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### The unfinished trial of Slobodan Milošević: Justice lost, history told

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**Publication date**

2015

**Document Version**

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Vrkić, N. (2015). *The unfinished trial of Slobodan Milošević: Justice lost, history told.*

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*He was a communist opportunist and became an opportunistic nationalist.  
His actions led to...four wars, the instability in Europe, creation of criminal gangs...*

*Richard Holbrooke, Interview, CNN, 11 March 2006*

## **Chapter II: The Leader**

The legal theory applied by the Prosecution distinguished the *de facto* and *de jure* powers of Milošević and, alongside the Joint Criminal Enterprise doctrine, assessed the dynamics of his influence in order to prove his individual and command responsibility for crimes alleged in Croatia, BiH, and Kosovo. The Prosecution's case against Milošević was that, as President of Serbia and later of the FRY, he accumulated extensive *de jure* and *de facto* powers that made it possible for him to control political and military institutions in Serbia, Montenegro, the SFRY and the FRY, as well as those established by Serb leadership in Croatia and BiH. In all three indictments against him, the Prosecution addressed Milošević's unique position as an omnipotent leader of all Serbs. This stemmed from his *de jure* power, as President, and was reinforced and extended by his *de facto* power, which resulted from the acceptance by Serbs living outside the Republic of Serbia of Milošević as their leader, too. His *de facto* power was further strengthened by the willingness of politicians from other Yugoslav republics – even those who actively opposed Serbian politics under his rule – to deal with him as if he was indeed the leader of all Serbs, inducing representatives of the international community to treat him in the same way.<sup>218</sup>

The Defence also underlined Milošević's leadership and his extensive powers, but stressed that they were legitimate and based on his qualities as a leader who was willing to listen to his people and who, unlike his fellow communist politicians at the time, was prepared to take risks and deliver what was expected from him. The Defence argued that he was the protector of Serbs

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<sup>218</sup> There are two telling examples of how Milošević's *de facto* power was accepted by Serbs from Croatia and BiH, along with his domestic political opponents and international representatives. The first is the Igalo Cease Fire Agreement – signed on 17 September 1991 by President of Croatia Franjo Tuđman, Chief of Staff of the JNA and Federal Minister of Defence General Veljko Kadijević, and Milošević, then President of Serbia, with the mediation of EC representative Lord Peter Carrington – which was an important agreement that secured a total cease fire in Croatia, in negotiations for which Milošević represented Croatian Serbs. See: "Statement by Lord Carrington, the Presidents of the Republics of Croatia and Serbia, and the Minister of National Defense at Igalo, Yugoslavia on 17 September 1991," Exhibit D275.2. The other example is the role Milošević played in the Dayton peace negotiations, where he represented Bosnian Serbs. See: "Notes from a meeting held in Dobanovci (Serbia) between Slobodan Milošević and the Bosnian Serb leadership," 29 August 1995," Exhibit P469.20a.

everywhere and in particular those living in Kosovo, Croatia, and BiH. In those places, the Defence claimed, Serbs' national existence had been threatened by Kosovo Albanians, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims.

In this chapter, Milošević's leadership will be explored, first by examining the degree to which his personal leadership style and charisma constituted a 'game changer' in Yugoslav politics beginning in 1987. Drawing on the definition of transformational leadership and the effect a leader has on his or her followers, the questions to be answered are: How, when, and why did followers develop trust, loyalty, and respect for Milošević and make him the leader of all Serbs? Was he a charismatic leader who triggered a revival of the post-communist nationalist movement and its populist appeal, or had the Serbian nationalist agenda been kept alive during the communist period as its ideologues waited for the right moment to act and the right man to lead them? Also, to what extent was Milošević a product of the dominant political culture in which a single leader was the state's most powerful political institution? Was he a dreary and predictable bureaucrat who found himself suddenly in the eye of a spiral of violence that he had triggered but was unable to stop, or was he prepared to use every means at his disposal to attain and maintain his grip on power, without any regard for human suffering? And finally, was Milošević driven primarily by ideological convictions, by political and personal ambition, or by the taste for power itself?<sup>219</sup>

### **The Making of a Leader**

Until 1987, Slobodan Milošević's biography was typical of a professional communist functionary, with nothing to distinguish him from many others who had also loyally served the party, the political system, and the state. Born in the small Serbian town of Požarevac in 1941, Milošević left home at the age of eighteen to study law at the University of Belgrade. Although the Prosecution did not dwell on his youth and the trial record does not contain material about his earliest years, a number of authors have found his childhood relevant to understanding

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<sup>219</sup> For discussion of the motivations of someone accused of mass crimes, see: Bettina Stangneth, *Eichmann Before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014). Also see: Jennifer Schuessler "Book portrays Eichmann as evil, not banal," *International New York Times* (4 September 2014).

Milošević's political conduct.<sup>220</sup> They have explored it in a search for clues that could explain Milošević's later behaviour. His parents' ideological differences – his mother an orthodox communist and his father an Orthodox priest – could certainly have created confusion for a young boy. But it was not until he was much older that he faced the oft-cited tragedy of both of his parents committing suicide. His father killed himself when Milošević was 21 years old and a student in Belgrade, and ten years later, when Milošević was 33, his mother also took her own life. It was an extraordinary start to his adulthood, and in part why his relationship with his wife Mira Marković would turn out to be the most important relationship of his life; and she has been regarded by many of their contemporaries as the driving force behind Milošević's political ambitions. They met in high school before going together to Belgrade to study. Both were devoted communists. Mira's parents had fought as communist Partisan guerrillas in WWII, and her mother had not survived. Her father had remarried and moved to Belgrade, leaving Mira's upbringing to relatives in Požarevac.<sup>221</sup> Upon completing their university educations, Milošević and Marković married and had two children.<sup>222</sup>

A firsthand account of Milošević's early years in politics can be found in a book written by his former political mentor, Ivan Stambolić, who detailed his dealings with Milošević during the 1980s power struggle in Serbia in *Put u bespuće* ("Road to Nowhere").<sup>223</sup> Stambolić was President of the Presidency of the League of Communists of Serbia in the mid-1980s and President of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia from 1986 to 1987.<sup>224</sup> In his book,

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<sup>220</sup> For example, see: Sell, *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 16; and Stevanović, *Milošević: People's Tyrant*, 3.

