

## SERBIAN NATIONALISM WITH THE DISINTERGRATION OF THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA IN 1991

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### Abstract

*Nationalism is one of the basic and decisive factors that led to the disintegration of the multinational Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991. In the lines of nationalism tied to the ethnic groups in this country, Serbian nationalism is the main flow affecting the formation, development and disintegration of Yugoslavia. Studying Serbian nationalism regarding those characteristics of formation context, goals, development process contributes to clarify not only the over-7 decades' historical existence of this multinational country of Yugoslavia in the fields of politics, society, culture, but also the cause and nature of its disintegration in the 1990s through the blood ethnic wars. Therefore, Serbian nationalism is associated with the history of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, typically via its disintegration in 1991.*

**Keywords:** *Concentratism, federalism, Serbian nationalism, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Yugoslav nationalism.*

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## CHỦ NGHĨA DÂN TỘC SERBIA VỚI SỰ TAN RÃ CỦA CỘNG HÒA LIÊN BANG XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA NAM TƯ NĂM 1991

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### Lịch sử bài báo

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### Tóm tắt

*Chủ nghĩa dân tộc là một trong những nhân tố cơ bản và quyết định dẫn đến sự tan rã của quốc gia đa dân tộc Cộng hòa liên bang xã hội chủ nghĩa Nam Tư năm 1991. Trong các dòng chảy chủ nghĩa dân tộc gắn với lợi ích tộc người ở quốc gia này thì chủ nghĩa dân tộc Serbia là dòng chảy chính tác động đến sự hình thành, phát triển và tan rã của Nam Tư. Nghiên cứu làm rõ những đặc trưng của chủ nghĩa dân tộc Serbia như bối cảnh hình thành, mục tiêu, tiến trình phát triển... không những góp phần làm rõ những nội dung lịch sử trong hơn 7 thập kỉ tồn tại của quốc gia đa dân tộc Nam Tư trên các lĩnh vực chính trị, xã hội, văn hóa... mà còn làm rõ nguyên nhân, tính chất của quá trình tan rã quốc gia đa dân tộc Nam Tư trong thập niên 1990 thông qua các cuộc chiến tranh dân tộc đẫm máu. Chính vì vậy, chủ nghĩa dân tộc Serbia gắn với lịch sử Cộng hòa liên bang xã hội chủ nghĩa Nam Tư, điển hình là sự tan rã của quốc gia đa dân tộc này năm 1991.*

**Từ khóa:** *Chủ nghĩa tập trung, chủ nghĩa liên bang, chủ nghĩa dân tộc Serbia, cộng hòa liên bang xã hội chủ nghĩa Nam Tư, chủ nghĩa dân tộc Nam Tư.*

## 1. Introduction

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was formed after World War II on the basis of restoring the Yugoslav Kingdom that had existed from 1918 to 1941. SFRY had experienced many different names from its inception (1945) to its disintegration (1991), but in essence, SFRY was a socialist federal state with its own characteristics relatively independent from the socialist model in the Soviet Union. In the period of 1945 - 1991, SFRY had a peaceful time to develop the nation and achieved many important achievements in all fields from economy, politics, culture - society and diplomacy. However, by the 1980s, SFRY was in a crisis that led to the complete disintegration of the multinational nation in 1991. Not only did the country disintegrate but the consequences of the disruption of ethnic links lead to the bloody ethnic wars in the 1990s. There were many factors leading to the disintegration of SFRY but nationalism was one of the main factors. In nationalist currents, Serbian nationalism played an important role. Therefore, understanding Serbian nationalism affecting the disintegration of SFRY is a necessary scientific issue. Clarifying this impact factor on national disintegration not only sheds light on the perception of nationalism in Serbia in particular, but also a better understanding of the nationalist flows in SFRY in general, contributing to clarify the disintegration of SFRY in 1991.

## 2. Overview of Serbian nationalism before 1945

Nationalism is also called nationalist thought as a complex, multi-dimensional concept that relates to the sense of community with one's nation. This political ideology aims to acquire and maintain complete autonomy or sovereignty over a territory of historic significance to a human community. Nationalism therefore argues that a nation should develop its own economy - politics, not from outside influences. Furthermore, nationalism aims to the

development and maintenance of national identity based on common characteristics such as culture, language, race, religion, political goals or beliefs about the common joint. Thus, nationalism is a term used to refer to the maturity of the national consciousness of a certain community of people in the awareness of their own national identity and right of self-determination.

