

Masculinity and Mobilised Folklore: The Image of the *Hajduk* in the Creation of the  
Modern Serbian Warrior

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of British Columbia, 2013

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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## Abstract

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Based on Hobsbawm's notion of "invented traditions," this thesis argues that the Serbian warrior tradition, the *hajduk*, was formalised from the folk oral epic tradition into official state practices. Using reports from the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, military histories of Yugoslavia's Second World War, and case files from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), this thesis shows how the *hajduk* epics were used to articulate war programs and formations, to construct perpetrator and victim identities, and to help encourage and justify the levels of violence during the Yugoslav wars of succession, 1991-1995. The thesis shows how the formalising of the invented *hajduk* tradition made the epics an important part of political and military mobilisation for at least the last two centuries. During Serbia's modernisation campaign in the nineteenth century, the epic *hajduk* traditions were codified by Serbian intellectuals and fashioned into national stories of heroism. While cleansing territories of undesirable populations during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the *hajduks* were portrayed in the tradition of nation builders by the Kingdom of Serbia. The *hajduk* tradition was also mobilised as Nazi Germany invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, with both Draža Mihailović's *Četniks* and Tito's Partisans appropriating the historic guerrilla tradition. During the "re-traditionalisation" period under Slobodan Milošević in the 1980s, the invented *hajduk* tradition was again mobilised in the service of war. As Bosnian Muslim bodies were flung from the Mehmed Sokolović Bridge in Višegrad in 1992, the Serbian perpetrators dreamed of themselves as avenging *hajduks* thus justifying a modern ethnic cleansing.

## Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
Acknowledgments .....	v
Dedication .....	vi
Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1: The Invented Serbian Paramilitary Tradition.....	14
Chapter 2: When Invented Social Traditions Become Political .....	30
Chapter 3: The Mobilised Invented <i>Hajduk</i> Tradition.....	45
Conclusion .....	77
Bibliography .....	85

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## **Dedication**

For my love and my light, my inspiration and motivation. For my Emily. And for you, Isabel: this project is as old as you are and yet in many ways much, much older. Em, you got me started on the path which has led to this project, and Izzy, you have kept me going throughout. Though the words are my own, we completed this project together.

## Introduction

Kad je Djordje Srbijom zablado,  
I Srbiju krstom prekrstio,  
I svojijem krilom zakrilo  
Od Vidina pak do vode Drine,  
Od Kosova te do Beograda,  
'Vako Djordje Drini govorio:  
"Drini vodo! Plemenita medjo,  
Izmedj' Bosne I izmedj' Srbije!  
Naskoro ce i to vreme doći,  
Kada cu ja i tebeka preći  
I čestitu Bosnu polaziti."

Then when Djordje, the Serbian land had mastered,  
And all Serbia with the Cross had christened,  
All the country with his wing protected,  
West from Vidin to the Drina's waters,  
North from Kosovo as far as Belgrade,  
Thus spoke Djordje to the Drina water:  
"Drina water, O though noble barrier,  
Thou that partest Bosnia from Serbia!  
Soon the day will dawn, O Drina water,  
Soon will dawn the day when I shall cross thee,  
Pass through all the noble lands of Bosnia."<sup>1</sup>

What the Greeks call *klephts*, the Albanians call *kaçaks*, the Bulgarians *hayduds*, the Ukrainians *Cossacks*, and the Scots highlanders, the Serbs call *hajduks*. Many cultures across Europe, and beyond, can claim to have a warrior mountain tradition but only in the Serbian example does the *hajduk* tradition live on in service of modern wars. Where other traditions of frontier guards and legendary outlaws have been relegated to history books and folk songs, the Serbs have maintained their *hajduk* tradition in a living national consciousness. The hajduk ethos has been activated, mobilised and applied by modern nationalists since at least the nineteenth century and most recently during the Yugoslav wars of succession, 1991-1995. Also like other traditions, the stories of the *hajduks* were initially transmitted orally, sung to the accompaniment of the *gusle*, a one-stringed fiddle-like instrument which sits on the singer's lap. The best singers, such as Filip Višnjić, have been called "bards" and equated to other great bards such as Homer. Such a comparison has imbued the reputations of Višnjić and the others with a mystical,

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<sup>1</sup> Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, "The Beginning of the Revolt Against the *Dahis*," Narodna Biblioteka Srbija, <https://www.nb.rs/collections/index.php?id=1914> (accessed 18 May 2017) in English translation. I have taken small liberties to clarify the translation found at the source, perhaps at the expense of the structural integrity of the decasyllabic format inherent in South Slavic poetry. However, I am more concerned with clarity of message than artistic merit, as such. The modern Serbian text in Cyrillic can be found at Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, "Početak Bunje Protiv Dahija," Narodna Biblioteka Srbija, <https://www.nb.rs/collections/index.php?id=1913> (accessed 18 May 2017).

timeless quality. The songs the bards sang and the stories they conveyed instilled in their audiences the same epic, mythological vision of the past. Even the songs themselves reflect a timelessness in which contemporary *hajduk* heroes wage war alongside ancient ones in the lands which neither of them were known to have visited. Though the epics have been compiled several times since at least the early eighteenth century,<sup>2</sup> it was only in the nineteenth with the rise of folklore studies that popular and academic interest in the epics of the South Slavs reached prominence. The most important, and certainly the most popular, compiler of South Slav epic poetry was Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, the ethnologist and grammarian who also systemised the Bosnian-Croat-Serbian language.<sup>3</sup>

Besides the popularity of Vuk's anthology, what makes it so important is its effect on the Serbian nationalisation project. Compiled in the midst of the Serbian Revolution against the Ottoman rule (1804-1830), Vuk's anthology sought to imbue the insurrectionists with national sentiment, regardless of the ubiquity of such a sentiment. Aware of the potential of his work and the written word, Vuk sought out bards, like

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<sup>2</sup> The earliest compilation in the Cyrillic script was the so-called Erlangen Manuscript, compiled sometime between 1713 and 1733. See, Biljana Markovic, "The Popular Image of Hajduks in Serbia," (MA Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2014), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Following Serbian custom and to avoid confusion between the compiler of the epics and the wartime leader of the Bosnian breakaway Republika Srpska, Radovan Karadžić, I call the former simply Vuk. Vuk's compilation consists of three volumes, the majority of which contain the *hajduk* epics as well as romances, aphorisms and other folk tales. For more on Vuk see, Duncan Wilson, *The Life and Times of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1787-1864: Literacy, Literature, and National Independence in Serbia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970). The scholarship on South Slav epic poetry is quite extensive. For the most important and interesting, see Svetozar Koljevic, *The Epic in the Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Robert A. Georges, "Process and Structure in Traditional Storytelling in the Balkans: Some Preliminary Remarks," in *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change*, ed. Henrik Birnbaum and Vryonis, Jr. (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1972), 319–37. See also Milan Curcin, "Goethe and Serbo-Croat Ballad Poetry," *Slavonic and East European Review* 11 (January 1, 1932) for interest in South Slav poetry in Western Europe. The most recent and unquestionably most comprehensive example of anthologists include Milman Parry and his student Alfred Lord. Both were responsible for bringing to light the fact that non-Serbian and non-Christian bards, singers and songs still existed in the twentieth century. Lord's account of "our Yugoslav Homer," Avdo Medžedović, is a perfect example. See Albert Bates Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, ed. Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). The Milman Parry Library at Harvard has thankfully digitised the scholar's legacy, which can be found at Milman Parry Collection, <http://chs119.chs.harvard.edu/mpc/index.html> (accessed 18 May 2017).

Višnjić, who were inclined to nationalise the revolutions. Thus, the *hajduk* songs in his volume sing of the mountain rebel who ambushes the Ottoman Muslim gentry and defends the Serbian Orthodox peasant, the *rayah*. The ostensible freedom-loving aesthetic is also overemphasized in Vuk's compilation.<sup>4</sup> The much-romanticized South Slav guerrilla was born in the pages of his volumes. So, too, was the ethnically Serbian *hajduk*. Unlike previous compilations, such as the Erlangen Manuscript dating to the mid-eighteenth century, Vuk's only contain songs about ethno-religious Serb Orthodox *hajduks*. As the oldest surviving compilation of South Slav epic poetry, the Erlangen Manuscript contains Croatian Catholic, Serbian, Vlach Orthodox, and Bosnian Muslim *hajduks*. Conversely, Vuk's compilation erases the Croatian-Catholic and Bosnian-Muslim viewpoints and silences the Vlach ones, featuring only Serbian Orthodox *hajduks*.<sup>5</sup> Vuk's compilation also applied retroactively, or at least exaggerated, the ethno-religious identity of its protagonists thereby bestowing a national identity, a Serbian Orthodox one, onto its protagonists. Necessarily, the antagonists in Vuk's volumes are Turkish Muslims, again, regardless of historical or literary reality but reflecting Vuk's

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<sup>4</sup> Markovic, "The Popular Image of Hajduks," 3. See also, Ibid., Chapter 2 for Markovic's contribution to Vuk's attempts at building an ideology, as well as Aleksandar Pavlović and Srdjan Atanasovski, "From Myth to Territory: Vuk Karadžić, Kosovo Epics and the Role of Nineteenth-Century Intellectuals in Establishing National Narratives," *Hungarian Historical Review* 5, no. 2 (2016): 357–76 for a similar argument, made more broadly. The same is present in the Montenegrin poems such as Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath*. Here, victims are exclusively Serbs and not Turks, Christians and not Muslims. Later still, Turks are presented as untrustworthy infidels and effeminate. Thus, an ethnicity is attached to both the revolutionaries and the Ottomans. See Aleksandar Pavlovic, "Naming/Taming the Enemy: Balkan Oral Tradition and the Formation of 'the Turk' as the Political Enemy," in *Us and Them: Symbolic Divisions in Western Balkan Societies*, ed. Predrag Cvetičanin and Ivana Spasić (Belgrade: The Centre for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe, 2013), 29-34. Djordje Stefanovic, "Seeing the Albanians Through Serbian Eyes: The Inventors of the Tradition of Intolerance and Their Critics, 1804-1939," *European History Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (July 1, 2005), doi:10.1177/0265691405054219, 469. For Vuk's views towards the Ottomans, see Wilson, *The Life and Times of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić*, 28-33.

<sup>5</sup> Markovic, "The Popular Image of Hajduks in Serbia," compares and contrasts the differences between Vuk's volumes and the Erlangen Manuscript, while Pavlovic and Atanasovski's "From Myth to Territory," focuses on the intellectual perceptions of the Serbian nation. In different ways, both argue exactly the point made here.

contemporary experience of the Serbian revolutions. That Višnjić's most popular contribution to the volume, "The Beginning of the Revolt Against the *Dahis*," was about the start of the Serbian Revolution in 1804 is also telling in that the historical and the contemporary events were mixed and a nationalising ideology applied to each.

The *hajduks*' legacy, like their ethno-religious identity, was also romanticised. Though they fight for freedom and justice in Vuk's compilation, the historical record shows this was less ubiquitous than Vuk's volumes suggest. While there were certainly examples of the *hajduks* acting as "social bandits"<sup>6</sup> to protect, defend and avenge the Ottoman Serb peasantry, the *rayah*, there were also abundant examples of the opposite being the case. Critics of the social bandit interpretation show that the *hajduks* did more damage to the *rayah*, the very class which they ostensibly defended, than they ever did to the Ottoman state.<sup>7</sup> Any riches that may have been taken from the state were rarely if ever given to the *rayah*, Robin Hood-style. Instead the booty was divided amongst individuals of the *hajduk* band, each gaining his fair share. To recuperate some of the lost riches the state heavily taxed the *rayah*, thus punishing the peasant. State targets were

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<sup>6</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Abacus, 2001). Hobsbawm was the first to concentrate exclusively on bandits and banditry in this work, as well as in *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 3rd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972). Both works offer a worldwide account from various time periods of the phenomenon, though the social bandit provides an ideal type of bandit and ignores other types or possibilities.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the most famous, and convincing, critique of Hobsbawm is Anton Blok, "The Peasant and the Brigand: Social Banditry Reconsidered," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14, no. 4 (September 1972), accessed September 13, 2016, doi:10.2307/178039, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/178039>. See especially 499-500. For the types of violence the *hajduks* inflicted on peasants, see Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Baltimore, MD, United States: Cornell University Press, 1996), 145. In her examination of a similar phenomenon, the *uskoks*, a state-legitimated irregular soldier community in Croatia's Senj from the seventeenth-century, Bracewell also mentions that the rural populations of the Ottoman, Venetian and Habsburg empires suffered the most long-term consequences, despite entrenchment of the *uskoks* in folk poetry. See, Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 1. For a balanced discussion of the competing approaches and bandit relationships to peasants, see Nicholas A. Curott and Alexander Fink, "Bandit Heroes: Social, Mythical, or Rational?," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 72, no. 2 (April 2012), doi:10.1111/j.1536-7150.2012.00837.x.

lucrative bounties; they were also rare. Tax collectors travelled armed and in groups, often with small armies to protect against ambush. On a day-to-day basis, the *rayah* was an easier and less hostile target.<sup>8</sup> If enough bounty was taken over time – sometimes in the form of sheep, women, money, or other prized possessions – the *hajduk* could make a deal with the peasants: in return for goods needed for survival, the *hajduk* would cease his attacks. In the event of a rival band threatening the villagers, the initial band would defend the village and thus the agreement. Historians have shown that often a “protecting band” would orchestrate attacks on villagers to extract an even more favourable deal, an act which has been described as a premodern protection racket.<sup>9</sup> In some cases, the Ottoman state even harnessed the *hajduk* menace for its own purposes.<sup>10</sup> In attempts to strengthen control over the *rayah*, the state hired *hajduks* on occasion to raid villages that had shown the slightest hint of rebellion.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the line between scourge and saviour was fine. Where Western European states experienced threats of successive rebellions in the seventeenth- to nineteenth-centuries, the Ottoman Empire managed to avoid rebellion during the same period.<sup>12</sup> Political unions between peasants and aristocrats in Western Europe ensured repeated cycles of revolution, and state centralization occurred as a

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<sup>8</sup> Dennis N. Skiotis, “From Bandit to Pasha: First Steps in the Rise to Power of Ali of Tepelen, 1750–1784,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2, no. 03 (July 1971), doi:10.1017/s002074380001112: 232.