<sup>221</sup> Sell, *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 17.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>223</sup> Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*. The following chapters of the book were used as exhibits in the Milošević case: Chapter VI, "The Memorandum, In Memoriam to Yugoslavia," was Exhibit P800a; Chapters VII, VIII, IX, X, and XI, "My Biggest Mistake," "The Schism," "It Started in Kosovo," "The Fateful Shots in Paraćin," and "A Prelude to the Eighth Session," respectively, were presented collectively as Exhibit P811a. These Exhibits comprise English translations of the book, originally published in B/C/S.

<sup>224</sup> In Communist Yugoslavia, the structures of the Party and the state were parallel but technically separate; but positions in each were named so similarly as to create confusion. The Party was known as the League of Communists (LC) beginning in 1952, and had a federal-level body with lower-level branches at the republic, provincial, and municipal levels. Communist functionaries from some cities, especially Belgrade – which was an economic and political center for the SFRY – held significant power. The Party's Central Committees (CC), at the federal and republic levels, were consensus decision-making bodies, each with a Chairman as well as a collective Presidency led by a President of the Presidency of the Committee. The state structure also employed a collective Presidency at the federal and republic levels, also led by a President of the Presidency (the executive branch); along with federal- and republic-level Assemblies (the legislative branch) that each had an internal hierarchy similar to that of a parliament or congress. Thus, there was a President of the Presidency of each LC Central Committee and a

Stambolić described the political culture in which the post-WWII generation of communists in Serbia was raised and cultivated. They studied, worked, and socialised together, and considered each other friends. And so, when Stambolić entered politics, his friends and contacts naturally followed.<sup>225</sup>

Stambolić felt the newer generation of communist politicians were more innovative and less bureaucratic, and Milošević held a special place in this group as a political protégé and favourite of Stambolić.<sup>226</sup> Their friendship had started when they were both law students at the University of Belgrade and Stambolić, several years his senior, became Milošević's mentor.<sup>227</sup> The relationship defined Milošević's career path and tragically, in the end, the future of Stambolić as well. In 1987, they parted ways bitterly, never to mend their friendship; and in 2000, Stambolić was assassinated while Milošević was still in power, leaving his 1995 book as a testimonial against his former protégé.

Although Milošević earned a law degree, he initially chose a career in management and banking. His entrance into professional politics came relatively late in life, at the age of 43. It was then, in 1984, four years after the death of Tito, that Milošević became Chairman of the City Committee of the League of Communists of Belgrade – one of the top four political positions in Serbia.<sup>228</sup> In 1986, as Stambolić rose through the ranks, becoming the President of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia, Milošević succeeded him, becoming the President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists (LC) of Serbia.<sup>229</sup> In those early years, Milošević was remembered as a supporter, to some degree, of market-oriented reform; and in

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President of the Presidency of each republic and of the federal state, as well as a Chairman of each LC Central Committee (and of provincial or municipal committees) and a President of each legislative Assembly. Due to the convoluted nature of these titles, they are spelled out in this text to provide as much clarity as possible.

<sup>225</sup> Stambolić, "My Biggest Mistake," in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a, 1.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>227</sup> Audrey H. Budding, *Serbian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: Historical Background and Context*, Expert Report, 11 April 2003, Exhibit P508, 58.

<sup>228</sup> The three more powerful positions were: President of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the LC of Serbia, President of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia, and Representative of the Republic of Serbia in the Presidency of the SFRY. For details of Milošević's career, see: Second Amended Indictment, 27 July 2004. Hereinafter, the Croatia Indictment.

<sup>229</sup> Budding, *Serbian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, 59.

1984, he had called on Serbian Communists to support a stronger Yugoslavia, which was very much in the line with “the usual communist rhetoric.”<sup>230</sup>

Milošević’s political career took a decisive turn when Stambolić appointed him as his successor in 1986.<sup>231</sup> In retrospect, Stambolić saw that the unwritten rule that allowed departing party leaders to determine their successors was in error. He grew to believe that if Milošević had been elected on a broader, more democratic platform, “he would have been under greater control and subject to a more direct review” by his peers.<sup>232</sup> Indeed, Stambolić would later reflect on his appointment of Milošević as one of the biggest mistakes of his life. Still, he contextualised his decision, saying:

Even if I conditionally agree that personnel choice could determine historical turning points, even then it can really happen only under certain circumstances. In that respect, Milošević was that decisive “fatal” personnel choice after which our society started sliding downhill.<sup>233</sup>

While he had initially viewed Milošević as representing an ideal politician – young, ambitious, and unburdened by the past – Stambolić recognised Milošević’s shortcomings over time.<sup>234</sup> He noticed that Milošević was unable to cope with criticism, that he could be rash, and that he was prone to draw superficial conclusions and judge too harshly.<sup>235</sup> Yet, Stambolić nonetheless viewed Milošević as a man who was decisive and dynamic; qualities he thought were required in a leader faced with implementing economic and political reforms.<sup>236</sup>

Others questioned Stambolić about his faith in Milošević, warning him in person and in writing about Milošević’s weaknesses. Vladimir Jovičić, a writer and active party functionary, left a

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Stambolić, “My Biggest Mistake,” in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a, 1.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid. This highlights the importance of political succession in communist structures, in which the installation of a leader was of paramount importance to the regime. Although it played out on a higher political level, one example of this can be seen in Lenin’s Testament from 1922. He offered a very critical appraisal of six potential candidates to succeed him, including Joseph Stalin, and expressed negative views about all of them; yet, despite Lenin’s evaluation (“I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using [unlimited] authority with sufficient caution”), Stalin nonetheless took over the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as well as of the state. Lenin’s Testament is available online in Fordham University’s “Internet Modern History Sourcebook,” at: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/lenin-testament.asp>

letter on Stambolić's desk one year before Milošević's appointment, expressing his reservations that Milošević was "arrogant, haughty, [and] craving power."<sup>237</sup> Cvijetin Mijatović, a high-level federal functionary and member of the Presidency of the SFRY in the early 1980s, told Stambolić that certain forces in Yugoslavia and in Serbia were uniting against him.<sup>238</sup> Even Draža Marković – Mira Marković's uncle and a member of the communist elite – warned Stambolić that history and the Serbian people would never forgive him for having pushed Milošević through; he said that Milošević "would destroy everything."<sup>239</sup>