Serbian nationalism was borned in the 40s of the nineteenth century in the context of the struggle of the Serbian people against the Ottoman rule and had undergone a long period of development since 1804. Serbia gained autonomy in 1817. In 1844, Garašanin - a Serbian intellectual made the point of "forming the Serbian state on the basis of gathering all Serbs in one country and inheriting the tradition of the Middle Serbian Empire" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.230). In fact, the Serbian knowledge learned in Western countries, assimilated the idea of liberal democracy in the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in forming the state - nation according to the model of the bourgeois countries like France. The goal of Serbian nationalism at the beginning was to gather all the Serbs in a united nation even though the Serbs were scattering in many different parts of the territory of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Montenegro. The nationalist ideology of the nineteenth century was the basis of the nationalist policies of the later Serbian ruling class. A growing national consciousness led to an awareness of self-determination national rights, which led the struggle of the Serbian people to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire. The victory of the struggle for national liberation in Serbia helped Serbia gain autonomy in 1817 and be fully independent recognized in 1878. However, with the large number of Serbs living outside the country in the neighboring territories, Serbia aimed to unite all Serbs in one country - it was a strong country (Great Serbia) on the basis of reviving the medieval

Serbian empire. This goal was introduced by Serbian intellectuals in the mid-nineteenth century and became a permanent goal of Serbian nationalism even when Serbia became part of the later Yugoslav multi-ethnic nation. Besides the formation and development of Serbian nationalism, Yugoslavism was also initiated in the mid-nineteenth century. Representing Yugoslavism were the representatives of Croatia with the goal of uniting all residents of the same ethnic origin - the South Slavs in a common state on the basis of common characteristics of ethnic and linguistic origins. In the mid-nineteenth century, except for the Serbs who gained autonomy, all South Slavs residents were under the dominion of the two empires, Ottoman and Habsburg. The emergence of Yugoslavism was a manifestation of the maturation of the common national consciousness of the Southern Slavs in order to realize the first goal of gaining independence from the domination of the two great external empires. After the liberation, based on their common ethnic and linguistic origins, residents of the South Slavs would establish their common nation - the nation of the Southern Slavs (Yugoslavia - whose name means the territory of the South Slavs). Yugoslavism was nurtured and developed by the representatives of Croatia (after the support from Slovenia) throughout the nineteenth century until the formation of the common state of the South Slavs residents after World War I.

The victory of the two Balkans wars (1912, 1913) and especially the members of the victorious faction of World War I strengthened the goal of uniting Serbs in a state of Serbian rulers. "Victory in the Balkans wars of 1912; 1913 created a great buzz for Serbia among the Slavs in the territory of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.243). With the position and prestige of the winning nation, with a strong military force, with the overwhelming number of Serbs compared to other ethnic groups of the

South Slavs, with having gained independence from domination prior Ottoman rule, Serbia had a favorable position in negotiating with Croats and Slovenian people to form a common nation after World War I. "On July 20, 1917, representatives of the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Commission (representatives of Croatia and Slovenia in the Austro-Hungarian empire met in Corfu and adopted the Corfu statement on the future formation of a common state model)" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.245). Earlier, in early 1917 "representatives of Slovenia demanded and were approved by the National Assembly in May declaring the recognition of human rights and self-determination to the people of Slovenia and Croatia, and requested establishing a Nation of Slovenian, Croats and Serbs in the territory of the Austrian-Hungarian empire" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.245). When the Salonika Front ended on September 15, 1918, the Slovenian People's Council, the Croats and the Serbs were formed and decided to form the "Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs" but this newly formed nation had been threatened by internal and external forces. Outside was Italy with the ambition to merge the territories of Slovenia and Croatia while the revolutionary elements from the Green forces inside was also a threat to the new state. In this context, the People's Council called for military support from Serbia. Serbia's view was its desire to merge the territories of South Slavs, including Serbs. Meanwhile, "on November 26, 1918, Montenegro decided to unite with Serbia to become a nation. Similar decisions were made to unify Serbia from Bosnia - Herzegovina and Vojvodina in November 1918" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.246). On 1 December 1918, after negotiations between the Serbian government and the People's Council of the Kingdom of the Slovenian, Croats and Serbs, "the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenian" was declared founded by King

Alexander of the Karadiordjevic Kingdom of Serbia. It can be said that the common state formation after World War I was the realization of the South Slavs' desire to independence in the Balkans after centuries of being dominated by outside empires. The common nation was formed to meet the South Slavs' independent aspirations, and to fit the calculations of the empire that won the war after World War I to stabilize the situation in the Balkans. However, in reality, the common country was the Serbification of the territories of the South Slavs in the territories of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empire when "Serbia brought its state apparatus, its monarchy, its winning army and its territories were annexed after the 1912, 1913 Balkans wars into the common state, dominating the common state" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.248). The formation of a common state was the way to realize the goals of Serbian nationalism set in the mid - nineteenth century. Serbs in the nation were generally satisfied with their status as being safe and secure anytime, anywhere. The Serbs were also the main force in the state organs of the centralized power model.