<sup>9</sup> Kelly Hignett, “Co-Option or Criminalisation? The State, Border Communities and Crime in Early Modern Europe,” *Global Crime* 9, no. 1-2 (February 2008), doi:10.1080/17440570701862736: 38.

<sup>10</sup> The same could be said of the *uskoks* which, as Bracewell says, differ from the *hajduks* in that the former enjoyed a consistent and sustained state legitimacy. See, Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, 11-12. Nevertheless, both groups became their own communities with distinct identities built around being “frontier peoples” who operated under their own sets of laws and codes of behavior. On this point, see *Ibid.*, 13. Part of the state’s interest in hiring the *hajduks* was because of the inaccessibility of certain areas, like mountains and heavily forested areas. See, Hignett, “Co-Option or Criminalisation?”, 35. Even in the Ottoman successor states, such as Greece, the state used bandits for state-oriented and state-building measures. See, John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece, 1821-1912* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1987), 294 and 14-15.

<sup>11</sup> Skiotis, “From Bandit to Pasha,” 232.

<sup>12</sup> Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*.

reactionary measure. Conversely, the Ottoman Empire avoided rebellion by preventing such relationships to materialize. If villages did happen to get too powerful, the state hired the *hajduks*.<sup>13</sup> Once the threatening village was subdued, the *hajduk* bands were free to cut protection deals with the village to manufacture a sense of security for the villagers. Thus, the lowest members of Ottoman society, the peasant *rayah*, were robbed by both the state and the *hajduk*, often in tandem.

The popularity of Vuk's volume has also led to the notion that *hajduks* are synonymous with Serbs, that to be one is to necessarily be the other. This claim overlooks the fact that this is not, nor has it ever been, the case. Rather, *hajduks* came from Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim backgrounds; they identified as Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Ottoman Muslim; perhaps even likely identifying more with a regional identity than a national one.<sup>14</sup> Bards and singers also came from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions. Recent examples have shown singers performing for Muslim audiences who portrayed the protagonists as Muslim heroes while the next performance, in front of a Croatian Catholic audience, the same protagonists were imbued with a Croatian national consciousness.<sup>15</sup> The singers clearly recognised the fluidity of identity and ethnicity, even if their audiences did not. Similarly, *hajduks* are invariably thought of as male. Again, this was not the case as an albeit small number of *hajduks* were women,<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A parallel can also be seen in the *uskoks*. See, Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*, 36. Likewise, the Ottomans exploited divisions amongst the Albanians for the same purposes. See Skiotis, "From Bandit to Pasha," 234.

<sup>14</sup> This is certainly the argument of several scholars. See, for example, Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*; and, Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj*. Note the regional marker in the latter reference.

<sup>15</sup> Ivo Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain: A Political Anthropology of War in Croatia and Bosnia* (London: Saqi Books, 2007), 53. Videos can even be found on YouTube in which Bosniak singers sing of Bosniak *hajduks*.

<sup>16</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 122.

as were some singers present even in Vuk's anthology. These latter two points have largely been ignored by historians and folklorists.

Despite these anomalies, the popular image of the *hajduk* – that of Vuk's male, Serbian Orthodox, anti-Ottoman freedom fighter – is the prevailing figure of the *hajduks*. It can be described as a victory of the literary over the historical, of the fictional over the factual.<sup>17</sup> And yet the literary and fictional can be just as real as the historical and factual. Vuk's *hajduk* narrative exemplifies “ethnic truth,” that which is true on a higher level of national consciousness.<sup>18</sup> It is also an “invented tradition.”<sup>19</sup> Invented traditions are rituals which are “actually invented, constructed and formally instituted” as well as “those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period — a matter of a few years perhaps — and establishing themselves with great rapidity.”<sup>20</sup> They “seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”<sup>21</sup> “Formal” traditions are those practiced

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<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Vuk insisted that within the epics one could find “the truthful history,” that is to say, a combination between “history” and the “invention” and “composition” of the “truth” that history attempts to tell. In other words, the stories told in the epics are in many ways more “truthful” than history. See, Tanya Popovic, “Guslars as Epic Poets and Chroniclers of the Serbian Uprising,” *Serbian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1991): 5. It is precisely this ability of narrativity to evade accuracy or truth that gives myths their truth value. The narrative needs to simply state that such actions occurred in order for them to be believed. It is in a myth's uses, not its truth value, that makes it political. See Anamaria Dutceac Segesten, *Myth, Identity, and Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Romanian and Serbian Textbooks* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011), 77.

<sup>18</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars: Myth, Reality, and the Eternal Conflict* (Montreal: Stoddart Publishing, 2001), 90-95.

<sup>19</sup> *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 21<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Invented traditions follow two courses: “official” and “unofficial”. The latter is a vernacular course in which the groups, such as clubs and fraternities, using the traditions “are not specifically or consciously political” (Ibid.). Given this definition, the current chapter follows “official practice” which is used politically, either by the state or for the organisation of political movements. The implication here is that the people claiming *hajduk* tradition have either been officially part of the state apparatus in one form or another or sought to seize control of the state or influence the state's apparatuses, most notably the king and/or army. “Unofficial practice” will be discussed in a later chapter more thoroughly.

<sup>20</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in Ibid., 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

politically or as “official practice.”<sup>22</sup> Harnessed by the state and/or political actors, official practice is imbued with a sense of legitimacy and, through repetition, create a mass following or mass recognition of the invented tradition. Though the volume presents several salient examples, Hobsbawm alone provides examples of public ceremonies, such as memorials to fallen soldiers during the Great War, and stamps which reflect the celebration of royal jubilees or anniversaries.<sup>23</sup> “Unofficial” or “social practice” is typically performed by groups or actors who were “not specifically or consciously political.” This category includes fraternities and clubs, such as soccer supporters’ groups.<sup>24</sup> Thus, we see from the *hajduk* example precisely the invention of the *hajduk* tradition as a distinctly ethno-religiously and gendered practice at both “official” political and “unofficial” social levels. In the case of the social practice of popular singing of epic folk tales, they became political and the myths they espoused were mobilised for war.

This is precisely what happened in the Yugoslav wars of succession, 1991-1995, as it did in the Serbian Revolution, 1804-1830. Yet, only recently has scholarship begun to look at the presence of the epic in the nationalist imagination. In some ways a response to the Romantic and nationalist viewpoints, as a strain of postmodernism the new wave of scholarship has interrogated what is being said in the poetry and how such messages can be manipulated by political and military elites, rather than the poetry’s aesthetics and truth values. Much of this postmodern *hajduk* scholarship shares a common, though unacknowledged, thread. What this thesis hopes to do is to illuminate this commonality

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<sup>22</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914,” 263 in *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 271 and 281 respectively.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

by providing a framework for analysing the *hajduk* tradition. Seeing the *hajduk* tradition through Hobsbawm's "invented tradition" lens will help to not only provide structure, but will also show how the practice was formally instituted by state and political actors to justify a modern genocide and countless acts of mass violence.

Chapter One of this thesis follows the "official practice" of enshrining the invented *hajduk* tradition in the Serbian and, later, Yugoslav armies. Since Serbia's revolutionary army of 1804-1830 was originally reliant on militarised volunteers, turning to *hajduks* who had experience of warfare, especially against the Ottomans, was a logical conclusion. However, as Serbia attempted to modernise after its autonomy (1830) and increasingly so after independence (1878), *hajduks* were eschewed for a professional, organised and modern military. The process of professionalisation followed other European states of the same period, but it also marginalised many *hajduk* bands pushing them out from military and state structures and back into traditional roles as *hajduks*. Yet, scholarship has overlooked the relationship between the official army and the *hajduk* bands which operated as paramilitary units. Once clandestine and sensitive activities were required to (re)conquer territory under Ottoman control, the Serbian state increasingly turned to using *hajduk* bands as mercenaries, leading to their paramilitarisation. As war increasingly loomed and culminated in the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the First World War, 1914-1918, the period which I call Serbia's Great War, the use of *hajduk* bands became an "open secret" and the Serbian state began employing them freely. Using them as extermination units, the Serbian state gained territories in Macedonia, Kosovo and Metohija, regions which Serb nationalists collectively call "Old Serbia." The tension between the covert official use of paramilitary *hajduk* bands and the formal

marginalisation of these bands would play a role in Yugoslavia's Second World War, as well. As the royalist *Četniks* took to the hills to resist Nazi invasion, they latched on to the *hajduk* tradition of guerrilla warfare and resistance. They employed not only the tactics and formations of the *hajduks*, but their reign of terror as well. Similarly, even the Communist Partisans used the *hajduk* tradition tactically and symbolically to carry out a socialist revolution and to garner support. *Hajduk* methods were couched in socialist terminology and Partisan tradition during the postwar era, as the Communist Yugoslav government prepared for the possibility of superpower invasion after the 1948 Tito-Stalin split. Merging *hajduk* tradition with Marxist revolutionary guerrilla tactics, the Communists managed to conflate history with their present and a hypothetical future in an "official" invented tradition. The implications of this will become apparent in later chapters.

Chapter Two shows how "unofficial" social invented traditions and "official" political ones can merge. In late socialist Yugoslavia, political and economic crises forced many young men into increasingly precarious positions. Forced to look for work outside of Yugoslavia's borders, many men took advantage of the *Gastarbeiter* visas. These guest worker visas allowed them to move to Western Europe, especially to Germany, in the 1970s and 80s. There, they would earn a living and send money back to their families in Yugoslavia. Once in their host countries, some guest workers sought adventure and took up organised crime to supplement their incomes. In some instances, the Yugoslav state security, UDBA, exported agents under the guise of *Gastarbeiter* visas to assassinate dissident Yugoslavs who opposed the Communist regime. Individuals were often at once gangsters, state security agents and *Gastarbeiter*. For others who remained

in Yugoslavia, they sought out group identification as society crumbled around them. Soccer hooliganism provided such an opportunity. The Red Star Belgrade's soccer supporters, the *Delije*, were amongst the most notorious supporters group in Europe. They rioted and attacked the opposing teams' supporters. With the arrival of the career criminal, gangster and eventual warlord, Željko Ražnjatović as the president of the *Delije*, the group was instilled with discipline and organisation. Their hooliganism continued but became more militarised and efficient. Ražnjatović, or "Arkan" as he was known, imbued the *Delije* with nationalist rhetoric, encouraged the singing of Serbian nationalist songs and slogans, and the group became more extreme in their views towards the other ethnicities of Yugoslavia. All of this was done while he was simultaneously part of Slobodan Milošević's Serbian security service, suggesting a coordinated campaign to radicalise young Serbian men. When war in Yugoslavia began in 1991, Serbia's paramilitary enlistees came from *Gastarbeiter*, organised criminals, and soccer hooligans, three streams which overlapped and became increasingly extreme in their nationalist views. Using Arkan as a case study, Chapter Two argues that when crumbling state infrastructures push people to extreme courses of action, and when nationalist mobilisers like Arkan are present, the mobilisation of folklore can have drastic and fatal consequences. Chapter Two, then, seeks the confluence of the social and the political environments to understand how and why Serbian men joined paramilitary units during wartime.