Aware as he was about Milošević's personal deficiencies, Stambolić never expected them to become political drawbacks. For instance, when he read in the newspapers that Milošević was appointing as candidates to the Central Committee of the LC of Serbia and the City Committee of Belgrade those whom he had not managed to push through as members of the Presidency of the LC of Serbia, Stambolić initially ascribed it to Milošević's need to demonstrate independence from his political mentor. Eventually, though, Stambolić was forced to admit that he had underestimated Milošević's cunning character and political (mis)conduct; and as much as he was inclined early on to ascribe Milošević's manipulation and deception to his personality and not to political premeditation, Stambolić drew different conclusions in time. He finally understood the extent of the long-term plan Milošević had designed, in order to take power in Serbia, when Milošević populated the most powerful political body in the Republic – the League of Communists – with party functionaries loyal to him, who voted Stambolić out of office in favour of Milošević. But Stambolić's realisation that Milošević had for some time been successfully playing a game of deception came too late.<sup>240</sup> The committees in which Milošević installed his loyalists became important centres of his personal power, where he successfully advanced policies on which he and Stambolić disagreed.<sup>241</sup>

Many years after their falling out, Stambolić still could recall Milošević as an amiable companion who radiated optimism and energy.<sup>242</sup> Indeed, Milošević's deceitful side seems to have been well hidden by his charming façade. According to Stambolić, Milošević could quite

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<sup>237</sup> Stambolić, "My Biggest Mistake," in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a, 6.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-12.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> *Cutting Edge*, "Sloba and Mira: Their World," directed by Frank Smith, presented by Phil Rees, BBC, 1999.

skilfully win the loyalty of people when it suited him. For example, he made a point of ingratiating himself to the older generation of communists by remembering their birthdays and visiting them in hospital, securing their support and sympathy.<sup>243</sup> He also hid behind his charm when faced with his own blunders; most of the time responding to any confrontation with a larger dose of self-criticism, becoming suddenly warm and indulgent. Although he sometimes overused this tactic, he often succeeded in bringing himself back into favour.<sup>244</sup>

### *The Leader Made in Kosovo*

Milošević's entry into politics in the 1980s was tightly connected to the revival of Serb nationalism, fomented by ethnic clashes in Kosovo. Ethnic Albanians took their grievances to the streets in April 1981, only one year after the death of Tito, and federal authorities saw them as a very serious threat to the stability of the SFRY. The 1974 Federal Constitution had created ambiguity about the status of Kosovo and Vojvodina, Serbia's two autonomous provinces, by making them territorial parts of the Republic of Serbia and at the same time federal units with representation equal to that of the six constituent republics. Both provinces had their own representatives in the Presidency of the SFRY, with voting powers. While many praised the 1974 Constitution as a model for a functioning decentralised federation, nationalists in the Serbian intellectual elite saw it as a threat to Serbian territorial and constitutional integrity.<sup>245</sup> Critics claimed, *inter alia*, that it divided Serbia into three territories, thereby weakening the republic economically and politically, relative to the other five; for none of the other republics had autonomous provinces within their territories.<sup>246</sup>

Riots on the streets of Kosovo towns in the spring of 1981 had been followed by political manoeuvring. Kosovo Serbs – encouraged by intellectual elites from Belgrade, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (*Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti*, or SANU), and the Serbian Writers Association – formed the Serbian Resistance Movement of Kosovo (*Srpski Pokret Otpora Kosovo*, or SPOK) in 1982. According to Miroslav Šolević, one of the founders, the driving forces behind the SPOK were writer and eventual President of the FRY Dobrica Ćosić

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>245</sup> Budding, *Serbian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, 44, 48-49, and 53-55.

<sup>246</sup> Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić, *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts: Answers to Criticisms* (Belgrade: SANU, 1993), Exhibit D250a.

and Dušan Ristić. Ristić, a former professional politician from Kosovo, had held various party and state positions, including President of the Kosovo Provincial Assembly, before he was expelled from the Party in 1981.<sup>247</sup> He had good knowledge of the communist political culture and suggested that the demands of the SPOK should be addressed to existing political and state institutions. He felt that if the communist establishment were approached first, the movement would be less likely to be labelled as nationalist, anti-Yugoslav, or anti-communist.<sup>248</sup> For the SPOK to be efficient in pursuing its still developing political agenda through the League of Communists, it needed a leader who was already a respected communist functionary in Serbian party and republican structures.<sup>249</sup> Members initially thought of Stambolić, but as it turned out, he was not prepared to advocate their positions at the republic level.<sup>250</sup>

Kosta Bulatović, another of the founding members of the SPOK, testified as a Defence witness that in 1986, after consulting Dobrica Ćosić, he and other Kosovo Serbs drafted a petition to the authorities calling for changes they claimed were necessary in order to stop alleged terror by Kosovo Albanians against Kosovo Serbs. He considered this a major success and asserted that 86,000 Kosovo Serbs, along with 2,016 other Serbs, had signed the petition.<sup>251</sup> According to Bulatović, he was arrested by Kosovo authorities on 2 April 1986 simply because he had a text of this petition on his person. When asked by Judge Robinson about the arrest, which seemed puzzling given that the text of the petition had been published in the press, Bulatović answered that the authorities had arrested him so that “nobody else would dare speak the truth.”<sup>252</sup>

Subsequent to Bulatović’s arrest, the SPOK leadership invited Stambolić to visit Kosovo. Stambolić accepted the invitation apparently unaware that Bulatović was in custody.<sup>253</sup> The SPOK organised public protests, demanding Bulatović’s immediate release. Once he realised how precarious the situation was, Stambolić gave a reconciliatory speech, sending a signal to

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<sup>247</sup> Miroslav Šolević, interview (16 April 2005). Šolević did not testify, though he was approached by the Prosecution in 2005 as a possible rebuttal witness to be called at the end of the trial.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Testimony of Kosta Bulatović (14 April 2005), 38525-38526. The petition was thought of as a particular success at the time, given that only 78 people signed a petition of similar substance in 1984.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Stambolić, “It Started in Kosovo,” in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a, 35-53.