The South Slavs' common nation was organized in a centralist model under the rule of Serbia's Karadiordjevic Dynasty. The Serbs dominated the other ethnic groups in the nation, the ethnic conflict between the Serbs and the Croats, the Serbs and the Slovenes became increasingly strained from the nation's founding. The main cause of this disagreement was that the ethnic goals were different among ethnic groups, typically the two largest ethnic groups in the country were Serbs and Croats. Croatia and Slovenia had been historically time under Habsburg rule but had a high tradition of autonomy and had gained autonomy throughout medieval history. Croatia and Slovenia saw the formation of a common nation as a step towards achieving complete independence for their people with a separate nation so they did not accept the model of centralism under Serbian dominance.

When the common state was formed, Serbia with its own advantages gained a dominant position in the common state, the politicians of Croatia and Slovenia became opposing political forces. The Croatian Farmer's Party - a political force representing the interests of Croats - boycotted the parliamentary elections in 1920, opposing Serbian political imposition. Political conflict intensified between the Serbs and the Croats during the 1920s and culminated in the shooting of Croatian parliamentary representatives from Serbs in 1928. In the midst of that political crisis, King Alexander announced the establishment of a dictatorship in 1929 and renamed the country Yugoslav Kingdom. "The dictatorship has created dissatisfaction among the people throughout the country and the separatist ideology has grown stronger" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.250). The policies of the authoritarian period did not only solve the ethnic conflict, it also made even more tension. The agreement reached between the Serbs and Croats in 1939 to deal with ethnic contradictions in a limited way led to the Yugoslav Kingdom not strong enough to unite the ethnic groups in the country against the aggression of Phat Nazi in 1941. Yugoslavia rapidly disintegrated; the country was occupied and divided the area of control between the Nazi invaders and the authorities.

In the period 1918 - 1941, the common nation of South Slavs residents formed after World War I faced internal and external challenges. Outside was the demarcation of borders with other countries, confirming the international position of the new nation. Inside was the relationship between ethnic groups. Although having the same ethnic origin as the South Slavs, the ethnic groups had undergone a different historical process, forming their own cultural and religious characteristics. When the common nation was established, the South Slavs had never known each other before, so each ethnic group agreed to form a common nation to realize their own

national goals, the most typical of which was the three Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The central structure of the state under Serbs rule from the outset contradicted the trends of autonomy and decentralization of the Croats and Slovenes. Serbian nationalism accomplished its goal after World War I to unite all Serbs living in different territories in a common state under Serbs control. However, the Serbian authorities did not resolve the ethnic conflicts in the common nation between 1918 and 1941. The constant disagreements and tensions in the relations between the three ethnic groups caused conflicts, political crisis and negative impact on economic development. The kingdoms of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (changed to the Yugoslav Kingdom in 1929) did not create a cohesion between ethnic groups, a rift between ethnic groups weakened the nation and quickly defeated by the fascists in 1941. The fall of the Yugoslav Kingdom in 1941 was the disintegration of national links in the country. More than two decades of coexistence with the South Slavs may conclude that "Yugoslavia is a common nation by imagination rather than reality" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p. 247). Yugoslavism was struggling in the early stages of national formation by the development of separate nationalism, of which Serbian nationalism was the most important factor.

During World War II, the independent Croatian state established in 1941 (Independent State of Croatia - NDH) implemented a ethnic cleansing policy aimed at Serbs in the territory of NDH. The measures aimed at deporting and exterminating Serbs were appalling for the Serbs during this period, becoming bad memories of the relationship between the Serbs and Croats, and also opening the ethnicity purification policy that SFRY made during the later wars of the 1990s. "By the end of 1941, 120,000 and in 1942, 200,000 Serbs had to leave Croatia, Serbs writing was banned, their Orthodox churches were destroyed, another part of the Serbs population,

Jews and Roma were housed in typical NDH concentration camps such as Jasenovac, Stara Gradiška and Jadovno" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.247). Fascist countries' invasion and domination of Yugoslavia during World War II not only divided territory but also divided ethnic groups, completely disintegrating Yugoslavia as a nation with the most systematic consciousness of the Southern Slavs.