The last chapter combines the invented *hajduk* tradition with the implosion of Yugoslav society and offers the bulk of original scholarly contribution in this thesis. It shows how masculinity, nationalism and nationalist myth intersect to create, and in many

ways continues to construct, a hyper-masculinised, extreme nationalist warrior identity.<sup>25</sup>

In times of “re-traditionalisation,” political elites look to historical narratives, past social structures and seemingly immutable, halcyonic pasts.<sup>26</sup> Typically shaken by social, economic and political uncertainty, political elites portray themselves as the only ones capable of returning the nation to times of past glory. In less extreme environments, like American conservative movements, such discourse is apparent in “traditional family values.” More recently, Donald Trump’s campaign slogan to “Make America Great Again” was closer to Bracewell’s conceptualisation of the Milošević regime’s use of traditional elements. Both speak to an ephemeral, idealised time in the past that never existed, but is sold to the public as not only existing but attainable. In Milošević’s Yugoslavia, the dictator focused on traditional family values in the form of the *zadruga*, a family social organising system which was never uniform and only practiced in certain parts of socialist Yugoslavia, but was portrayed as an inherent South Slav institution. This reinforced patriarchy, attempted to erase socialist gains of gender equality, and elevated a martial masculinity rooted in the epic *hajduk* warrior tradition over other types of masculinities. Describing the Serbian nationalist Jovan Cvijić’s concept of “Dinaric man,” the chapter shows its connection to the idealised *hajduk* masculinity. Symbolically and pragmatically, the *hajduk* myths and construction of “Dinaric” masculinity provided the Serbian state a narrative to further its war aims during the Yugoslav wars of succession from 1991-1995. As ethnic Bosnian Muslims were increasingly portrayed as “Turks,” despite their Slavic background and ancestral ties to Orthodoxy, the perpetrators

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<sup>25</sup> The internalisation, interpretation and use of memories within specific groups is a hallmark of all nationalism. See, Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Wendy Bracewell, “Rape in Kosovo: Masculinity and Serbian Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 4 (2000): 563–90.

of mass violence and genocide were given the *hajduk* tradition, to which they could tie their identities and use to justify their crimes against humanity. Couched in terms which portrayed conflict with the Bosniaks as historical struggles, inevitable until the complete annihilation of one group or the other, Serbian paramilitaries conducted a campaign of slaughter and genocide, in keeping with their *hajduk* “ancestors.” Srebrenica, Višegrad and countless other Bosniak villages were burned and looted, their inhabitants destroyed. As the last vestiges of the Ottoman Empire were buried in mass graves, the *hajduk* paramilitaries marched on, for many their legacies intact. The goal of this chapter, and ultimately this thesis, is to unsettle the *hajduk* tradition so that its use is unfavourable to the environment for the next conflict, should it arise.

## Chapter 1: The Invented Serbian Paramilitary Tradition

"Kume Marko, Bog ti pomogao!  
Tvoje lice sv'jetlo na divanu!  
Tvoja sablja sjekla na mejdanu!  
Nada te se ne našlo junaka!  
Ime ti se svuda spominjalo,  
Dok je sunca i dok je mjeseca!"  
Što su rekli, tako mu se steklo.

"Godfather Marko, God be good to you!  
"May your face shine in the council!  
May your sword cut in duels!  
May no hero be better than you!  
May your name be remembered  
everywhere,  
As long as the sun and the moon shine!"  
And as they said then, it happened.<sup>27</sup>

This chapter follows the formation of the modern Serbian army through the country's incorporation into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and, later, Communist Yugoslavia. I will show that *hajduks* were the original members of the modern Serbian army after the Serbian Revolutions (1804-1830), but because of state building enterprises, the army was professionalised and some *hajduk* bands were relegated to the periphery. This peripheralisation, however, did not prevent the Serbian state from using *hajduk* bands for ethnic cleansing during "Serbia's Great War," the period that includes both Balkan Wars and the First World War, essentially the years 1912 to 1918. Rather, it was precisely because of their liminal status that it became advantageous for the state to use the *hajduk* bands in this period, essentially making them paramilitary units. Later I will show that because of the nature of the Second World War in Yugoslavia, the delineation between the paramilitary *hajduks* and the Yugoslav army was blurred. This is a curious incident because the professional Yugoslav army of 1941 was Serb-dominated and royalist-leaning, but because of the nature and outcome of the war, the Yugoslav army in 1945 was anti-royalist, multi-ethnic and Communist-led. Yet, both royalist Yugoslav soldiers and Communist Yugoslav partisans mobilised the *hajduk* mythology to frame their war-making in historical terms. The last part of the chapter discusses the post-

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Svetozar Koljevic, *The Epic in the Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 141.

Second World War Partisan doctrine of Territorial Defence (*Territorialni odbrana*, TO).

This concept pulls from the apparent Partisan wartime tradition, but also incorporates elements of *hajdukery* as a means of defence from invasion which would later play an important role, both psychologically and practically, in the Yugoslav wars of succession, 1991-1995.

Beginning in the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries, the Serbian army underwent several rounds of modernisation. Comparing modern Balkan armies, Djordjević divides these rounds into four stages: from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1830s; the 1830s to the 1860s; the 1860s to 1880s; and the 1880s to the First World War.<sup>28</sup> Because the focus of Djordjević's study is the new Balkan states emerging throughout the nineteenth century, and not just Serbia, Djordjević's schematisation should be taken as a rough guide rather than a hard and fast rule applied to only one state. Also, because his focus is on the creation and professionalization of modern armies, Djordjević's study omits the role and actions of the *hajduk* bands during these periods. Though they were left outside the formal structure of the army, the tension between the professional army and the paramilitary-style *hajduk* bands created dynamic and at times mutually reinforcing relationships between the two militarised structures. Taking Djordjević as a starting point, my chapter will show that the creation of the modern Serbian army follows what Hobsbawm calls an "invention of tradition" in which a seemingly immutable feature of society, in this case the warrior *hajduk* mythology,

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<sup>28</sup> Dimitrije Djordjević, "The Role of the Military in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century," in *Der Berliner Kongress von 1878: Die Politik Der Grossmächte Und Die Probleme Der Modernisierung in Südosteuropa in Der Zweiten Hälfte Des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Ralph Melville and Hans-Jürgen Schröder (Wiesbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner, 1982), 318-319.

becomes part of “official practice.”<sup>29</sup> In other words, Serbian political and military elites have brandished the *hajduk* mystique in order to convey to the public, their underlings and their enemies, real and perceived, the messages that have come to be seen as inherent in the *hajduk* narrative as conveyed within the oral epics, the most popular means of disseminating the *hajduk* songs and stories. These traditions then become a viable marker of identity for perpetrators of mass violence. Focusing on only the Serbian example, and because of Djordjević’s limitations, the case study of the leader of the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813), Karadjordje Petrović, will help to illuminate the roles of the *hajduks* as both real actors and incarnations of symbolic traditions.

Sometime between the years 1785 and 1786, Djordje Petrović killed an Ottoman official, became a *hajduk* and went into hiding.<sup>30</sup> His father was a day labourer and servant to Ottoman officials, which meant that the family travelled a great deal during Djordje’s youth. Young Djordje struggled to find stability and roamed with his family in search of work. Being used to the transient lifestyle, Djordje became a shepherd and, eventually, a pig-trader in and around the Austrian military frontier.<sup>31</sup> He was rather successful at this trade and joined the emerging “rural middle class,” a “thin stratum” made up of merchants and district heads (*knezes*).<sup>32</sup> Despite this success, Djordje’s transience continued as he traversed the Ottoman-Habsburg border, especially after

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<sup>29</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 263.

<sup>30</sup> Radoš Ljušić, “Bekstvo iz Srbije,” *Novosti Online*, 23 August 2003, Komentara/Commentary, [http://www.novosti.rs/dodatni\\_sadržaj/clanci.119.html:276202-Bekstvo-iz-Srbije](http://www.novosti.rs/dodatni_sadržaj/clanci.119.html:276202-Bekstvo-iz-Srbije) (accessed 12 May 2017).

<sup>31</sup> Vladimir Stojancevic, “Karadjordje and Serbia in His Time,” in *The First Serbian Uprising, 1804-1813*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich, trans. Roger V. Paxton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 23.

<sup>32</sup> Wayne S. Vucinich, “Introductory Remarks: Genesis and Essence of the First Serbian Uprising,” in *The First Serbian Uprising, 1804-1813*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 7.

killing the Ottoman official. Like many Serbs of his social standing, Djordje joined the Austrian *Freikorps*, where he fought against the Ottomans on a few occasions. During this time, and especially during the First Serbian Uprising, when he was elected as supreme commander of the revolutionaries, Djordje earned himself a reputation amongst the Ottomans, who named him “Kara” Djordje, “Black” George, for his dark complexion. It is telling that someone of Karadjordje’s background should be voted as the supreme commander, as well as the liaison between the rebelling Serbs and the Ottomans. Not only was Karadjordje respected for his business successes, but he was also decorated for his actions in the Austrian *Freikorps* in fighting against the Ottomans. Despite the presence of many notable and well-respected *knezes* amongst the revolutionaries, Karadjordje was chosen, Vucinich suggests, because of his wartime record against the Ottomans.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the *hajduk* was not only present in the founding of the protean Serbian army, one was its first leader.

The First Serbian Uprising began when the Serbs lost newfound privileges. Sultanic *firmans* during the period 1793 to 1796 attempted to curb the influence of *dahiyas*, janissary leaders in the Belgrade *pashalik* (district), and granted the Christian Serbs various rights. For the first time in centuries, the Serbs could form a national militia and thus own arms; elect village elders (*kmets*) and *knezes* to collect taxes and act as representatives to Ottoman authorities; and, build churches, monasteries and schools without state permission. The *firmans* also excluded the Ottomans from entering Serb villages without the permission of the pasha or during times of harvest and from interfering with celebrations, elections, religious holidays and the personal affairs of the

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Serbian peasantry, the *rayah*. All of this was granted in hope of influencing the Serbs from the side of their local Serb and Orthodox leaders towards the Ottoman authorities, pacifying the population and to strengthening government authority.<sup>34</sup> By 1801, however, the *dahijas* took over the Belgrade *pashalik* and revoked Serb rights in direct violation of sultanic orders. The *dahijas* imposed harsh taxes on the sale and trade of livestock, had other taxes doubled, people were either “thrown into prison or murdered” for the “smallest infraction,” Serbian men were attacked “indiscriminately” and the women were raped.<sup>35</sup> In 1804, direct resistance began when the *dahijas* slaughtered 72 *knezes* as a measure to prevent Serbian insurrection. Instead, the opposite happened. As the epic chronicle of the time put it, “the folk sprang up like grass from the ground,” took up arms and fled into the hills to join *hajduk* bands.<sup>36</sup> They gained the full support of the Sultan and resisted the rebellious *dahijas*. The *hajduk* guerrilla warfare brought quick and decisive victories.<sup>37</sup> Karadjordje’s insurgents burned inns and Turkish residences, and killed the *dahijas*’ representatives.<sup>38</sup> Soon, however, the insurgents would lose the support of the Sublime Porte as they continued to gain momentum and territory. Areas around Belgrade in the north to Novi Pazar in the south, with only the Belgrade *pashalik* still under *dahija* control, were in Serbian hands. The Serb leadership began to develop greater aspirations as they continued to win on the battlefield.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, with the failure

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<sup>34</sup> The arms that Serbs could carry included a rifle, two pistols and a long-curved knife called a *yatagan*. See, Stojancevic, “Karadjordje and Serbia in His Time,” 28.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>36</sup> Vuk, “The Beginning of the Revolt Against the *Dahis*.”

<sup>37</sup> Vucinich, “Introductory Remarks,” 4.

<sup>38</sup> Stojancevic, “Karadjordje and Serbia in His Time,” 31.

<sup>39</sup> Roger Paxton, “Nationalism and Revolution: A Reexamination of the Origins of the First Serbian Insurrection 1804- 1807,” *East European Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1972): 355.

of several peace negotiations, the Porte lost faith in the Serbs' motives. The uprising, then, can be divided into two phases. The first phase included Serbs fighting as loyal subjects of the Sultan "seeking restoration of limited self-government and of the privileges that had been given them in the 1790s," and the second as open rebellion against the Porte.<sup>40</sup> The First Uprising lasted nearly a decade.