Kosovo Serb activists that he would not advance their agenda.<sup>254</sup> With Bulatović still in prison, where he spent three days, his fellow activists threatened to bring the protest against his detention to the streets of Belgrade.<sup>255</sup> Communist leaders in Kosovo started their own inquiry, finding that there had been no order issued by the Kosovo police to arrest Bulatović; the police, it seemed, did not know, or could not say, on whose authority he had been detained. It eventually emerged that he had been arrested on the orders of someone from Belgrade, and Kosovo communists realised that the arrest and the protests may have been staged. Bulatović was released and communists in Kosovo, including top leaders like Azem Vllasi, began to understand that they were pawns in a game much bigger than they could appreciate from Priština or Prizren.<sup>256</sup>

On his return from Kosovo, Stambolić told members of the Serbian Central Committee that the situation in Kosovo was so unstable that one bloodthirsty slogan yelled by a prominent Serbian nationalist at a rally would bring the Serbs to rebellion.<sup>257</sup> One year later, in the spring of 1987, another high-level visit from Belgrade to Kosovo was scheduled. Originally, Stambolić was expected to go; but he felt it was time for somebody else from Serbia's republican leadership to become acquainted with the political problems of the province. Some senior functionaries disagreed with the choice of Stambolić to delegate such an important function, but he held firm and chose his protégé Milošević, the second highest-ranking official in Serbia.<sup>258</sup>

Before his departure, Milošević sought advice from Stambolić about how to approach the visit. Stambolić recalled advising Milošević not to succumb to emotions, telling him that the tense and passionate atmosphere could easily explode and unleash violence. He told Milošević to “be careful and keep a cool head.”<sup>259</sup>

Milošević's visit to Kosovo took place on 17 April 1987 and followed usual party protocol. At the end of the visit, Kosovo Serb activist Šolević confronted Milošević, saying they did not want

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<sup>254</sup> Miroslav Šolević, interview.

<sup>255</sup> Azem Vllasi, interview (17 April 2005). Vllasi had not been called as a witness by the Prosecution or Defence at the time of Milošević's death. He had been interviewed by the OTP as a potential rebuttal witness, or as a witness the judges themselves might call to address changes in the Kosovo policy after Milošević took over power in Serbia.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Stambolić, “It Started in Kosovo,” in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a, 36.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 37.

him to present a monologue, they wanted dialogue. “When are you coming back?” they asked.<sup>260</sup> Milošević replied that he would return the following Friday. The week between these two visits would prove to be crucial to Milošević’s political rise. The trial record does not reveal what happened in that week, or with whom Milošević consulted, but his return visit to Kosovo appeared meticulously orchestrated. He organised this second visit through his own channels, bypassing the LC of Kosovo.<sup>261</sup>

The political leadership in Kosovo decided to confront Milošević over his disregard of official protocol upon his arrival; but they waited for him in the capital, Priština, in vain.<sup>262</sup> They contacted his office and learned that Milošević was scheduled to arrive by helicopter, but the time of his arrival was unknown. Eventually, just one hour before the meeting was to start, he landed, leading Kosovo communists to think that he was deliberately avoiding an encounter with them. Vllasi insisted on a meeting, arguing that Milošević was to blame for any delay, but Milošević, visibly upset, said the public meeting should not be delayed and was adamant that they meet afterward.<sup>263</sup>

The entire group went to Kosovo Polje, only to discover that there had been substantial changes in the organisation of the event. Azem Vllasi and the LC of Kosovo had planned for the meeting to take place in a Railway Company Hall that could accommodate only a limited number of people and where attendance would have had to be controlled by invitation. When they arrived, they saw that the Railway Company Hall was empty and they were told that a parallel meeting had been arranged in the nearby Cultural Hall.<sup>264</sup> According to Vllasi, the leadership of the LC of Kosovo learned through an informer that Milošević had already sent his own Chef de Cabinet to Kosovo to coordinate directly with members of the SPOK. They also discovered that local Serbs were being encouraged to prepare speeches in advance, to share their difficult plight and request

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<sup>260</sup> Miroslav Šolević, interview. Also see: *Death of Yugoslavia*, “Enter Nationalism,” Part I, produced by Brian Lapping, BBC, 1995. The *Death of Yugoslavia* documentary series detailed the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia and relevant portions of the film were used by the Prosecution in court on numerous occasions.

<sup>261</sup> Azem Vllasi, interview. Also see the statement made by Dušan Mitević in *Death of Yugoslavia*, Part I. Mitević, one of Milošević’s closest aides and an expert in public relations, was the Deputy Head of Serbian TV. He recalled that Milošević had summoned his most trusted associates to his home, asking how to handle the situation.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Miroslav Šolević, interview.

constitutional changes for Kosovo, and that every word would be broadcast on television.<sup>265</sup> Miroslav Šolević later explained that the SPOK had been given only three days to re-organise the event. He admitted that the venue had been changed without informing Kosovo's communist leaders and that part of the plan included parking roadwork trucks in front of the Cultural Hall, loaded with stones to be thrown at the local police in order to start a riot if Kosovo Serbs were not allowed inside.<sup>266</sup>

As originally envisioned, 300 people were to attend the event, but many more turned up.<sup>267</sup> Even with the venue change, not everyone could fit. And indeed, as expected, many of those without invitations were kept outside, giving the SPOK activists an excuse to spark unrest. Mitar Balević was with the local League of Communists at the time, in charge of organising the meeting, and appeared as a Defence witness. Answering Milošević in the courtroom, he explained:

When the meeting began, I was informed that the police had used truncheons against some citizens who had gathered outside and there was a crowd of about 15,000. That was the estimate made then. I asked you to go outside the building and to address the citizens, and I asked Azem Vllasi to do the same... So you went outside and I followed you but there was a huge racket, cries and shouts of "Yugoslavia"...and the first people who came up to you said "We are being beaten, President." And you answered that little group around you, "They must not. They must not beat you." But there was a huge racket in which you couldn't hear anything, so I returned inside, and I told the technician, an Albanian, to put the loudspeakers on the window so you could address the citizenry from the window.<sup>268</sup>

Šolević recalled that he had approached Vllasi first, telling him that a problem was developing outside, and when Vllasi refused to do anything about it, he had approached Milošević.<sup>269</sup>

This second visit to Kosovo by Milošević in April 1987 led to his meteoric rise to power and has been regarded as a turning point in Yugoslavia's history and the beginning of the process of

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<sup>265</sup> Azem Vllasi, interview.

<sup>266</sup> See statement by Miroslav Šolević in *Death of Yugoslavia*, Part I.

<sup>267</sup> Testimony of Mitar Balević (25 January 2005), 35660.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 35653-35654.