### **3. The development of Serbian nationalism after 1945**

When Yugoslavia was invaded and dominated by Nazi Germany, the territory was divided into various occupation areas between fascists and minions. The two movements against fascism and aggression appeared in Yugoslavia in late 1941, the Communist movement led by the Yugoslav Communist Party (Tito) representing the interests of all both the Yugoslav people and the Chetnik movement representing the royal government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia led by General Draža Mihailović. The goal of the Communist movement was to liberate the country from fascist and minion rule and then to build socialism in Yugoslavia, while Chetnik's goal was to liberate Yugoslavia and restore it. Imperial dictatorship was dominated by Serbia before the war. With the support of the people of Yugoslavia together with the support of allied forces, the movement led by the Communist Party has affirmed its position, influence and became the main strategic force in the struggle to liberate Yugoslavia in the end of World War II. In the context of the war against fascism and minions entering the final stage, the victory of the Communist movement led to the declaration of the establishment of the Yugoslav Democratic Republic (November 19, 1943). The alliance between the Yugoslav Communist Party and the government in exile failed to reach agreement between 1943 and 1946, which led to the declaration of the establishment of the People's Republic of Yugoslavia (November 29, 1945) with the constitution. The first federal law

was issued on January 31, 1946. The Yugoslav Communist Party became the ruling Party after the war.

The new state was formed after World War II in the model of a socialist federal state with the first principle of equality between peoples and equality for all people. The state has recognized other legal ethnic groups other than the three ethnic groups before World War II: Macedonia, Montenegro and Islam (recognized legal ethnic group in 1971). Two areas of Serbia, Kosovo (most Albanians) and Vojvodina (most Hungarian), were granted autonomy. On the basis of legally recognized ethnic groups forming the republics - such ethnic groups are Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia - Herzegovina. Thus, after World War II, the People's Republic of Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic nation made up of 6 republics and 2 autonomous provinces of Serbia. In 1963, the People's Republic of Yugoslavia changed its name to the Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic. "The only principle of survival and development of the Yugoslav multi-ethnic nation is to maintain political balance and limit national tensions. If the Yugoslav state does not maintain this function, separatism of ethnic groups will lead the nation into a national war that is inevitable" (Pestic, 1996, p.1).

Based on the federal principle to build state apparatus after World War II, the relationship between ethnic groups changed. By recognizing new ethnic groups in the nation such as Macedonia and Montenegro, even recognizing Bosnian Muslims as an equal ethnic group to those who have displeased the Serbs. In addition, the recognition of the autonomy of Vojvodina province and the Kosovo autonomous region in Serbs territory created a feeling of limiting Serbia's power in the new federal state after World War II. In the period 1945 - 1948, the federal state was organized in the model of the Soviet Union - a state highly concentrated under the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist

Party, implementing economic development under a centralized mechanism with Economic planning prioritizes the development of heavy industry and infrastructure construction, and nationalizes national relations in the federation. However, after a rift in relations with the Soviet Union in 1948, the Yugoslav People's Republic of Yugoslavia chose its own path in building socialism, not in the system of world socialism with leadership of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In that political context, a new wave of violence emerged in Yugoslavia. "Political dissidents are arrested and sent to concentration camps. This is considered as the success of Tito in the campaign to weaken the Serbs against the new government and to break the traditional alliance in the history between the Serbs and the Russians" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.258). The Serbs were dissatisfied with the policies of the new government after World War II because it was detrimental to their interests, undermining the hegemonic position they had before the war. The view of the head of the Yugoslav Party and State - Tito after World War II was to implement equality among ethnic groups in the nation, together unite to build a nation - the Yugoslav nation with "a weak Serbia for a strong Yugoslavia". However, the implementation of fairness and equality among ethnic groups, provided that each ethnic group played a major role in each federal republic, would lead to increasingly high federalism. The development of federalism in the state would reduce centralism under the leadership of the Communist Party. This conflict between the government of the federal government and the government of the republics inevitably led to a political struggle between the two trends of federalism and centralism in the state of SFRY. The Constitution of 1974 had initially affirmed the victory trend of federalism in the operation of the state of SFRY when it gave the republics high autonomy. As a people who supported the centralized model in the two periods before and