Many Serbs who took part in the uprising, Karadjordje amongst them, served at various times in the Habsburg army. There, they gained valuable experience as regulars, volunteers and officers in the various Habsburg campaigns, often moonlighting as *hajduks*.<sup>41</sup> Others shunned all aspects of the imperial order and remained loyal only to their *hajduk* bands. Of course, the decade-long struggle against the Ottomans also provided military experience for Serbian men, *hajduk* or otherwise. Military training permeated various levels of Serbian society, from priests to *hajduks* and the "rural urban class,"<sup>42</sup> and impacted generations of Serbian males. This meant that a boy who was a toddler at the start of the insurrection in 1804 was by the end of the First Uprising participating in militarised Serbian society.<sup>43</sup> The revolution permeated every facet of society.

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<sup>40</sup> Vucinich, "Introductory Remarks," 4. Paxton, "Nationalism and Revolution," 345.

<sup>41</sup> Many Serb men fought variously in the *Raitzische National Miliz*, *Freischutzenkompanie*, *Scharfschutzen*, *pandurs*, and *Slaveno-serbsko vojinstvo Freikorps*. See Vucinich, "Introductory Remarks," 4.

<sup>42</sup> Vucinich, "Introductory Remarks," 7.

<sup>43</sup> Even in the 1990s, as testimonies at the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) revealed, boys as young as 10 to 12 years were considered "of military age," leading to their destruction at the hands of paramilitaries, Serbian or otherwise. It is reasonable to assume, without sufficient primary source documentation, that the same was as true in the early nineteenth-century as it was for the end of the twentieth. Indeed, in his war correspondences, Trotsky notes that "men of army age" included boys "not under twelve years of age." See Leon Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars, 1912-13*, ed. George Weissman and Duncan Williams, trans. Brian Pearce, 3rd ed. (New York: Pathfinder Press GA, 1980), 270-272.

Thus, from 1804 until Serbia became an autonomous principality in the 1830s, the revolutionary army was the *de facto* official Serbian Army. The revolutionary army was centralised under Karadjordje's rule beginning in 1804. When Karadjordje was assassinated in 1817, the central leadership of the army fell to Miloš Obrenović who began the process of negotiation with the Ottoman authorities, which lasted until 1830 when Serbia's autonomy was basically finalised. As Prince of Serbia and leader of the army, Obrenović began the modernisation of the new state. Thus, many of those who participated in Serbia's revolutions against the Ottomans became part of the official state apparatus. Unable to recruit men into the army, however, Miloš created the standing army from his own bodyguard, many of whom were trained by Russian officers. In 1837, military ranks were introduced and Serbia could field a standing army of 4,000 men.<sup>44</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, the Serbian state passed conscription laws,<sup>45</sup> founded ministerial positions<sup>46</sup> and military schools,<sup>47</sup> and increased military expenditures which "strained and almost bankrupt[ed]...State [sic] budgets."<sup>48</sup>

What is missing from this narrative, however, is what became of those men who did not choose to become part of the state military. Some who fought in Serbia's revolutions shunned the state building enterprise and continued *hajdukery*, choosing to openly oppose the state rather than partake in it as happened in Greece at about the same time.<sup>49</sup> Other veterans also returned to *hajdukery* but were not necessarily hostile to the

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<sup>44</sup> Djordjević, "The Role of the Military in the Balkans," 319.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>49</sup> See John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause: Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece, 1821-1912* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1987).

state. Where the former became outlaws and villains, the ambivalent groups of *hajduks* were those who were marginalised actors in Serbia's state building enterprise and became paramilitary units and heroes, precursors and inspiration for the Second World War *Četniks* and, to some extent, Partisans.

From at least 1904, *hajduk* bands operated in the Ottoman territories that nationalist Serbs called "Old Serbia," the regions of Kosovo, Methohija, Novi Pazar and Macedonia. Originally a "private venture,"<sup>50</sup> the Serbian state soon coopted the *hajduk* bands in order to "disclaim responsibility" for their actions and to benefit from the chaos.<sup>51</sup> By 1912, Serbia and her allies in the Balkan League – Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro – were openly using *hajduk* bands to reign terror on the peasant populations within Ottoman territory. As Serbia's Great War began, it was an open secret that the Balkan nation states were employing such methods against the empire and its citizens.

In his war correspondences, Trotsky writes that the *hajduks* were organised into *čete*, bands or units, of anywhere from 20 to 100 men, *četniks*, and often a regular army officer was assigned to command them. The *čete* were attached to army units and would enter an area ahead of the regular army and the volunteers, "each under the leadership of its *vojvoda*," its commander, and would soften up military positions and pillage the village, often simultaneously.<sup>52</sup> Knowledge in guerrilla warfare was an advantage to the Serbian war machine and the *četniks* provided this ability. Thus, interest in guerrilla

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<sup>50</sup> Jozo Tomasevich, *The Četniks: War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975), 116.

<sup>51</sup> Wendy Bracewell, "'The Proud Name of the Hajduks': Bandits as Ambiguous Heroes in Balkan Politics and Culture," in *Yugoslavia and its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*, ed. Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case (Boston, MA, United States: Stanford University Press, 2003), 27.

<sup>52</sup> Tomasevich, *The Četniks*, 117.

warfare continued from the nineteenth century into the twentieth.<sup>53</sup> The Serbian army used the *četniks* to blow up Ottoman government buildings, sabotage railway lines, conduct scouting and even recruit men. When a *čete* arrived in a village, the territorial defence militias would customarily greet them. A guard would be assigned to keep lookout. If the Ottomans attacked, the militia would be obliged to fight alongside the *čete*. Then, once victory was achieved, the *čete* and portions of the territorial defences would move on to the next battle, side by side.<sup>54</sup> As we shall see in later chapters, similar methods were employed in the 1990s to ensure the mobilisation and participation of men of fighting age.

The order of battle was such that the regular army would destroy the houses of Albanian *kaçaks*,<sup>55</sup> then the reserves “did their bit,” and the *čete* would return to “finish the job.”<sup>56</sup> What this meant was that prisoners were taken by the *četniks* and tortured and killed, the reasoning being “one enemy less, one danger the less.”<sup>57</sup> Many times, the army would move from one battle onto the next, leaving behind them the undisciplined *četniks* who then continued their reign of terror “without anybody to keep an eye on them.”<sup>58</sup> The period of 1912-1918 should be seen as what Alan Kramer calls “the dynamic of destruction,” because of the turnover of non-Serb schools, religious sites, and government and cultural institutions into Serbian nation-making ventures.<sup>59</sup> As Albanian, Turkish and

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>54</sup> Trotsky, *War Correspondence*, 120 and 232.

<sup>55</sup> In essence, an Albanian *hajduk*.

<sup>56</sup> Trotsky, *War Correspondence*, 120.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>59</sup> Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

even Bulgarian teachers and religious leaders were removed, Serbian Orthodox ones took their place. Often, it was aged *hajduks* who arrived, choosing to settle down, retire and take on nation-building roles as teachers, clergy and civic leaders.<sup>60</sup> Serbia's Great War also signals an important shift in the development of *hajduk* bands and in state-*hajduk* relations. On one level, the 1912-1918 period marks the beginning of the popular use of the term *četnik*, a member of a band, being applied to *hajduks*. Previously, they were merely called *hajduci* in the plural form or *hajduk* in the singular. This semantical difference is apparent when one considers that the word *hajduk* could signify any combination of outlaw, brigand, bandit, guerrilla or freedom fighter, whereas *četnik* came to signify guerrilla or freedom fighter more narrowly and was empty of ethnic marking. By the 1990s, *četnik* would be used exclusively for Serbs and the start of this practice was in the period discussed. In addition, the state began to use *hajduk* bands clandestinely, as well as using them as paramilitary units attached to the regular army. The distinction between regular army and irregular was increasingly blurred. Where the regular army was expected to act as a professional, modern army, the *četniks*, seen as liberators of unredeemed territories, were used as extermination units responsible for the cleansing of Muslim populations and glorified as nation builders. Taken together, these points would have implications for later conflicts, most notably those of the 1990s.

To be sure, many veterans of Serbia's Great War fought in the Second World War. While some members of the interwar *Četnik* societies joined the Communist Partisans, escaped abroad or surrendered with the rest of the Yugoslav Army in 1941, others went on to continue their nationalist struggles. Some became leaders and

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<sup>60</sup> John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903-1945* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 32.

ideologues in Draža Mihailović's Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland, colloquially known as the *Četniks*.<sup>61</sup> Those associated with Mihailović's movement held fast to the *četnik* tradition even though the Yugoslav government did not plan sufficiently for guerrilla warfare. In part, this speaks to the grassroots movement of the Mihailović *Četniks*. Nor did Mihailović's *Četniks* have much to do with the interwar *četnik* units.<sup>62</sup> Regardless, the tradition of the fighting guerrilla came along with the *četnik* name.

Prior to 1943, Mihailović, a professional soldier, was the leader of the official Yugoslav resistance movement and enjoyed the support of British and American allies, as well as the Yugoslav government-in-exile. When the Yugoslav Army melted away, one of its officers, Mihailović, stayed on to fight. He achieved the rank of general soon after and was the commander-in-chief of all official Yugoslav forces, though his leadership abilities were questionable.<sup>63</sup> He was a veteran of Serbia's First World War, having been decorated for his actions on the Salonika Front, and he fought in "Old Serbia" in 1912-1913.<sup>64</sup> From the capitulation of the Yugoslav Army until his capture in spring 1946, Mihailović and his men conducted guerrilla warfare and sought out *yataks*, accomplices, to help in providing food, shelter and alibis.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, though not a *hajduk* and not a classical *četnik*, Mihailović and his men knew their ways and used them to their advantage.

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<sup>61</sup> Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 156. To differentiate between Mihailović's followers and other pre- or interwar *četnik* bands, the former will be capitalized as *Četniks*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 125, n. 24.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 449.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>65</sup> Ivo Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain: A Political Anthropology of War in Croatia and Bosnia* (United Kingdom: Saqi Books, 2007), 27.

Not only did Mihailović organise his men into traditional *hajduk trojkas*, units of three which were “long considered to be convenient and efficient,”<sup>66</sup> but also communicated with the army and the people using the oral epic tradition.<sup>67</sup> Thus, Mihailović’s *Četniks* were openly taking part in the *hajduk* discourse on both a practical and mythological level. Taken together, these forms of rhetoric had the effect of endearing the Mihailović *Četniks* to the Serbian populace. They called him “Čiča,” uncle, and his appeal to the Serb peasantry provided an ideological basis for his movement. However, the outright national chauvinism inherent in the *Četnik* movement meant that the movement could only be accessible to those who identified as ethnic Serbs.

The violence the *Četniks* wrought was directed largely towards Muslims “who, rightly or not, were reminders of the hated Turkish rule.”<sup>68</sup> For example, in the Sandjak, a pocket of territory between Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, the worst massacre against Muslims occurred in January and February 1943. In a report of 13 February 1943 Pavle Djurišić relayed to Mihailović that 1,200 fighters, 8,000 old people, women and children were liquidated; that all property besides livestock, grain and hay was seized; and, that the surviving Muslims fled to Sarajevo.<sup>69</sup> In December 1941 and January 1942, roughly 2,000 Muslims were also killed in Foča.<sup>70</sup> As only two examples, the *hajduk* tradition manifested itself amongst Mihailović’s *Četniks* in both symbolic and real terms.

Even Mihailović’s most avowed enemy, the Communist Partisans, could find meaning in the *hajduk* tradition. Though born to Croat and Slovene parents in an area of

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<sup>66</sup> Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 179.

<sup>67</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 27.

<sup>68</sup> Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 256.

<sup>69</sup> *The Trial of Dragoljub-Draža Mihailović: Stenographic Record and Documents from the Trial of Dragoljub-Draža Mihailović* (Belgrade, 1946).

<sup>70</sup> Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 258.

Croatia which never experienced the Ottoman Empire, Josip Broz “Tito,” the leader of the Partisans and eventual Yugoslav dictator-for-life, used the *hajduk* tradition. Writing about the oppressive royalist Yugoslav regime, Tito used the terms from the Ottoman period. Those who harnessed power were “*pashas*” and the country was divided into “*pashaliks*” and “*bölüks*,” organised military units.<sup>71</sup> The one-time comrade of Tito and postwar dissident Milovan Djilas played the *gusle* and sang of the *hajduks* to build morale in the troops during lulls in battle, and this is to say nothing of the guerrilla tradition shared by the Partisans and the *hajduks*.<sup>72</sup> Even the postwar Yugoslav landscape inflated the *hajduks*’ revolutionary spirit, portraying them in textbooks, for example, as precursors to revolutionary socialists.<sup>73</sup> In this way, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) was painted as descendants of the *hajduk* traditions.<sup>74</sup> For many in the 1990s who had a memory of the Second World War, seeing soldiers wearing the *Četnik kokarde*, skull and crossbones badge, fighting alongside those who wore the *petokraka*, the Communist red star, created a cognitive dissonance. Yet in this light, it makes perfect sense when one understands that the tradition under which each was mobilised was the *hajduk* one, and that the tune to which each marched was played by the *gusle*.<sup>75</sup>

During the existence of Communist Yugoslavia, 1945-1990, the *hajduk* tradition was couched in terms of the Partisan wartime tradition of the Second World War. The

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<sup>71</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 27-28.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>73</sup> Anamaria Dutceac Segesten, *Myth, Identity, and Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Romanian and Serbian Textbooks* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011), 99, 196-197, 201, 232-233.