<sup>269</sup> See statement by Miroslav Šolević in *Death of Yugoslavia*, Part I.

disintegration and war. The debate among scholars over the historical meaning of the words ascribed to Milošević on that day – “No one is allowed to beat you”<sup>270</sup> – is still ongoing, with some claiming he made the statement on the spur of the moment and others that it was part of a premediated plan. Nonetheless, these words were attributed to Milošević in heroic terms even though they did not reflect any real brutality in the moment or any real heroic poise on his part. The event took place as planned and when local Serbs were allowed inside, they spoke in front of the cameras from prepared speeches about the personal suffering they claimed to endure in Kosovo just because of their ethnicity.<sup>271</sup> The meeting dragged on for hours, with a total of 76 people allowed to speak.<sup>272</sup>

The events of 24 April 1987 were aired live on Serbian television and Milošević’s utterance of “No one is allowed to beat you” was taken out of context, aired repeatedly, and instrumentalised by Kosovo Serb activists and the intellectual establishment in Serbia to forge a new leader. The footage was rerun endlessly and the visit became a major topic in the written press as well, presenting Milošević to Serbs outside of Kosovo as a saviour and unifier of the Serb people and placing the Kosovo issue solidly on the federal (and later, state) political agenda. Years afterward, Šolević summarised this interlude aptly, remarking that it would be wrong to say the SPOK had put Milošević in power, for as a communist politician Milošević already had power; what they did was make a leader out of him.<sup>273</sup>

### *The Eighth Session: Milošević Seizes Power in Serbia*

The Kosovo Serbs may, indeed, have played a vital role in making Milošević a leader, but he had yet to win power in Serbia at the republic level. As Milošević’s public profile began to rise and he started to enjoy support from influential Serbian intellectual elites, he became a threat to the communist establishment that gravitated around Stambolić. Still, Stambolić persisted in underestimating Milošević’s craving for power until he was confronted with it in a very public and humiliating way. Only three months after Milošević’s visit to Kosovo Polje, a showdown

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<sup>270</sup> The sentence “*Niko ne sme da vas bije*” has been seen colloquially as a symbol of his rise to power. In reality, the words were uttered in a different order: “*Ne sme niko da vas bije*.” This has been translated in a number of ways, for example, as “Nobody will be allowed to beat you” and “No one shall beat you.”

<sup>271</sup> Testimony of Mitar Balević (25 January 2005), 35661-35680.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 35689.

<sup>273</sup> Statement by Miroslav Šolević in *Death of Yugoslavia*, Part I.

occurred between the two at the Eighth Session of the Central Committee of the LC of Serbia, held in September 1987, with Milošević presiding. Milošević attacked Stambolić indirectly, by targeting Dragiša Pavlović, another of Stambolić's protégés, who held an influential position as Chairman of the LC of Belgrade and who had criticised Milošević's nationalistic rhetoric.<sup>274</sup> Everyone in attendance understood that Milošević was also assailing Stambolić and the policies he represented.

Borisav Jović, a close ally and advisor to Milošević, recalled the atmosphere that surrounded the meeting, explaining that the media broadcast every word that was spoken and that citizens, while watching, began sending telegrams of support to Milošević. These telegrams were read aloud at the session, to the dissatisfaction of Stambolić supporters, encouraging further telegrams. As the pressure increased, a vote for Milošević's policy won with only seven opposing voices, leading to the dismissal of Pavlović.<sup>275</sup>

To viewers, Milošević appeared resolute and self-assured – a person determined to win even if that meant publicly humiliating his political mentor and former friend. Stambolić, on other hand, looked totally unprepared to respond to an attack against his politics and leadership. It seemed he did not comprehend the consequences of shifts in Serbian politics, for himself or for the future of Serbia and the SFRY.<sup>276</sup>

Prosecution Expert Witness on history, Audrey Budding, summarised the importance of these events of September 1987, noting that Milošević had targeted those who opposed his Kosovo policies or criticised his inflammatory portrayal of the Albanian population there.<sup>277</sup> Budding, like many other historians, political commentators, and political opponents of Milošević, qualified the changes to the political leadership in Serbia that followed, and the unorthodox manner in which it happened, as a putsch.<sup>278</sup> In the aftermath of the Eighth Session, the LC of Serbia was purged; those not aligned with Milošević were marginalised or dismissed before the

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<sup>274</sup> Budding, *Serbian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, 58.

<sup>275</sup> Jović, *Knjiga o Miloševiću*, 44.

<sup>276</sup> Stambolić, "A Prelude to the Eighth Session," in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a.

<sup>277</sup> Budding, *Serbian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, 61.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

end of their mandate. Objections to or questions about what happened to exiting members were met with the simple explanation that they exhibited “professional incompetence.”<sup>279</sup>

In May 1989, Milošević became President of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia, the position previously occupied by Stambolić. Commenting on his own responsibility for Milošević’s rise to power in Serbia, Stambolić explained that it was not only his election as President of the Presidency of the Central Committee that had pushed Milošević to new heights of power. It had also taken well-planned efforts to make a cult figure out of Milošević; for which songs were written about him, paintings painted, and his photographs printed in great numbers for public display. And, adding further to this persona, academicians competed in their praise of him, comparing Milošević to French President Charles de Gaulle and American President Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>280</sup>

### *Empowered by a Legacy of Authoritarian Culture*

It may indeed have been Kosovo and the cult that emerged after his appearances there that made Milošević the leader of all Serbs, but as Šolević noted, it was the system that had given him authority. The political system of the former Yugoslavia developed from a monarchy before the Second World War into a communist federation after it, always with power concentrated in the hands of a single leader. In post-Cold War transformations, post-communist elites did not seek to develop democracy but concerned themselves first and foremost with ‘self-determination’ – which meant establishing nation states based on an ethnic principle.<sup>281</sup> Yet, all attention had been given to the state and to the collective rights of nations, with hardly any regard for the development of civil society and the rights of individuals.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Jović, *Knjiga o Miloševiću*, 20.

<sup>280</sup> Stambolić, “My Biggest Mistake,” in *Put u bespuće*, Exhibit P811a, 14.

<sup>281</sup> For example, see: Dov Ronen, “End the Campaign to Spread Democracy,” *New York Times*, 30 April 2013, 8. Ronen develops an interesting theory on the tension between self-determination and democracy in the aftermath of the collapse of communist regimes in the 1980s and 1990s, and after the recent Arab Spring uprisings. In his view, what people aspired to was self-determination, not democracy. Also see: Dov Ronen, *The Quest for Self-Determination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979).