after World War II, Serbian authorities initially reacted to strong federal trends after the 1974 constitution. Struggling against federalism, the Serbian leadership called for either a model of a highly centralized state throughout the federation or a return to Serbs nationalism - a concentration of Serbs in a United Nation. Both the demands of the Serbian authorities were detrimental to the interests of the republics especially Slovenia and Croatia at the time. Thus, the political struggle in the Yugoslavian state since the early 1980s was the struggle of two trends of federalism (represented by Slovenia and Croatia) and centralism (represented by Serbia). The unified Yugoslav state that Tito advocated to build after World War II began to crack. The tendency of political struggle was driven by the feelings of nationalism that had existed for a long time in history. So nationalism was the main driver of the trend of political struggle, which was clearly shown in the 1990s when the political crisis led to national disintegration with a series of grim blood wars. "For the Serbs, the centralized and unified state is the way to unite all the Serbs into one country, so they oppose any idea that supports the opposing state model: autonomy, joint states or alliances" (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.263). The Serbs believed in what they built after World War I: a Serbs state, Serbian monarchy, Serbian army, the proportion of Serbs in the total state population. The Serbs used violence against other ethnic groups as stated in the Vidovdan constitution in 1921 or the assassination of Croatian representatives in parliament in 1928. The dictatorship established in 1929 was logical in the minds of Serbian leadership - using concentrated violence against opposing peoples. It was the internal political instability and the pressures of the Nazi aggression from outside that led to the complete disintegration of the Yugoslav nation of phase 1 (1918 - 1941). In contrast to Serbian nationalism, which was Slovenian and Croatian nationalism, as well as those recognized

after World War II - they always struggled against national hegemony, increasingly defined its identity in terms of ethnicity and autonomy in exercising political power. After World War I, Yugoslavia was the most complicated nation in Central - Southern Europe with "relevant criteria from history, political traditions, development level about economic, society, culture, religion ... Yugoslavia has gathered many ethnic groups in a common country" (Pesic, 1996, p.1). In fact, Yugoslavia has never built a national identity of the nation based on a national-ethnic principle with the role of the larger ethnic groups in the country. The period 1918-1941 was the role of the Serbs and the period 1945-1991 was a temporary political and national balance led by the Communist Party. However, "this temporary equilibrium does not please the Serbs - the ethnic group that accounts for 40% of the population of the whole SFRY" (Pesic, 1996, p.1) and the ethnic group that determined Yugoslavia development from 1918 to 1941.

Following the intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia in 1968, many perspectives on humanitarian socialism emerged in SFRY. In the early 1970s, "free trends began to emerge within the Yugoslav Communist League, party congresses in the republic elected new generations of leaders with reform and liberty ideas before the Party (Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017, p.266). SFRY's 1974 constitution laid the basis for the recognition of the legitimacy of the province and the autonomous region of Serbia, laying the foundation for Vojvodina and Kosovo to take another step in the struggle to recognize the status as a republic. This constitution created dissatisfaction with the Serbs and was one of the foundations of Serbian nationalist explosion in the 1980s. Thus, after World War II, the federal state principle created Serbian disgruntled leaders. Serbia saw SFRY's policies as aimed at Serbia, weakening Serbia and it was done with Tito's prestige and personal power (the Croatian

headed the Party, the Yugoslav state after World War II). The feeling of discontent was being aroused by the Serbian leadership to become a strong nationalist emotion of the Serbs when Tito died and Serbian nationalism returned to its original goal. Serbs would establish a dominant position in SFRY with the model of centralism or uniting Serbian territories to form a powerful Serbian nation. This goal was prevented by Croatia and Slovenia in SFRY and the national disintegration became visible.

#### **4. Serbian nationalism with the disintegration of SFRY**

After World War II, "Tito's strategic principle for a peaceful development of SFRY was to suppress the power of the largest republic (Serbia) and undermined separatism of other republics in the federation" (Pescic, 1996, p.14). However, after Tito's death in 1980, opportunities for development in peace among ethnic groups lessened when there was a lack of reputable rulers, power acting as a conflict mediator between ethnic groups. "There was no legal agency in SFRY that could play a role in suppressing conflicts between different ethnic groups and supporting the building of a nation - the nation of SFRY" (Pescic, 1996, p.14). This was also a common situation for multinational nations in the socialist bloc and this is a favorable condition for the increase of nationalism - ethnicity in these multinational nations. The political crisis in SFRY was characterized by a process from the disintegration of the political system that led to the outbreak of wars between ethnic groups and republics in the federation. This process started in 1991 when Slovenia and Croatia declared themselves independent nations from SFRY. Of all the premises that led to political crisis and war, nationalism was the most important factor. In the currents of nationalism, Serbian nationalism played a decisive role. It was nationalism with its distinctive historical characteristics that created the cruelty of the wars in SFRY during the two decades after the

