 1918, were still economically and socially backward. The vast majority of the population were illiterate peasants, politically inarticulate and apathetic. The bourgeoisie and the upper classes had united with the monarchists (in Serbia) to form liberal parties which favored an active foreign policy, but supported the domestic status quo. The peasants, in those areas where they were at least semi-articulate, formed Radical and peasant's parties. Unlike similar parties in other countries, these were not revolutionary, but reform-minded. War presented an opportunity to the political leaders to change that static condition. In essence, the conflict provided an alienated peasant leadership the opportunity to greatly accelerate the developmental pace of a semi-stagnant society.

The political leaders in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia made
a convincing case for independence, based on the ancient south Slav traditions of culture, language, and history. It was rather evident that neither Slovenia nor Croatia could survive politically or economically as individual entities.

If, as is intimated, diplomacy was such an important factor in 1918, we must question which function was served by symbols and their manipulators. The manipulation of symbols created a convincing case for union which was used by political leaders to sway or convert economic, social, and religious leaders to the desired goal -- union. Popular leaders such as Pashich and Radich were dependent on their positions as social and political spokesmen for the peasants and other segments of society for national power and influence. Without the support of these groups they could not continue to help guide the government. It therefore was the task of the leaders to make their cause and goal of nationalism and finally Yugoslavism, the cause and goal of the peasants and non-political leaders. To accomplish this goal, they made use of newspapers, public meetings, and literature to arouse, through the symbols expressed in these media, a strong nationalist sentiment. This was essential for the preservation of their power.

There are then, two factors in the unification and formation of the Yugoslav state. The first was the existence
of an extremely articulate and realistic group of political leaders in the south Slav states, particularly in Serbia. These men created, through the manipulation of symbols, active nationalist feeling among other leaders and the peasantry. Being political manipulators, they dealt in terms of the possible. When, in 1918, individual national existence for Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia became unrealistic in terms of political stability and diplomatic possibility, the emphasis was shifted to union.

The second factor involved primarily two of the great powers, the United States and the United Kingdom. The leaders of these two nations recognized the futility and unrealistic nature of granting independence to such tiny states as Slovenia and Croatia, with no recent history of independent existence. Based on this realization, the two powers pressed vigorously for a south Slav union.

There is a second, less plausible, more theoretical explanation of the events related to unification. It could be argued that the political skill of the political leaders concerned occupied an insignificant role. Certain conditions existed and the leaders merely followed a path to which there were no alternatives. Toward the end of the war, it was clear that Slovenia and Croatia had neither the political, social,
nor economic strength to exist independently. To grant them autonomy within the new Austrian republic was politically and diplomatically impossible. Also, to annex them directly to Serbia was a violation of the principle of autonomy put forward in the Fourteen Points. The only course of action open to the political leaders was some form of union of the south Slav states, with an guarantee of autonomy to Slovenia and Croatia within such a state.

It is my conclusion that the explanation of the course of events lies in a combination of the two points of view: that the unification of the south Slavs was accomplished due not only to the limitation of alternatives by existing conditions, but also to the political realism and skillfulness of the leaders of the three states.
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