<sup>282</sup> For discussion on the history of the Yugoslav state from 1918 to 1991, see: Dušan Bilandžić, *Historija SFRJ: glavni procesi, 1918-1985* (Zagreb, 1985); Vladimir Dedijer, et al., *History of Yugoslavia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974); Bogdan Denitch, *Legitimation of a Revolution: The Yugoslav Case* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975); Alex Dragnich, *The First Yugoslavia: Search for a Viable Political System* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1983); John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK:

The first Yugoslav state existed from 1918 to 1941 as a parliamentary monarchy that was strongly influenced by the king. The Communist Revolution started in 1941, but drastic modifications to the political system that were introduced after the Partisans won in 1945 brought little change to a political culture that had long accepted strong leadership. As in other communist regimes, the Yugoslav government revolved around the personality cult of its leader, Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980), who would rule the country for 35 years. And despite Tito's determination that a single person would not succeed him as head of state and Chairman of the Party (he had laid out plans for his successors to rule through a collective presidency) his political will alone could not change the dominant political culture overnight. So, although it was not officially possible for another politician to succeed Tito, carrying out all his functions after his death in 1980, there was a general expectation among the public that another strong leader would emerge.<sup>283</sup>

It was in this historical and political context, and in a culture of political patrimonialism, that Milošević was able to assume a position that gave him power beyond his formal political entitlement.<sup>284</sup> It had been his ambition to impose himself as the leader of Yugoslavia through the League of Communists; but, with the end of the communism in 1990, Yugoslav state structures changed and so did Milošević's ambitions. He would have to secure his place as the elected leader of Serbia.

Milošević's first term as the President of Serbia, still in a one-party system, lasted only one year.<sup>285</sup> Then, in 1990, Serbia was the last of all six SFRY republics to organise multi-party elections. In July of that year, Milošević and his allies formed a new political party with a socialist orientation. The Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*, or SPS) was constituted by merging two existing organisations, The Socialist Union of the Working People of

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Cambridge University Press, 2000); Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije, 1918-1988*, 3 vols. (Belgrade, 1988); and Sabrina Petra Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press: 2006).

<sup>283</sup> For discussion, see: Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia and the West since 1939* (London: Westview, 1985); Vladimir Dedijer, *Novi prilozii za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* (Rijeka: Liburnija, 1981); Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Tito: Yugoslavia's Great Dictator – A Reassessment* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1992); Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and its Problems, 1918-1988* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1988); Jasper Ridley, *Tito* (London: Constable, 1994); Richard West, *Tito and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1995).

<sup>284</sup> See: Quimpo, "Trapo Parties and Corruption."

<sup>285</sup> Until January 1991, his official title was President of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia; then, after multi-party elections, his title was simply President of Serbia.

Serbia and the League of Communists of Serbia.<sup>286</sup> It had inherited the property of both constituent institutions, and with it a legacy of one-party politics that its leaders looked to replicate despite the ostensibly multi-party environment in which they now operated. The SPS embraced and united various ideologies, from left to right, and Milošević's role in forming the SPS – a party based on socialist principles at least in name – conflicted with the principles of his nationalist supporters. But in reality, he wasn't driven by either ideology, beyond their instrumental benefit, and was thus well placed to embrace both at the same time.

Winning political power in Serbia, with a mandate handed to him by the Serbian people themselves, Milošević entered a new stage in his political career. Latinka Perović, a historian and former communist politician from Serbia, described Milošević as a “consensual autocrat” because he came to power with considerable public support but then used the electoral mandate of Serbian voters as a platform to rule autocratically. According to Perović, Milošević was not an authentic nationalist but someone who simply rode the train of nationalism that was put in motion by Serbian elites close to Dobrica Ćosić and in the Serbian Writers Association and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU).<sup>287</sup>

As Chairman of the SPS, Milošević was able to control the federal government as well as republic-level governments and assemblies through party loyalists, much as he had been able to do under communism. This secured the next phase of his political agenda; namely, imposing the SPS Party Programme – which had been legitimised by Serbian voters – as the dominant state policy in Serbia. Zoran Lilić, a former prominent SPS official and President of the FRY from 1993 to 1997, testified as a Prosecution witness about how the SPS became Milošević's major power base, through which he influenced legislation that was eventually passed at all levels of government.<sup>288</sup> Lilić said that important decisions were first reviewed within Milošević's family (alluding to his wife Mira Marković), then within Milošević's inner circle of close associates from the SPS. The Executive Committee of the SPS's Main Board, which served to legitimise Milošević's initiatives, subsequently confirmed decisions made by the inner circle. From there,

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<sup>286</sup> “Programme of the Socialist Party of Serbia from the first Congress,” 16-18 July 1990, Exhibit P469.3a.

<sup>287</sup> Latinka Perović, interview (11 August 2005).

<sup>288</sup> Testimony of Zoran Lilić (17 June 2003), 22551-22552.

trusted leaders of municipal and regional boards implemented those decisions without question.<sup>289</sup>

The SPS participated in every federal government in the decade between 1990 and 2000, extending the reach of Milošević to all federal institutions.<sup>290</sup> The party also won majorities in republic-level parliamentary elections in 1990, 1992, and 1996, giving opposition parties no chance to shape legislation.<sup>291</sup> It was clear that Milošević knew very well how much political strength and control resulted from his position in the SPS. Upon his election as President of Serbia in 1990, he ceded the position of SPS chairman to Borisav Jović for a short time because the Serbian Constitution prohibited the President from engaging in other public duties; but, several months later, disregarding the Constitution, Milošević reclaimed his chairmanship.<sup>292</sup>

Milošević was re-elected President of Serbia in 1992 and was appointed President of the FRY in 1997, moving his power to the federal level. With his departure, the office of the President of Serbia suddenly lost all influence and his successor Milan Milutinović settled comfortably into the role of Milošević's lapdog. Milošević had planned to serve two more mandates as President of the FRY.

### **Power for the Sake of Power**

Milošević's personal taste for power developed very quickly. His leadership had been attained with support of Serbian intellectuals and Serbs from Kosovo, who were determined to re-define Serbian statehood via nationalism. However, evidence presented at the ICTY revealed that Milošević's central motivation over ten years as the political leader of Serbs was nothing more or less than his desire to have and hold onto power for the sake of it. Indeed, when faced with choices between the welfare of Serbia and his own political power, Milošević chose the latter.

### *Surviving Mass Protests*

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 22557-22558.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 25551.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 25552.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 25555.

Demonstrations in central Belgrade, organised by his political opposition on 9 March 1991, were the first serious threat to Milošević's personal authority or regime after his rise to power in 1989. The demonstrations were massive but peaceful; but Milošević was aware that they could bring his leadership to an end. Alarmed by the prospect, he called PSFRY President Borisav Jović to request military intervention. Jović, who was not in Belgrade at the time and was reliant on Milošević's assessment of the security risk, began contacting the other seven PSFRY representatives to garner support for deployment of the Army on Belgrade streets.