Cold War. The ability to embrace democratic changes when the socialist crisis system in SFRY was overlooked with the conservative coalition winning in Serbia and establishing Milošević's ruling as the leader of the federation provoked in 1987. The strong reaction to Serbia's dissatisfaction was after the 1974 constitution in SFRY. This constitution had reduced Serbia's dominant power in the two autonomous regions of Serbia's territory, Kosovo and Vojvodina, by recognizing these two autonomous regions as legally as the federal republics. The legal framework of 1974 provided that the republics and provinces were autonomous with equal rights and obligations. At the federal level, autonomous provinces had the right to veto, had equal representation in the Chairman's Council, had the right to represent the interests of the province without going through the Republic of Serbia as before, representatives of Serbia at the federal level only represent the interests of Serbia in the territory excluding the two autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina" (Pescic, 1996, p.14). The 1974 constitution was the turning point that led to changes in the political system in SFRY. "Slovenia and Croatia, based on the constitutional right of their own right to self-determination, had taken a step forward to secede from SFRY. Serbia, after failing to turn SFRY into a nation with its dominion, turned to a new political program, establishing a Serbian nation-state on the basis of merging all the territories of Serbs that lived in other republics" (Universität Wien, 2013, p.269). In the course of such disagreements and contradictions, a war on territorial and ethnic issues was inevitable in SFRY when the split republics declared themselves independent states, especially in the republics that had a high proportion of Serbs. Practice had been proved by the decade of bloody war on the territory of SFRY in the 1990s in Croatia, Bosnia - Herzegovina and Kosovo. "Since the founding of the common nation in 1918, there had been two nationalist tendencies of the two

largest ethnic groups in the country. Croatian nationalism was separatist nationalism, which required a division of power from the central level, while Serbian nationalism was centralized with high centralized power under Serbian rule” (Pesic, 1996, p.V). In the common state, Croats who sought support from other ethnic groups also aspired to secede and independence as Slovenian, Macedonians, Albanians, Muslims (Bosnia). The two currents of nationalism was the hindrance to create a free, united and modern Yugoslav state.

In 1976, Serbia proposed a constitutional amendment by being allowed to identify the leadership of the republic and the autonomous provinces of Serbia. This proposal was strongly opposed by the leaders of the republic and the autonomous provinces. In the early 1980s, attention was focused on the Kosovo issue, where rising national tensions along with the hardship of the economic crisis led to a 1981 protest by the Albanians to demand the situation of a republic for Kosovo. The leader of Serbia at that time, Ivan Stambolić, advocated resolving the problem through peaceful negotiation. In this context "to change the constitution, Serbia asked to form a coalition supporting Serbia in the federation, but when this alliance was not formed, Serbia thought that there was an alliance in SFRY against Serbia." (Pesic, 1996, p.15). When he came to power "Milošević pledged to fight against nationalism, liberalism and all forms of anti-revolution in Belgrade" (Pesic, 1996, p.17). In the late 1980s, an anti-democratic coalition was formed in the political sphere in Serbia, including the most extremist nationalists in the Orthodox Church and intellectuals - who played an important role in propagating and formulating a nationalist strategy for Serbia, in conjunction with Party officials, the military and the police - who used this nationalist strategy to consolidate their positions of power. Despite the different goals, the members of this alliance complemented each other in pursuing the policy of disbanding SFRY and implemented national

interests in a separate framework: either SFRY became a nation under Serbian control or Serbia united all Serbs in a common state to form "Great Serbia" with violence. The vision of the Serbian leadership in building a new nation was to redistribute the SFRY space to form a strong Serbian nation based on the implementation of Serbs' nationalism. This vision was reflected in redefining Serbian national identity, propagated by the media about Serbs historical legends. To stimulate the development of Serbian nationalism, conservative leaders used methods from intellectual and church conservatives to propagate and assert that Yugoslavism was a lie to the people. Serbs, “Serbia sacrificed everything to form Yugoslavia, fought for Yugoslavia in the war of national liberation but was treated unfairly after the war. Yugoslavia under Tito (Croatian) and Kardelj (Slovenian) implemented anti-Serbia policy, weakening Serbian hegemony in SFRY” (Pesic, 1996, p.19). The Serbs felt they were victorious in the war but lost in peace.