<sup>74</sup> Bracewell, “‘The Proud Name of the Hajduks’,” 31.

<sup>75</sup> The same can be said about similar oppositional groups in other parts of Eastern Europe. For example, see Serhy Yekelchuk, “Bands of Nation Builders? Insurgency and Ideology in the Ukrainian Civil War,” in *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe After the Great War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 108-109.

distinction between civilian and soldier was blurred under the doctrine of *Teritorijalna Odbrana* (TO), or Territorial Defence. This doctrine was adapted and updated from nineteenth century Marxist military doctrine, bringing it in line with the modern nature of war, and stemming from the threat posed by the Tito-Stalin split of 1948.<sup>76</sup> It was the task of the TOs, and not the army, navy or air force, “to activate and wage a military struggle if and when the country was occupied” by one of the superpowers.<sup>77</sup> Police units were to be incorporated into the armed forces, and civil services, fire brigades, and even the Red Cross were to resist the invaders and not surrender infrastructure.<sup>78</sup> This program created both a “nation in arms” and what Kardelj called the “citizen-soldier,” in which every citizen was to be in a constant state of mobilisation.<sup>79</sup> Tactically, the Partisan wartime focus was on creating “liberated territories” which would be governed by “revolutionary ‘national councils,’” as the example of the first Partisan-liberated territory, the so-called Užice Republic, shows.<sup>80</sup> As territories were linked up, the central command relocated as “mobile operation centres,” and any lost territory was “exchanged” for new ones.<sup>81</sup> Thus, the wartime tactic was to be employed in the case of hypothetical invasion during the postwar period. The underlying implication of TO doctrine was that it stemmed from a long history of *hajduk* revolutionary guerrilla warfare. Indeed, the “tradition” of what the Partisans called “mobile operation centres” came from the *hajduk* insurgents of the

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<sup>76</sup> Tomislav Dulić and Roland Kostić, “Yugoslavs in Arms: Guerrilla Tradition, Total Defence and the Ethnic Security Dilemma,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 7 (August 9, 2010), doi:10.1080/09668136.2010.497015, 1051-1054.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 1059.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 1061.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 1061.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 1055.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 1055.

Serbo-Ottoman wars of 1876-77 in which the insurgents established the Central Committee of Serbs for Non-Liberated Regions, centralised in Belgrade but with roving command posts in Ottoman-held territories.<sup>82</sup> Of course, this overlooks the fact that such an organisational structure was not much older than Tito (b. 1892), or that “the Balkan peoples did not participate in the determination of their destinies” in the nineteenth century, relying instead on great power participation.<sup>83</sup> Pavlowitch has even suggested that in the Second World War, during which Tito and the Partisans came to power in Yugoslavia, “the destiny of the Balkans was in the hands of an American, an Englishman, and a Georgian.”<sup>84</sup> Regardless, the Communist Yugoslav government looked to an invented tradition, and centered part of its ideological narrative on a heritage of guerrilla warfare for the country, its leadership and peoples. The country was prepared for invasion and defence, but what its leadership failed to consider was the internal rot after decades of neglect and oversight. Yugoslavia was not invaded but was destroyed from the inside out.

In the heart of Yugoslavia, 6 May 1991 appeared to be a typical spring day. Hundreds of people gathered atop Mount Romanija in Eastern Bosnia to celebrate the feast of St. George, the patron saint of *hajduks* and *četniks* and the day on which the *hajduks* would begin their seasonal pillaging. Outside the cave named after Starina Novak, a composite character from the *hajduk* epics, Radovan Karadžić and Vojislav

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<sup>82</sup> Dimitrije Djordjevic and Stephen Fischer-Galati, *The Balkan Revolutionary Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 161.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>84</sup> K. Pavlowitch, “Djordjevic, D., Fischer-Galati, S. ‘The Balkan Revolutionary Tradition’ (Book Review),” *Slavonic and East European Review* 60, no. 1 (n.d.): 109.

Šešelj gave speeches.<sup>85</sup> Šešelj, the newly appointed *vojvoda* of the *Četnik* movement, vowed to move Serbia's republican borders to within miles of Zagreb, bringing it to prominence again. Karadžić, the soon-to-be president of the Bosnian breakaway Republika Srpska and ever the politician, welcomed the crowd and made note that they were celebrating the "ancient" feast day of the *hajduks*. Spring had sprung and the *hajduk* awoke from his slumber. By the summer of that year, Serbian paramilitary units were operating in Croatia's breakaway Republic of Serbian Krajina.<sup>86</sup> "The folk sprang up like grass from the ground," the Yugoslav wars of succession had begun. What this day on Romanija shows is that Karadžić and Šešelj, like many before them, mobilised the *hajduk* traditions for political goals. Indeed, "past heroes are a reservoir of bones on which the present rulers can feed and from which they draw their strength."<sup>87</sup> The mobilisation of tradition such as occurred in Yugoslavia in the 1990s provided many bones but few heroes.

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<sup>85</sup> A truncated video of this event can be found at Radovan Karadžić and Vojislav Šešelj, "Karadzic & Seselj 1991," YouTube video, 3:51, posted by "DoktorDabic," 23 July 2008, [https://youtu.be/cGs\\_TmDw\\_Aw](https://youtu.be/cGs_TmDw_Aw) (accessed 12 May 2017).

<sup>86</sup> *Martić Judgement*, IT-95-11-T, 12 June 2007, p. 60. United Nations Security Council, "Final Report of the United Nations Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992): Annex III.A" (New York: United Nations, 1994) found that 83 paramilitary groups were in operation during the war by 1994, of which 56 were Serbian forces.

<sup>87</sup> Maja Brkljačić, "Popular Culture and Communist Ideology: Folk Epics in Tito's Yugoslavia," in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-century Southeastern Europe*, ed. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), 191.

## Chapter 2: When Invented Social Traditions Become Political

God is angry with the Serbian people  
because of their many mortal sins.  
Our kings and tsars trampled upon the Law.  
They began to fight each other fiercely  
and to gouge out each other's very eyes.  
They neglected the government and state  
and chose folly to be their guiding light.<sup>88</sup>

Yugoslavia's collapse did not occur in a vacuum. It happened at the same time that the Eastern Bloc disintegrated, other Eastern European countries fractured, and socialist experimentation was increasingly discredited. Where most Eastern European countries emerged unscathed, or near so, Yugoslavia erupted in violence and mayhem. For the people living between the Adriatic Sea and the Carpathian Mountains, the Danube River and the Prokletije mountains, the bloodshed was a daily lived experience. As some of these individuals ran through sniper fire to buy bread, others fell victim to ethnic cleansing. Still others were paramilitaries, the perpetrators of such violence. While other studies have looked at the experiences of victims and war dodgers,<sup>89</sup> this chapter seeks to understand the motivations of paramilitary enlistment. It has been argued elsewhere that certain conditions must exist for a state to weaken,<sup>90</sup> though complete collapse is never inevitable and certainly not in the case of Yugoslavia. However, the way that these increasingly intractable conditions influenced individual motives for militarisation have not been thoroughly studied in the Yugoslav context. I argue that it is

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<sup>88</sup> Taken from Petar II Petrović Njegoš, "The Mountain Wreath," trans. Vasa D. Mihailovich, *Rastko: Internet Library of Serb Culture, Literature*, accessed June 5, 2017, [https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain\\_wreath.html](https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain_wreath.html).

<sup>89</sup> Aleksandra Milicevic, "Joining Serbia's Wars: Volunteers and Draft-Dodgers, 1991-1995" (University of California, Los Angeles, 2004).

<sup>90</sup> Much of this chapter has been influenced by Dejan Jovic, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches," *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 1 (2001): 101–20.

the tension between state weakness, the threat of collapse and the normalisation of extreme ethnic nationalism that compelled a small, but significant, number of men to join paramilitary units. Taking a structuralist view to chart the socio-political environment of late-socialist Yugoslavia, this chapter explores the cultural aspects of the invented *hajduk* tradition to understand why paramilitarism was perceived by some people as an attractive course of action when conflict began in 1991.

To state the obvious, the Yugoslav wars of succession had an ethnic character to them. However, it was not ethnicity which caused the conflict. Rather, ethnicity provided the basis to articulate a narrative of “us” versus “them.” In other words, extreme ethnic nationalism exacerbated cleavages, but ethnicity itself was not the cause of the ensuing violence. By the 1980s, Yugoslavia’s Serbs dominated the judiciary, the army and the government. Though decades of unofficial ‘Serbianisation’ of the military, party and state leadership gave cause for alarm to Yugoslavia’s other ethnicities, the onset of war was the final break. This sentiment has historical justifications. During the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941), the royal government propagated “official Yugoslavism.” Ostensibly, it was an attempt at creating a unified national identity; in reality, it was Serbianisation in disguise.<sup>91</sup> Particularly during King Alexander’s dictatorship, proclaimed in 1929, Serbian myths and the Serbian “culture of victory” were promoted at the expense of the other ethnicities’ historical legacies.<sup>92</sup> The explanation was that Serbs, having “liberated” themselves from Ottoman control and eventually “united” the South Slav peoples after the First World War, exude the very best of South Slavic identity.

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<sup>91</sup> John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903-1945* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 31-32 and 74-75.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Even the division of the Kingdom into nine *banovinas*, or provinces, had given ethnic Serbs a majority in all but two of the *banovinas*, further favouring the Serbianisation project. The division “resembled nothing so much as a gigantic gerrymandering of the state in favour of the Serbs.”<sup>93</sup> The Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks and other Slavs understandably felt a repeat of Serbianisation throughout the 1970s and 1980s as Serbs were given priority for raises and promotions, and were preferred for jobs that were ostensibly accessible to all Yugoslav citizens. Slobodan Milošević’s so-called “anti-bureaucratic revolution” of the 1980s helped to enshrine the perception of Serbian domination when he replaced dissenters in the other Yugoslav republics with pro-regime voices. That many of the pro-regime voices identified as Serbian, regardless of religion, helped the mobilisation of ethnic identity, giving the subsequent war the veneer of an ethnic conflict.<sup>94</sup>

Ethnicity was also entrenched in the Yugoslav constitution, adding another layer to the perception of the conflict as an ethnic one. The Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia was divided into six constituent republics in 1945, but the 1953 constitution allotted even more power to the republics. This reform was intended to decentralise the country and facilitate a goal of local self-management, but one consequence was to entrench ethnic identity. After a decades-long debate over the level of centralisation, Tito decided to further decentralise the country in 1974 under pressure from a faction of the

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<sup>93</sup> Christian Axboe Nielsen, “One State, One Nation, One King: The Dictatorship of King Aleksandar and His Yugoslav Project, 1929-1935” (Dissertation, Columbia University, 2002), p. 179.

<sup>94</sup> A wartime example is Fikret Abdić. A Muslim by religion, Abdić identified as an ethnic Serb and was even allowed to maintain an “independent” territory in northwestern Bosnia by the Serbian authorities. The fact that he collaborated with the Bosnian Serb authorities in military tactics and aims was surely favourable for both parties as each side enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship. See, Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain: A Political Anthropology of War in Croatia and Bosnia* (United Kingdom: Saqi Books, 2007), 313-317.

League of Communists (SKJ) dubbed the “reformers.”<sup>95</sup> This constitution maintained the republics’ equal decision-making capacity, but created two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, both within Serbia but both given equal status with the republics. This greatly increased Serbian discontent as no other republic was subdivided. In the Federation’s eyes, this reform was a positive move as it was supposed to keep ethnic animosity at bay. Since Vojvodina had a significant ethnic Hungarian minority and Kosovo was a majority ethnic Albanian province, the Federation saw the division of Serbia as a way to transcend ethnic tension. To Serbia, however, the provinces were able to veto and overrule the Republic of Serbia’s decision-making capacity, thereby putting the Republic at a disadvantage to the other republics. Incidentally, the constitution also divided the population of all republics along ethnic lines. Serbia was a majority Serb republic, Croatia had a majority Croat population, and so on. Thus, with no alternative ideology to socialism and no other frame of reference than nationalism, Yugoslavia’s violence occurred along an ethno-religious axis.<sup>96</sup> Bosnia was the only republic which was divided roughly evenly across three main constituent peoples of Serb, Croat and Muslim.<sup>97</sup> In 1974, “Muslim” also became an ethnic marker, a constituent people of the federation. Religion, then, was elevated to ethnicity.<sup>98</sup>

Pragmatically, it was expected that the republics would aid each other for the benefit of the country, and that international loans would be paid back quicker as a result

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<sup>95</sup> For a full account of the debate between the “conservatives” and the “reformers,” see V. P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (United States: Cornell University Press, 2004), Chapter 3.