Vasil Tupurkovski, the Macedonian representative, recalled later that Jović had first called him around midday. Tupurkovski told Jović that there was no need for JNA intervention since the demonstrations were peaceful. That evening, violence did break out among the protestors, but whether or not it was provoked by Serbian police in order to create the necessary conditions to declare a state of emergency – required to activate the military – is now hard to establish. However, by the time Jović called Tupurkovski later that day, Tupurkovski had seen the eruption of violence on the TV news and gave his consent.<sup>293</sup> According to Jović, JNA Chief of Staff General Veljko Kadijević was reluctant to allow the Army to get involved, apparently only changing his mind when demonstrators neared JNA Headquarters in the centre of Belgrade.<sup>294</sup> Eventually, Milošević managed, through Jović, to secure a favourable majority and the JNA did intervene, dispersing the demonstrators using tanks, water cannons, and tear gas.<sup>295</sup>

It wasn't just Tupurkovski who wondered if some manoeuvring had taken place to justify use of the JNA and help Milošević retain power; and Milošević and his associates heard enough rumblings of distrust from other PSFRY members in the immediate aftermath of these events to understand that they could no longer rely on the PSFRY for a majority vote the next time they felt the need to deploy the armed forces. And the test came just days later, during the 12 to 15 March 1991 PSFRY session, when the JNA proposed introducing extraordinary measures that would have allowed the Army to take action against the Croatian government for its noncompliance with orders given by the PSFRY earlier that year. Five votes were needed to

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<sup>293</sup> According to Tupurkovski: "Finally at about six o'clock in the evening, when Jović called me for seventh or eighth time, I told him, 'OK I will vote Yes,' because I saw that there were casualties, [and thought] others will come for sure. Everything was getting out control, it was obvious." See: *Death of Yugoslavia*, Part II.

<sup>294</sup> Jović, *Knjiga o Miloševiću*, 65-67.

<sup>295</sup> See: Testimony of Branko Kostić (7 February 2006), 48174; Testimony of Major General Aleksandar Vasiljević (13 February 2003), 16045-16046.

enact the measures, only seven members were present, and BiH representative Bogić Bogićević, an ethnic Serb, surprisingly voted against. Sensing that there was indeed a growing schism, the Serbian Bloc realised that the PSFRY could be an obstacle as far as use of the JNA was concerned, and so the day after the session, Milošević gave a rare public address in which he announced the formation of special police forces in the Republic of Serbia.<sup>296</sup>

### *Defying Political Opponents*

The next challenge to Milošević's power followed the formation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992, and came from Milan Panić, a successful US businessman with dual citizenship who Dobrica Ćosić had put forth as Prime Minister. According to Borisav Jović, Panić had approached him in May 1992 with intelligence that the US was willing to help lift UN sanctions against the FRY if Milošević would step down. When Jović brought this to the attention of Milošević, he was dismissive and avoidant; Jović believed Milošević feared that the intelligence could lead to his forced resignation.<sup>297</sup>

Although Milošević had initially been in favour of Panić's appointment, their relationship very quickly cooled, and then Milošević did all he could to sideline Panić. He banned Panić from attending sessions of the Supreme Defence Council, the collective commander-in-chief of the FRY.<sup>298</sup> But Panić was allowed to participate in meetings of the State Council for Harmonisation of Positions on State Policy (*Savet za usaglašavanje stavova o državnoj politici*) because this *ad hoc* body had been brought to life by his close political ally, FRY President Dobrica Ćosić. According to Zoran Lilić, who succeeded Ćosić as President, the Council for Harmonisation was created in order to provide a forum for the political leaders of the FRY, Serbia, Montenegro, and

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<sup>296</sup> See: Slobodan Milošević, public address, 16 March 1991, Exhibit P328.29.

<sup>297</sup> Jović, *Knjiga o Miloševiću*, 34.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid, 33-34. He prevented Panić from attending SDC meetings by using Panić's dual citizenship – Serbian and American – as justification, and asserted that Panić's presence was not necessary. See: "Minutes from the 3rd session of the Supreme Defence Council," 23 July 1992, Exhibit P667.3.2a, 2-4.

occasionally the RSK and the RS to discuss issues of vital importance to their common political future.<sup>299</sup>

Records of the eight sessions of the Council for Harmonisation, held between July 1992 and April 1993, were discovered by the Prosecution by chance in 2001. They reveal a great deal about Milošević's politics and about his resentment – and on occasion, open hostility – toward Panić, who had shown himself willing to contradict Milošević. Although Ćosić and Panić were both federal leaders and therefore his superiors, Milošević was not prepared to tolerate their criticism or entertain any alternative political course and did everything he could to contradict, obstruct, and marginalise them.

The showdown between Milošević and Panić started before the London peace conference held on 26 and 27 August 1992. The conference was called by the international community after the disclosure of information about Serb-run detention camps in Northern Bosnia and ethnic cleansing of the non-Serb population. At the Council of Harmonisation meeting on 18 August, a stern and blunt Milan Panić had not found support among Milošević and his followers, and the delegation went to London several days later without a unified position.<sup>300</sup> According to Jović, Panić had requested that Milošević withdraw from politics and that he announce it while in London. Apparently Ćosić supported Panić in asking Milošević to step down; only he thought that the announcement should not take place in London, but in Belgrade before the Serbian parliament.<sup>301</sup> Milošević was incensed. Upon returning to Belgrade, he pressured his party to initiate a motion of distrust in the FRY Parliament against Panić as Prime Minister.<sup>302</sup>

In the unfolding power struggle, Panić – who had no party base in Serbia – took a risk and challenged Milošević in the December 1992 elections, and lost. He left Serbia, and returned to his career, abandoning politics after only several months. Milošević won the elections and remained in power for the next eight years.

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<sup>299</sup> Testimony of Zoran Lilić (18 June 2003), 22745-22746.

<sup>300</sup> “Stenographic notes from the Council for the Co-ordination of positions of State Policy,” 18 August 1992, Exhibit P469.42.