When the Albanian protest broke out in 1981 to demand that Kosovo became a republic, Serbia immediately expressed its attitude toward the Kosovo issue. The first manifestation was from the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, in the 1986 memorandum calling for the strengthening of the Serbs power and affirming the legitimacy of the Serbs leadership in Kosovo, calling for the abolition of the Serbs abandoning Kosovo's autonomy, bringing Kosovo backed as a Serbian administrative unit. After this highly prestigious academic memorandum, within the Serbian Communist Confederation split at the Eighth Conference in 1987, a group of people was led by Slobodan Milošević supported the resolution of the Kosovo problem with justification strong measures (including the used of violence) while the party was led by Ivan Stambolić in the Party supports the mode of conversation in Kosovo. The final polarization that defined Slobodan Milošević's power in the Party and brought him to power in place of Ivan Stambolić in 1987.

With the statements and policies of Serbia after Slobodan Milošević came to an end, the solidarity ended consensus of SFRY. In this context, SFRY either would secede from the republics or conflict would occur. If the republics seceded, Serbia would implement a national unity policy - concentrating the Serbs in the neighboring republics to merge with Serbia to become a united nation. If SFRY was maintained, Serbia would require a centralized model with Serbian power control. In fact, when the republics declared separatist states to become independent states, Serbia supported the centralized areas of the Serbs to establish autonomous governments, declaring the establishment of the republic of the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia - Herzegovina. That was why it created a military conflict and escalated into a bloody war in the 1990s in Croatia and Bosnia - Herzegovina under the influence of Serbian nationalism.

At the XIV Congress of the Yugoslavian Communist League (LCY) in January 1990, the proposals of the Slovenian and Croatian representatives to address the political situation in Kosovo, in terms of nature and organization LCY's organization, on Serbia's imposition policy on Slovenia goods and on the recognition of sovereignty of the republics. These proposals were not met, and the representatives of Slovenia and Croatia left the meeting, the LCY disintegrated and ended the existence that paved the way for the disintegration of the federal state of SFRY. After Tito's death in 1980, the Party was the remaining pillar to ensure unity in SFRY. However, when the LCY disintegrated on January 1, 1990, the national unity became broken, the rift in national relations was deepened. In this context, the individual interests of the republics come first. The disintegration of a common nation is inevitable. However, it was the ethnic conflict and the developmentist nationalist ideology that pushed the ethnic groups in SFRY during the war of slaughtering each other throughout the 1990s. The disintegration of SFRY was inevitable

with tissue. The state shape could not solve problems in national relations. But disintegrating in the way of war and violence as happened in SFRY, nationalism had become a negative factor affecting this disintegration process. The development of nationalism in SFRY was a factor to explain the bloody violence between ethnic groups during the war in the 1990s. Especially when nationalism was incited, used, exploited by the authorities to carry out political intrigue and consolidate personal power characterized by Serbian nationalism.

The crisis of SFRY in the 1980s was the ideological crisis, the organization of political system, the choice of state model. "Conservatives wanted to maintain their power as government officials, party leaders, and military leaders were mostly concentrated in Serbia, so soon formed a conservative coalition against civilian changes topics to maintain their power" (Pesic, 1996, p.2). Meanwhile, in other republics in the federation, the ruling elite was also facing pressures of Serbian nationalist reform and strategy. "They recognized nationalism as the most effective tool to maintain their power" (Pesic, 1996, p. 2). In this context, the initiation and explosion of nationalism was the best option for rulers in the republics in SFRY to maintain and consolidate power. Both political trends used nationalism as a tool for different purposes, but they had in common to reinforce the current position of power. However, using nationalism as a tool to fight politics would be a way to lead SFRY into the tragedy of war in the 1990s. Because when national hatred was aroused, ethnic groups for decades shared peacefully living together could immediately kill one another brutally with very normal weapons. When nationalism was activated, the authorities forgot that in the history of political struggle in SFRY was all about ethnic issues. When national interests conflicted, it would lead to conflict over political issues and political crisis. Thus, nationalism was one of the main factors leading to the political crisis