<sup>96</sup> K. Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma – On the Wings of Patriotism: Delegated and Spin-Off Violence in Serbia,” *Armed Forces & Society* 36, no. 2 (October 29, 2009), doi:10.1177/0095327x09339897: 315.

<sup>97</sup> Slovenes, another constituent people, remained mostly in Slovenia, the most ethnically homogenous of the republics.

<sup>98</sup> It should be noted that the contemporary term for the Yugoslav “Muslim” is Bosniak.

of the reformers' measures. However, reforms were only half-finished by the time the "centralisers" won back Tito's support in the late-1970s. New reforms were halted; existing reforms were in the process of being reversed and anything "in the pipeline" was cancelled at this point. To buy time and to help re-centralise the country, the SKJ took out more international loans. Reversing de-centralisation was difficult and was only partially completed when Tito, the only person capable of ensuring a smooth transition and arbitrating between the two factions, died in 1980. What was left was a reform process that was partially imposed and partially repealed. Likewise, the Yugoslav federation was receiving mixed messages from the West and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which vacillated between encouraging the reform and insisting on a return to the *status quo ante*.<sup>99</sup> The cleavages cut several ways. The republics held all the political power while the economy, in the process of reformation, was in the hands of the federal government. The republics were unable to stimulate a stagnant economy, the federal government could not put political pressure on the republics to provoke change, and the federation was forced to take out more loans with even more exacting demands. What was a bad situation in the 1970s became worse by the end of the 1980s, when ethnic mobilisers like Milošević were thrown into the mix. The equation became volatile.

With the changing order of the early 1990s, Yugoslavia's political elites were increasingly limited in their ability to influence the changing political environment. After the Tito-Stalin split of 1948, Yugoslavia was no longer aligned with the Soviet Union, choosing instead its own path to socialism, which meant a relatively warmer relationship with the West and a cooler one with the Soviets. When the Soviet Union collapsed, so too

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<sup>99</sup> Thanos Veremis, "Western Amateurs in the Balkans and the End of History," *Balkanica*, no. 36 (2005), doi:10.2298/balc0536237v: 240.

did the possibility of invoking an outside enemy if and when needed. This further constrained the political elites, forcing them to invent new enemies. Rather than focusing outside their borders, the elites turned inwards and articulated enemy threats from within Yugoslavia.<sup>100</sup> Thus, Milošević's ethnic mobilisation rested on making enemies out of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and portraying the ethnic Serbs in the province as victims. The rhetoric for this mobilisation owed ultimately to the changes fostered by the 1974 constitution. As conflict began in Croatia in 1991, the enemy focused upon shifted and so too did the victim-perpetrator narrative. Rather than focusing upon ethnic Albanians as aggressors, it was now ethnic Croats, and victimised Serbs were not just in Kosovo, but in Croatia too. In 1992, Milošević's rhetoric shifted again from the victimised Serb narrative to one of an avenging Serb. The Serbian President's comment that "No one shall dare beat you again!" came to fruition in Bosnia as the Bosnian Serbs, and those imported as paramilitaries from other republics, took on warrior identities to avoid the sustained and prolonged victimisation that Milošević insisted occurred in Communist Yugoslavia.

Yet army recruitment suffered, even in the earliest days of the war.<sup>101</sup> When war broke out in 1991, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) was essentially an ethnic-Serb army and this character became even more emphatic as ethnic Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks and other non-Serbs joined their own national armies, moved abroad or avoided the conflict altogether. Despite recruitment drives and conscription, the JNA struggled to find military aged men willing to join. For those who did answer the call, desertion was

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<sup>100</sup> See, Schlichte, "Na Krilima Patriotisma," 312.

<sup>101</sup> Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*.

prevalent.<sup>102</sup> The formation of paramilitary units was meant to allay these issues by providing good, steady wages and the promise of plunder.

Serbia's recruitment strategy for paramilitary units fed off real fears of persecution. The propaganda campaign also relied heavily on manufacturing or at least exaggerating the threat posed by the ethnic others. In ethnically-Serbian parts of Croatia and Bosnia, army and paramilitary units armed ethnic Serbs against potential and perceived threats from Croats or Bosniaks. According to initial media reports coming out of Croatia during the so-called "Log Revolution" of 1990, the Serbs of breakaway Republika Srpska Krajina armed themselves with old guns because of their lack of weaponry.<sup>103</sup> Soon, however, the farmers would trade their outdated rifles for new ones they were given by organised paramilitary units. In Bosnia, truckloads of guns and ammunitions were stored in schools by the Yugoslav Army and later distributed to the Serbian population.<sup>104</sup> In witness testimony at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia it was revealed that the guns were manufactured in Kragujevac, Serbia at the *Crna Zastava* gun factory. "All of us who had done our military training," said the witness, "could recognise that type of rifle at a glance."<sup>105</sup> Indeed, it was an "open secret" that the Serbian military was arming the Serbs of Pale with government-issued rifles.<sup>106</sup> Within a matter of weeks, often days, of distribution, the newly-armed Serbs would be trained in camps, such as the one in Erdut, organised into paramilitary

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<sup>102</sup> Milicevic, "Joining Serbia's Wars."

<sup>103</sup> "Armed Serbs Seal Roads to Croatia," *Toronto Star*, August 19, 1990, sec. H2.

<sup>104</sup> *Prosecutor vs. Momčilo Krajišnik*, IT-00-39-T, 27 September 2006, 19-24.

<sup>105</sup> *Krajišnik Trial* (Transcript) IT-00-39-T, 2 September 2004, 5303.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 5305.

units, and open conflict would ensue. If the men had not been armed and trained before because of the Territorial Defence doctrine, they were by the eve of conflict.<sup>107</sup>

Recruits also came from the lowest socio-economic strata of Yugoslav society, and were members of marginalised groups or social outcasts. Indeed, the economic situation in Yugoslavia was such that the eastern and southern republics were the poorest regions and had the highest rates of unemployment. To be an ethnic minority within a republic was an even worse prospect. Even for the ethnic Serbs in Croatia, an affluent republic, the economic situation was dire as Tudjman's drive to independence in 1991 increasingly marginalised an already affected population. This can also perhaps explain the level of discontent felt by Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population. After Milošević revoked the political gains granted to Kosovo in 1973, which had provided essentially republican status, Kosovo Albanians were even more marginalised and were refused economic mobility and civil rights. Paramilitarism, then, gave these men a job, a steady income, and group membership within an elite section of a "grassroots" military, the Kosovo Liberation Army. Though Kosovo Albanian involvement in paramilitary units needs further study, ethnic Serbian recruitment came from three main streams of Yugoslavia's ethnic Serbs: guest workers, gang members, and soccer hooligans.<sup>108</sup> At least for the first two streams, "larger evolutionary cycles linking organised crime, racketeering and kleptocratic gangster-states" are hallmarks of state and societal

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<sup>107</sup> See p. 26 of this thesis for the Territorial Defence doctrine of Communist Yugoslavia.

<sup>108</sup> Neven Andjelić, "The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia: Politics and Football in the Service of the Nation(s)," ed. Dario Brentin, Armina Galijaš, and Hrvoje Paić, *Študošteuropa*, Football and Society, 62, no. 2 (2014): 99–125; Ivan Čolović, "Football, Hooligans and War," in *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia: Essays in Political Anthropology*, trans. Celia Hawkesworth (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2002), 259–86.

“instability, collapse and regeneration.”<sup>109</sup> Hooliganism has been linked to disaffection and seeking out belonging.<sup>110</sup> Often, the three streams overlapped and mingled.

Guest worker visas gave young men in search of meaningful work an opportunity to travel while earning an income. *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) visas were available for Western Europe, especially in Germany and especially during the 1970s and 80s. They were one privilege enjoyed by Yugoslavs that citizens of other Eastern European Communist states did not experience. The *Gastarbeiter* workers would often send money back to Yugoslavia and, in some cases, return home with enough money to start businesses of their own. For others unwilling or unable to move, the black and grey markets proved favourable. Yet in other cases, the two phenomena merged.

Under Tito’s authoritarian rule (1945-1980), Yugoslav organised crime was limited to the diaspora but retained links to the state. The Yugoslav state security, UDBA, employed criminals to assassinate “dissidents and terrorists” abroad, mostly in Western Europe, North America and Australia. UDBA was one of the most prolific security agencies in terms of liquidations abroad. The most targeted group by UDBA was former-Ustaše, members of Croatia’s fascist government of the Second World War. By the 1970s, newly-released criminals in Yugoslavia were given new passports under aliases, and sent abroad to carry out these assassinations, often under the guise of *Gastarbeiter* visas.<sup>111</sup> Once in their new environments, UDBA assassins developed networks of

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<sup>109</sup> Katherine Hirschfeld, *Gangster States: Organized Crime, Kleptocracy and Political Collapse* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 17.

<sup>110</sup> Dario Brentin, *Football in Southeastern Europe: From Ethnic Homogenization to Reconciliation* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Dražen Lalić and Shay Wood, “Football Hooliganism in Croatia: A Historical and Sociological Analysis,” ed. Dario Brentin, Armina Galijaš, and Hrvoje Paić, *Südosteuropa* 62, no. 2 (2014): 145–69.

<sup>111</sup> For a discussion on the crime-wartime nexus, see Serge Brammertz, *The Connection Between War Crimes, Corruption, Financing Terrorism and Organized Crime*, (n.p., 2012), <http://www.iap->

organised crime syndicates.<sup>112</sup> They banded together for business outside of official Yugoslav operations and created gangs. Officially, these men were hired assassins; unofficially, extortion, bank robbery and jewelry heists were also part of these ex-convicts' lexicons. Money was generated in places like Frankfurt, Germany and sent back to Yugoslavia. Upon returning to Yugoslavia to reside, the organised criminal-assassins established clubs, restaurants and coffee shops. The exported criminal underground had come home to roost.

The now-infamous Željko Ražnatović “Arkan” was part of this movement.<sup>113</sup> He notoriously escaped Swedish prison several times with the help of UDBA and the most famous jewelry heist in Dutch history is rumoured to have been carried out by him and his men. By the end of the 1980s, Arkan and his ilk were free to return to Yugoslavia. They opened cafes, bars and nightclubs and continued to engage in the illicit trafficking of guns, drugs and women. Though Arkan provides an interesting case study, he inhabits a realm of his own because of his notoriety. There were many like him through the 1970s and 80s, but none achieved the fame that Arkan had in the wartime and postwar contexts. He married a famous turbofolk singer, Ceca, and bought the soccer club *Obilić*.<sup>114</sup> He was also one of the few gangster-paramilitaries to be indicted by the ICTY. In some respects, his fame preceded him.

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[association.org/Conferences/Annual-Conferences/17th-Annual-Conference-and-General-Meeting.-Bangko/P4\\_speech\\_Serge\\_Brammertz\\_AC17-\(1\).aspx](http://association.org/Conferences/Annual-Conferences/17th-Annual-Conference-and-General-Meeting.-Bangko/P4_speech_Serge_Brammertz_AC17-(1).aspx). A similar situation developed in Colombia. See, Francisco Gutierrez Sanin, “Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War,” *Politics & Society* 36, no. 1 (March 1, 2008), doi:10.1177/0032329207312181: 10 and 14-15.

<sup>112</sup> Xavier Bougarel, “Yugoslav Wars: The ‘revenge of the countryside’ Between Sociological Reality and Nationalist Myth,” *East European Quarterly* XXXIII, no. 2 (June 1999): 173.

<sup>113</sup> Brammertz, *War Crimes, Corruption, Financing Terrorism and Organized Crime*.

<sup>114</sup> Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 320. The name Obilić, of course, is a reference to the semi-mythical medieval warrior Miloš Obilić who, according to the epics, assassinated Sultan Murad I at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.