<sup>301</sup> Jović, *Knjiga o Miloševiću*, 102-103.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

After London, Milošević also turned against Čosić. The depth of the rift between them became apparent at the Council of Harmonisation session held on 2 November 1992.<sup>303</sup> The immediate cause of a heated debate that polarised Serbian and FRY representatives at the meeting was a raid that had been executed by the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) on the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, purportedly due to a dispute over the ownership of the property. Pavle Bulatović, Minister of the Federal MUP at the time and one of Milošević's closest associates, was taken by surprise. He complained that when Serbian MUP officers took the building, they also took over its communication system, cryptographic equipment, technical devices of the State Security Service, documentation, registries, and cars from the car pool.<sup>304</sup>

The Prosecution considered this event a turning point for the Serbian MUP, which usurped the Federal MUP to become the most powerful security service in the country. By taking over sophisticated intercepting and cryptographic equipment along with intelligence files on many prominent political, military, and other figures, Milošević was able to control his political opponents. He also succeeded in diminishing federal authority and humiliating President Čosić and Prime Minister Panić, who were both out of the country at the time. Čosić, livid about the takeover, noted in his diary that he was “astounded by Milošević’s act.” He went on:

His police forcibly entered the building of the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs and offices of the SDB disarmed the policemen, took over the intelligence equipment, documentation, the archive and threw the federal civil servants out. The federal state was left without a State Security Service by which it was deprived of one of its constitutional functions. The Požarevac despot carried out this coup when Panić and I were not in the country.<sup>305</sup>

The takeover of the Federal MUP by the Serbian MUP was an important part of the Prosecution's theory on how Milošević's *de facto* power had relied on the Serbian MUP's implementation of his politics inside and outside Serbia, beginning in April 1991. And an internal document from 13 November 1992 – “Rules Governing the Amendments to the Rules on

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<sup>303</sup> For this session, only minutes were provided. “Minutes from the Council for the Co-ordination of positions of State Policy,” 2 November 1992, Exhibit 469.45.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>305</sup> Čosić, *Pišćevi zapisi*, 183.

the Internal Organisation of the State Security Department in the Ministry of the Interior” – had actually stated that the Serbian MUP was to takeover security tasks on behalf of the FRY.<sup>306</sup>

In mid-1993, only a few months after Panić’s withdrawal from politics, Milošević finally managed to force Dobrica Ćosić out of his position as President. With the elimination of Ćosić, Milošević was successfully able to initiate changes to the federal leadership that tightened his grip on power, appointing only those most loyal to him. And despite losing some support from Serbian nationalist circles loyal to Ćosić, Milošević was firmly in control.

### *Keeping It in the Family*

When Milošević’s charismatic authority began to fade in the mid-1990s, it was largely as a result of the economic disaster that had been set off by the high price of Serbia’s involvement in war. Borisav Jović reflected back on how Milošević’s war politics were criticised by the international community, and how international sanctions in combination with those imposed by the UN in 1992, along with widespread corruption among elites close to Milošević and his wife, left Serbia impoverished.<sup>307</sup> Milošević’s political tenure was marked by a huge gap between a small group of excessively rich elites – including his family – and a large group of excessively poor citizens. While Milošević had declared himself a socialist at the formation of the SPS in 1990, according to Jović, Milošević was not actually committed to principles of social justice and began to lose the support of many people who had originally believed he held socialist convictions.<sup>308</sup>

Milošević’s early supporters also could not possibly have envisaged the degree to which his leadership would be influenced by his wife. Milošević’s political alliance with Mira Marković strained the relationships he had with many close associates; and indeed, Milošević was defined by Marković and uxoriously deaf to the opinions of others. In 1991, for example, Jović advised Milošević to remove a photograph of his wife from the wall of his presidential office, reasoning that a huge portrait of his wife next to a portrait of Tito of the same size was not something that

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<sup>306</sup> “Rules Governing the Amendments to the Rules on the Internal Organisation of the State Security Department in the Ministry of the Interior, 13 November 1992, 1. This document reached the OTP after the trial.

<sup>307</sup> Jović, *Knjiga o Miloševiću*, 21.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

would pass unnoticed by visitors. Milošević replied that he would rather remove Tito's photograph than his wife's. Jović did not ascribe too much importance to the exchange until he saw later that Milošević had indeed removed Tito's photograph but his wife's remained, and would until the end of his time in office.<sup>309</sup>

Jović and Lilić both witnessed firsthand the influence Mira Marković had on her husband and, through him, on Serbian politics generally; and they both testified about how Milošević and his wife engaged in a destructive political game that led to many irrational and otherwise inexplicable decisions. Jović recalled how Marković began writing published articles in the form of diary that recorded her thoughts and ideas, which were printed in the biweekly magazine *Duga*. The articles fascinated the public. Once, she attacked the SPS, asserting that it was not a socialist but a nationalist party and claiming that some party members did not want a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav crisis. The fact that Marković attacked her husband's party led initially to rumours that they were about to divorce, which turned out to be far from the truth.

Mihailo Marković (no relation to Mira) was known worldwide for his role in introducing the Praxis School into Marxist philosophy, and in 1990 had become one of the founders of the SPS and its principle ideologue. He responded in the media to Mira's accusations only to see Milošević come to her rescue. Through an intermediary, Milošević requested that Jović, who was Vice-President of the SPS at the time, call Mihailo Marković and demand that he stop arguing with Mira in public. Jović did contact Marković, but only to tell him that he agreed with him and could not understand what Milošević and his wife were up to.<sup>310</sup>

Shortly after her public clash with Mihailo Marković, Mira Marković founded her own political party, the United Yugoslav Left (*Jugoslavenska ujedinjena levica*, or JUL). Notwithstanding that this new party would directly compete for votes with the SPS – another leftist party at least in name – Milošević more or less ordered SPS leadership to attend the JUL party gathering. Those who refused, as Jović did, became outcasts from the SPS leadership, essentially writing off their political futures.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 25.

Jović apparently discovered by accident that Milošević had personally taken part in the foundation of the JUL, which was purportedly aimed at helping him remove warmongers, criminals, and thieves from his own SPS ranks. Jović was sceptical of this reasoning; Milošević could have dealt with this problem without founding a new party.<sup>312</sup> Lilić also testified about Milošević's involvement in the foundation of the JUL and said he could not distinguish the influence of the SPS from that exercised by the JUL. Lilić explained how the JUL took over some of the most important functions in the Republic of Serbia and in the FRY, including controlling financial affairs as well as media, and concluded that both the JUL and SPS were under Milošević's authority.<sup>313</sup>

The Prosecution characterised Milošević as a man without personal conviction or honour, though not a racist or xenophobe, who was motivated only by power.<sup>314</sup> But does that sufficiently explain his political conduct and the violence that resulted? Must the ideological platform from which he acted be taken into account? And does it matter if he adopted an ideology out of conviction or out of political opportunism? In the following chapter the relationship between Milošević's leadership and Serbian state ideology will be explored.

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Testimony of Zoran Lilić (17 June 2003), 22555-22557.

<sup>314</sup> Trial Transcript, Prosecution Opening Statement (11 February 2002), 9.