and progression, the nature of the political crisis was significantly affected by nationalism. For SFRY in particular and the Balkans in general, nationalism appeared and developed with its own characteristics under the impact of historical and cultural factors. The multinational nation, SFRY, must find a political model appropriate to its multi-ethnic nature, first of all harmonizing the interests and aspirations of all ethnic groups. Ever since the founding of the common nation in 1918, nationalist currents had been inconsistency and conflict with each other. Therefore, the existence and development of a common nation was a great challenge for the ruling elite. Yugoslavia failed to develop its multi-ethnic nation in the period 1918 - 1941 and finally collapsed completely in 1991. Not only that, when the multi-ethnic nation disintegrated, nationalism was also the factor that brings ethnic groups into bloody wars. In those nationalist flows, the center was Serbian nationalism. The Serbs were both the largest ethnic group in the common nation, and an advantageous nation at its inception, essentially Serizing the South Slavs in 1918. After World War II, based on federal principles, the status of the Serbs had declined but the Serbs still hold key positions in the state apparatus. When Tito died in 1980, Serbian rulers joined forces to form a conservative coalition to strengthen centralization in SFRY. The program failed, and the Serbian rulers consolidated their positions of power and maintained their political interests pushed nationalism to flourish. The SFRY in the 1980s actually returned to the starting point right from its inception with the political struggle wearing nationalism. A civil war will be unavoidable based on the political movement of SFRY during the 1980s. The results proved by the wars in the 1990s were not only tragic for SFRY but also the hot point about political and security instability of the region and the world.

Right after the formation of a common nation, with its existing advantages, if it did not set up a centralized state model, Serbia would

proceed to unite all Serbs-inhabited territories to become a communist country united "Serbs-inhabited territory within the Austro-Hungarian empire would be merged into Serbia which was understood as Bosnia - Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Srem, part of Dalmatia. Montenegro, which had been united with Serbia, was also understood as Serbs territory. In addition, Serbia gained the Vardar regions of Macedonia and Kosovo when it won the Balkans War (1912 - 1913). These territorial requirements ensured Serbia was a strong federal entity compared to Slovenia and Croatia" (Pesic, 1996, p.6). The view of a federal state based on historical borders would not been considered because it would either defeat Serbian nationalism or lost Serbian leadership in the federation. The political struggle was ongoing in two stages of existence of SFRY. Political struggles led to ethnic issues because nationalism represented the political interests of each ethnic group. The amount of ethnic groups in the federation aggregates, differentiates and eventually links around the two major ethnic axed of Serbia and Croatia. The view of pre-revered Croatian politicians was to support an independent Croatia within its "historical borders" including Bosnia-Herzegovina and several Serbs-focused territories. The long history of autonomy in the territory of the Austro - Hungarian empire had created a tradition of very high awareness of Croatian "self-determination" rights as well as the requirement of an independent state. However, as soon as the founding of the common nation in 1918, Croatia did not have the favorable conditions to exercise this right nor to implement a federal state model of the common state. Therefore, Croatia reluctantly accepted the formation of a common state but maintained a strategy of separatism against centralism as soon as the new nation was formed.

## 5. Conclusion

Serbian nationalism that dates back to the mid - nineteenth century is one of the factors promoting the formation and development of

the nation of the South Slavic people on the Balkans. Throughout the history of existence and development of the common nation (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918 - 1929), Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929 - 1941), Yugoslav Democratic Republic (1943 - 1946), Yugoslavian People's Union (1946 - 1963), Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic (1963 - 1991) Serbian nationalism is a decisive factor. In the period 1918 - 1941, as a dominant ethnic group in the state, Serbian rulers were satisfied with the nationalist ambitions and goals that had been realized. But national and ethnic contradictions during this time weakened national power and led to the disintegration of Nazi invasion. With the establishment of the role and leading position of the national liberation struggle in the period of 1941 - 1945, the Communist Party became the lawful ruling party after the war, restored and built Yugoslavia on the principle of federal under the concentrated leadership of the Communist Party. Serbian nationalism was restricted and controlled during 1945 - 1980 and then exploded again when the Communist Party leader Tito died in 1980. The development of Serbian nationalism in the 1980s brought SFRY into political crisis is getting worse. As a result of the political crisis, the country completely disintegrated and brought SFRY into the process of disintegration by bloody national war in the 1990s. Thus, Serbian nationalism was an important factor leading to the disintegration

of SFRY, specifying the nature and manner of disintegration of this multi-ethnic nation.

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