Yet in other ways he is typical of the type of character employed by UDBA and the Yugoslav authorities. A shared background of ‘career criminality,’ state employment in the security apparatus and eventual member of paramilitary organisations during wartime are the more salient points.<sup>115</sup> In the late-1980s, Arkan became president of *Crvena Zvezda* (Red Star Belgrade)’s supporters group *Delije* (“Valiants”). This put him “in direct contact with a large number of disaffected youth with military training,”<sup>116</sup> almost all under 25 years old.<sup>117</sup> The *Delije* were well-known for hooliganism throughout the former Yugoslavia, and were beginning to get a reputation in Europe as well. Staging riots and fights inside and outside soccer stadiums resulting in extreme violence against their enemies, the *Delije* were amongst the most dangerous ultras in the world. To improve their image, Arkan trained group members and “insisted on discipline,” though hooliganism continued.<sup>118</sup> When war began in Croatia in 1991, Arkan encouraged volunteering and recruited from those he knew best – soccer hooligans, the “losers of modernization.”<sup>119</sup> Their violence moved from the soccer stadiums to the villages and country sides. The Serbian republic was unable to recruit and maintain men to fight in the army despite conscription, so it turned to forming paramilitary units to make up for this deficiency.<sup>120</sup> Arkan’s paramilitary unit, the “Tigers,” was one of these groups. Soccer

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<sup>115</sup> For Arkan’s role in looting pillaged villages, see the interview with Bojan Dobovsek, a member of the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption in “Art, Terrorism, and Organized Crime,” in *Art and Crime: Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World*, ed. Noah Charney (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009), p. 70. Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 312-313.

<sup>116</sup> James Horncastle, “Unfamiliar Connections: Special Forces and Paramilitaries in the Former Yugoslavia,” *Special Operations Journal* 2, no. 1 (January 2, 2016), doi:10.1080/23296151.2016.1151752: 15.

<sup>117</sup> Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 315.

<sup>118</sup> Čolović, “Football, Hooligans and War,” 277.

<sup>119</sup> Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 315.

<sup>120</sup> Bougarel, “Yugoslav Wars,” 173. See also Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 47; Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 312.

hooligans, with their unique brand of discipline, order, and sets of values and rules, became an ideal type of recruit for Arkan and other paramilitaries.<sup>121</sup> They were “imbued with the spirit of organisation and subordination,”<sup>122</sup> especially once Arkan took control. They were trained in military tactics through peacetime conscription, and these skills were refined at Arkan’s training camp in Erdut. Those from the criminal underworld were also recruited as soldiers of fortune and inmates were released from jail on condition of military service. Within this matrix, through people like Arkan, the volunteers also held a curious status as part of the state structure, allowing Milošević to use them as tools of his warped foreign policy. Their recruitment allowed Serbian politicians to distance themselves from the war crimes perpetrated by the paramilitaries,<sup>123</sup> just as it had the Kingdom of Serbia in 1912-1913. In this matrix, Arkan’s “Tigers” was only one of several such groups.<sup>124</sup>

During the war, Milošević relied on underground organised crime groups and paramilitary units to “ensure basic consumer goods and commodities were available” to the Republic of Serbia, despite international sanctions. This ability also maintained or

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<sup>121</sup> Čolović, “Football, Hooligans and War,” 283.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 283-284.

<sup>123</sup> Horncastle, “Unfamiliar Connections,” 16. This modified warfare has been called “dual purpose” by Tanner and Mulone. In such hierarchies, there exists enough space between those “on the ground” and their commanders to create plausible deniability amongst the leadership. The further up the hierarchy, the more plausible the deniability, leaving responsibility for such crimes at the feet of the perpetrators rather than the ideologues, commanders and politicians. There is, then, the purpose of distancing the hierarchy while at the same time materially enriching both parties, hence the “dual purpose.” Interestingly, this “dual purpose” also has a dual purpose: it presents itself within the paramilitary group as well. Fighters inhabit both a liminal role and one within the state apparatus. See Samuel Tanner and Massimiliano Mulone, “Private Security and Armed Conflict: A Case Study of the Scorpions During the Mass Killings in Former Yugoslavia,” *British Journal of Criminology* 53, no. 1 (October 17, 2012), doi:10.1093/bjc/azs053. Plausible deniability has been used as a defence by virtually every political elite brought to the International Court for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). For the cases which have concluded, such as Karadžić’s, it is clear that such a defence is not accepted by the ICTY.

<sup>124</sup> Šešelj’s *Četniks* also received backing from Serbia’s Ministry of the Interior in the Croatian regions of Krajina and Slavonia, where they cooperated with the Ministry’s “secret unit,” the Red Berets. See Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 318.

increased his popularity.<sup>125</sup> Through such means, gangster-paramilitaries could also consolidate their control on the illicit trade of goods in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Televisions, radios, DVDs, VHSs, and other goods were looted in Bosnia and sold on the streets of Belgrade.<sup>126</sup> These groups hijacked aid convoys, kidnapped citizens to dig trenches in the front lines, resorted to extortion, and smuggled oil, cigarettes, and cars.<sup>127</sup> The regime and the syndicates could ensure their grip on power so long as the flow of goods continued. The gangsters represented a new elite layer in Yugoslav society, one whose power rested on the “ownership of property, capital and wealth, and control over distribution networks.”<sup>128</sup> Even changes to the structure of Yugoslav society after the 1990s conflict were not enough to ensure the destruction of the gangster-elites. Indeed, during post-war Yugoslavia’s “regeneration” phase, many of these gangster-paramilitary units were incorporated into the state apparatus. Members of the Zemun Clan, the most notorious of Belgrade’s gangs, many of whom had been paramilitaries during the war and who had close ties to Belgrade’s political elite, were enveloped by the Ministry of the Interior as the Unit for Special Operations (*Jedinica za specijalne operacije*, JSO).<sup>129</sup> Thus, the state, paramilitary units, the security apparatus and “underground” criminal

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<sup>125</sup> Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 119. Such illicit activity makes it easier for states to survive during times of international sanctions. This is what Cornell and Jonsson call the “crime-conflict nexus,” the point at which states in time of conflict turn to the trade of illicit goods and otherwise illegal activity to sustain themselves and the war effort, but also allow individuals and crime groups “to achieve status, influence, security, and even territorial control” through the chaos. In most cases the criminal and the political actors and motivations operate on a continuum. See Svante Cornell and Michael Jonsson, “The Nexus of Crime and Conflict,” in *Conflict, Crime, and the State in Postcommunist Eurasia*, ed. Svante Cornell and Michael Jonsson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

<sup>126</sup> Dobovsek, “Art, Terrorism, and Organized Crime,” 70. Brammertz, *War Crimes, Corruption, Financing Terrorism and Organized Crime*. Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma,” 312.

<sup>127</sup> Hirschfeld, *Gangster States*, 119-120. Tanner and Mulone, “Private Security and Armed Conflict,” 46-47.

<sup>128</sup> Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 119 and 129.

<sup>129</sup> Horncastle, “Unfamiliar Connections,” 12. For more on Arkan as well as the examples of Šešelj and Vuk Drašković, see Schlichte, “Na Krilima Patriotisma.”

networks melded. When postwar Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić cracked down on such groups, it elicited a response. He was assassinated on 12 March 2003 by a member of state security with ties to the Zemun Clan.<sup>130</sup> This time, state structures refused to melt.

Nationalist myths were also mobilised in the cause of Milošević's war-making. During Arkan's reign as president of the *Delije*, the group embraced a great number of Serbian nationalist slogans and songs, and politics became as much a source of discussion as the scoresheet.<sup>131</sup> The mix of paramilitary "volunteers" was painted as an inheritor of the *hajduk* tradition of rebellion, liminality and freedom fighting. That many of the recruits came from the margins of society helped their attachment to the invented *hajduk* tradition. With diminishing security, stifled economic opportunities for disaffected young men, and the influx of nationalist narratives, groups offering a sense of safety and belonging emerged in the form of soccer supporters' groups and organised crime syndicates. The men could identify strongly with the *hajduk* ethos of marginality and isolation. Propagators of the *hajduk* epics were even embedded with the paramilitary units, much like the war reporters during the 2003 Iraq war.<sup>132</sup> Historically, the tradition of epic folk singing and song making was often continued by the *hajduks* themselves. Some of the songs were written by the actors who took part in the events about which they sang. Thus, the bard was often synonymous with the *hajduk*. Even in the 1990s this tradition continued. Along with their automatic rifles, the paramilitary volunteers brought their *gusle*. While singers were nevertheless embedded with paramilitaries, the paramilitaries were often the singers themselves. *Gusle* singers sang the epics during lulls

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<sup>130</sup> Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War*, 130.

<sup>131</sup> Čolović, "Football, Hooligans and War," 275-279.

<sup>132</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 88.

in battle, they replaced the ancient, mythical *hajduks* with themselves, the contemporary paramilitary warriors. The very modern and very real paramilitaries were imbued with a sense of the epic and mystical as they were transformed into the Starina Novaks and the Hajduk Veljkos of the songs. In the nationalist imagination, the 1990 “Log Revolution” in the Republic of Serbian Krajina took place at the same time as the 1804 “Beginning of the Revolt Against the *Dahijas*.” In both “the folk sprang up like grass from the ground,” and in both “the folk” were led by the *hajduks*, and the *hajduks* got revenge for timeless sufferings.

When governments fail to provide adequately for their populations, people begin to feel the acuteness of their situation. Though real attempts were made to curb the mounting difficulties, many of the decisions often made matters worse. At the very least, they made them exploitable. With the addition of ethnic mobilisers at various levels – from Milošević at the federal one, Radovan Karadžić at the republican or Arkan at the grassroots – they and their exploitative manipulations had fatal consequences. Yet for all the institutional constraints, and for all the propaganda and nationalist rhetoric that flooded late-socialist Yugoslavia, it was ultimately individuals who enlisted, volunteered and accepted recruitment and conscription into paramilitary units who deserve their fair portion of the blame. The failure of Yugoslavia was not just the failure of the state. It was the failure of the individual as well.

### Chapter 3: The Mobilised Invented *Hajduk* Tradition

Yet they (*gusle* players) are the history books, the legend tellers of the country. They fan the fire of patriotism and loyalty by songs of the deeds and accomplishments of their Prince, of dead heroes and past glorious battles, and form another link with the medieval world of which the traveler is so strongly reminded at every step...<sup>133</sup>

In 1992, in the usually quiet “little oriental town of Višegrad,” Serbian paramilitary units re-enacted a scene from Ivo Andrić’s great historical novel, *The Bridge on the Drina*.<sup>134</sup> Though not explicitly stated, the influence of literature on the Serbian paramilitaries is clear in the way they perpetrated atrocities during the 1990s. In Andrić’s novel, Serbian men suspected of partaking in Karadjordje’s rebellion of 1804-1813 are beheaded, impaled on stakes and, if their corpses are not claimed by loved ones, thrown into the Drina River below by Ottoman forces.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, in 1992, Serb paramilitaries shot Bosniak men in the back or in the head and dumped their bodies into the river from the same iconic Mehmed Sokolović Bridge.<sup>136</sup> Three years after the real-life Višegrad massacre, on 11 July 1995, the Bosniak population of Srebrenica experienced horrors at the hands of Serbian paramilitaries. Serb forces rounded up Bosniak men of fighting age, between 14 years and 50 years old.<sup>137</sup> They were bound at the hands, forced to kneel, shot

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<sup>133</sup> Reginald Wyon and Gerald Prance, *The Land of the Black Mountain: The Adventures of Two Englishmen in Montenegro* (London: Methuen & Co., 1903), 39.

<sup>134</sup> Ivo Andrić, “The Bridge on the Drina,” in *Nobel Prize Library: S.Y. Agnon, Ivo Andric*, vol. 1, The Nobel Prize Library (New York: A. Gregory, 1971), 125.

<sup>135</sup> Andrić, “The Bridge on the Drina,” 179-180. Cathie Carmichael, “Watch on the Drina: Genocide, War and Nationalist Ideology,” *History* 98, no. 332 (October 2013), traces the massacres at the Drina River, plus the associated symbolism.

<sup>136</sup> *Krajišnik Judgement*, IT-00-39-T, 27 September 2006, 253. *Lukić and Lukić Judgement*, IT-98-32/1-T, 20 July 2009, 37-83. The Lukićs were part of the “White Eagles” paramilitary unit and found to be responsible for the events at Višegrad and elsewhere.

<sup>137</sup> *Krstić Judgement*, IT-98-3, 2 August 2001. Note 3 in *Ibid.* makes the point that “military age” is a vague term as there were several bodies found to be younger or older than what might be considered military age. Therefore, “military age” should be “understood in its broadest, non-technical sense as including the men and boys who were broadly defined by the Bosnian Serb authorities as being within the vicinity of

in the head and back, and buried in shallow, unmarked graves (many of these bodies would later be transported to other regions of the former Yugoslavia, usually in Serbia, in an attempt to mask the crimes). After a round of congratulations, the Serb General Mladić said, “Finally, after the rebellion against the *dahis*, the time has come to take revenge on the Turks in this region.”<sup>138</sup> This chapter looks at the intersections of ethnicity, masculinity and the invented *hajduk* warrior tradition within public and private narratives to determine the construction of self, other and ideology amongst the Serbian paramilitaries and their leaders, those who were responsible for massacres like that of Srebrenica and Višegrad. Such an approach seeks to answer how such narratives are remembered, imagined, and applied to justify what Mladić calls revenge.<sup>139</sup>

Theoretically, this chapter rests and builds upon Hobsbawm’s concept of “invented traditions.” Traditions include those which are “constructed” and employed as well as those which a start point is less easy to trace.<sup>140</sup> In other words, traditions become such over a long period, implied by Hobsbawm as taking a decade or perhaps longer,<sup>141</sup> as well as over a much shorter period. Most of the traditions featured in Hobsbawm and

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military age.” Indeed, one UN report investigating Prijedor cites the ages being as young as 16 though “sometimes the age limit may have been lower,” and “older than 60 or 65”. See United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)” (New York: United Nations, 1994), 40.

<sup>138</sup> A video of this event can be found at The Mladić Files. “The Mladic Files: Mladic Entering Srebrenica – July 11, 1995.” YouTube video. 2:09. Posted by “ushmmfellows.” 21 October 2011. <https://youtu.be/QfInjINoT4Q> (accessed 15 May 2017). *Dahis*, in this case, refers to the five janissary leaders who took control of Belgrade in 1801, and whose violence led to the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813).

<sup>139</sup> This “obsession” is a characteristic of all nationalisms. See, Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 7-8.

<sup>140</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 21<sup>st</sup> ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

<sup>141</sup> Certainly this is the case in Cannadine’s chapter of the same volume in which British monarchical traditions were established over the course of a century-and-a-half. See David Cannadine, “The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the ‘Invention of Tradition,’ c.1820-1977.”

Ranger's volume appear to have been constructed over the course of a few decades or less. Hobsbawm cites the period of 1870-1914 as the one in which most traditions we take for granted were invented.<sup>142</sup> This was due to the rise of nation-states, proliferation of new technologies and a greater increase in public performance, meetings and gatherings within this period. This chapter argues that in these ways, patriarchy, masculinity and the supposed ancient traditions of the Balkan warrior *hajduk*, should be seen as invented traditions. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century radical politicians mobilised them in the service of civil war and genocide.

Considering this background, the ethno-religious other being thrown from a historic bridge carries the symbolic meanings attached to a fratricidal war, like that of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The Mostar "old bridge's" meanings have been written about elsewhere but the same attributes attached to that bridge can also be applied to the Sokolović Bridge in Višegrad. As in Mostar, the Sokolović Bridge symbolised, in both Andrić's novel and in real life, the connection between communities, in this case Serbian and Bosniak. Besides carrying the flow of troops, trade and communications, people from the two communities met in the middle of the Sokolović Bridge, talked, gossiped and conducted business. Their communities were connected despite the treacherous and difficult to navigate waters of the Drina River. Bridges, then, carry all kinds of symbolic and real meanings. For example, "ethnic" Serbs and Bosniaks shared a common ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious background up to the Ottoman conquests beginning in the fourteenth century. Despite these commonalities, Mladić's invocation of the events of 1804 call to mind both the rhetorically constructed notion of collapsed time (i.e. the

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<sup>142</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 21st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 263-307.

recalling of events from nearly two centuries before as though they had just recently occurred) and the “centuries old struggle” between Serbs and “Turks.” Both collapsed time and the framing of Serb-Turk warfare are central to the *hajduk* epics, while masculinity is an explicit feature of them. The quote by Mladić, then, summarises well the ways in which Serb nationalists managed to articulate a narrative of difference between them and their Bosniak victims. The Bosniaks were neither Bosniaks nor Serbs, but “Turks.” Their Slavic ancestry was removed and replaced by a Turkic one. This ties the victims’ identities to the Islamic religion by equating them with “Turks,” the ruling ethnic group of the Ottoman Empire which in its day had divided its Balkan societies along religious differences. Mladić’s rhetoric also has the added effect of abstracting the victims from any sense of reality. Though there were very few ethnic Turks living within Bosnia, the victims were located within an abstract, perhaps even largely unknown, and certainly stereotyped identity. That this identity was located within a historical past and removed from contemporary reality within which events were taking place creates a distance between the victims and perpetrators, and their time and place. Thus, the perpetrators transcend time and place, and even reality. They are removed from the present in every respect. Such conceptualisations give the impression, at least to the perpetrators, that the events are occurring within a vacuum where the past and present, fiction and reality are one and the same. Any truths which might exist despite such abstractions are obsolete and occur outside of the vacuum they have created for themselves. The jettisoning of individuals from the bridge, then, assumes both a symbolic and practical role.

The execution of military-aged men and boys, as happened in Srebrenica, also has a practical purpose as it prevents the victims from joining the enemy army. Indeed, both Mladić and Karadžić's ICTY defenses relied heavily on some of the victims allegedly having been soldiers earlier in the war.<sup>143</sup> Of course, this does not excuse the way in which the victims were killed – not in battle but as unarmed prisoners. Regardless, the murder of men during wartime also has attached to it symbolic meanings, both for the victims and the perpetrators. It tells us something about the ways in which the perpetrators of such massacres constructed their masculinity and the perpetrator's perceptions of their male victims.

Given the decades' long study of gender, the intersection of masculinity and warfare is a relatively new mode of inquiry. Perhaps it has long been taken for granted that masculinity is inherently a part of the act of warfare and that each reinforces the other. Rather, recent scholarship has shown that masculinity and warfare not only reinforce but complement *and* compete with one another to such an extent that it only appears as though one cannot exist without the other.<sup>144</sup> Such studies look to upset these narratives by showing the hierarchical construction of masculinity within military cultures: just as masculinities are constructed outside of such cultures in wider society, from everyday occurrences on the shop-floor to sports teams, so too are militarised

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<sup>143</sup> *Karadžić Trial* (Transcript) IT-95-5/18 (16 October 2012), 28876-28878.

<sup>144</sup> For some examples see, Maya Eichler, "Militarized Masculinities in International Relations," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2014): 82. Rachel Woodward, "Warrior Heroes and Little Green Men: Soldiers, Military Training, and the Construction of Rural Masculinities," *Rural Sociology* 65, no. 4 (2000): 640–57. Frank J. Barrett, "The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the US Navy," *Gender, Work and Organization* 3, no. 3 (July 1996): 129. Aleksandra Milicevic, "Joining Serbia's Wars: Volunteers and Draft-Dodgers, 1991-1995" (University of California, Los Angeles, 2004). Kimberly Hutchings, "Making Sense of Masculinity and War," *Men and Masculinities* 10, no. 4 (June 2008): 389–404.

masculinities constructed and a hierarchy is assigned to them.<sup>145</sup> Implied here is that gender is socially, historically and culturally engineered. This has led to some scholars employing the concept of hegemonic masculinity on militarised institutions.<sup>146</sup>

Hegemonic masculinity is an archetypal masculinity which seeks to assert itself as a dominant form of masculinity. Like all genders, hegemonic masculinity is defined by what it is: heterosexual, white, economically successful, and “manly.” More importantly, perhaps, it can also be defined by what it is not. It is *not* feminine, it is *not* homosexual; hegemonic men do not fail, they are *not* effeminate nor racially – or ethnically – subordinate. Necessarily, hegemonic masculinity is defined in opposition to both women and other forms of masculinity that compete for dominance. This has led more recent scholarship to speak of hegemonic masculinities, rather than a singular, monolithic gender.<sup>147</sup> Also like all gender constructs, hegemonic masculinities are navigable and negotiated. They are fluid, dynamic and in flux; they are “multiform.”<sup>148</sup> Hegemonic masculinities of one period do not necessarily take the same forms in another era, even within the same geographic region, because societies, historical contexts and cultural practices change despite perceptions of the immutability of each.

Within this framework is what Bracewell calls Milošević’s “return to traditionalism,” a period that ran from roughly 1986 to the Serbian president’s downfall

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<sup>145</sup> Barrett, “The Case of the US Navy,” 141.

<sup>146</sup> The first to use the term “hegemonic masculinity” was Connell who later updated the term to incorporate the various critiques of the term. See, R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 829–59. Barrett, “The Case of the US Navy,” 129–42. Ann-Dorte Christensen and Palle Rasmussen, “War, Violence and Masculinities: Introduction and Perspectives,” *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* 10, no. 3–4 (2015): 189–202.

<sup>147</sup> Eichler, “Militarized Masculinities,” 82.

<sup>148</sup> Wendy Bracewell, “Rape in Kosovo: Masculinity and Serbian Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 4 (2000): 566.

in 2000.<sup>149</sup> In this time, much of Milošević's platform rested upon the re-traditionalisation of Yugoslav, and especially Serbian, society. In practice, this meant recalling several "ancient" traditions which are supposedly inherent within and amongst the Serbian nation. Bracewell examines Milošević's speeches and, later, following Milošević's consolidation of power in Serbia, the state-run media rhetoric, showing the increasing use of language which seemed to harken back to simpler times in which Serb men were victorious liberators of the South Slav peoples from the Habsburg Empire and the heroes who seized their liberty from the clutches of the Ottomans by their own volition. Such rhetoric entered public then later private discourses, Bracewell shows,<sup>150</sup> and I argue that it became the foundational cornerstone of (re)invented and re-imagined traditions of masculinity and extreme Serb nationalism.

It is precisely the perceived immutability of nation and gender to which ethno-nationalists attach narratives in order to propagate their chauvinistic rhetoric and to reinforce hegemonic patriarchy. Many nationalist discourses portray things as essentialist and dichotomous, especially in terms of gender and ethnicity: the warrior-hero is an ethnicised male and defends the feminised nation and its women against the other. Nationalist discourses, then, are ethno-gendered. Ethno-gendering means the ascribing of gendered qualities to ethnic groups as well as ethnicity to gender. For our purposes, the in-group's men are masculine, its women are feminine,<sup>151</sup> and both are part of the pure ethno-religious identity of the nation, Serbian Orthodox. Any deviations from these

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 574.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 563-90.

<sup>151</sup> Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women and the Biological Reproduction of 'the Nation'," *Women's Studies International Forum* 19, no. 1/2 (1996): 17-24. Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State, and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in Former Yugoslavia* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 72-73.

norms are necessarily Othered, even within the ethnic in-group, as was the case with dissenters and draft-dodgers in the earliest days of the war.<sup>152</sup> In this example, men who refused to fight were portrayed as less-masculine and homosexual, and women who spoke against the war were deemed impure.<sup>153</sup> Necessarily, ethno-gendering is tied to sex rather than being part of cultural and social pressures. Therefore, homosexuality is reserved for other ethnicities. The ethno-gender of the in-group is reified and necessarily unattainable, yet exists within the rhetoric and discourse as not only attainable, but desirable and ubiquitous. Such rhetoric is an oversimplification and false, yet I argue that the tension between unattainability and the perception of ubiquity of such an ethno-gendered identity influenced the Serbian paramilitaries to commit egregious breaches of international law.<sup>154</sup> Because the individuals strove for something that did not exist they could not achieve the desired results. The continual one-upmanship to “prove” one’s ethno-gender as the hegemonic type led to an increase in the violence that one conducted. The levels and types of violence differed within contexts, but the results were essentially the same: a performance to outdo one’s colleagues and even one’s own past record, encouraging others to do the same in attempts to reach peak militarised hegemonic masculinity.

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<sup>152</sup> Milicevic, “Joining Serbia’s Wars.” Adam Jones, “Straight as a Rule: Heteronormativity, Gendercide, and the Noncombatant Male,” *Men and Masculinities* 8, no. 4 (April 2006): 451–69.

<sup>153</sup> The most infamous case comes from a Croatian example of the “Five Witches,” five women who dissented against the treatment of civilians, especially of women, and against the nationalist war campaign of the Croatian Tudjman regime. The women’s backgrounds, addresses and occupations were published and a media “witch hunt” ensued. The women were Slavenka Drakulić, Rada Iveković, Vesna Krešić, Jelena Lovrić and Dubravka Ugrešić. See, Meredith Tax, “Five Women Who Won’t Be Silenced,” May 10, 1993, <http://www.meredithtax.org/gender-and-censorship/five-women-who-wont-be-silenced> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>154</sup> Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, eBook (New York: Harper Collins, 2013). See especially p. 156-181 in Ibid.

The social institution of the *zadruga* provides an interesting example of an invented tradition from which other invented traditions derive, namely the reification of patriarchy and the *hajduk* warrior tradition. Patriarchy, here, means a hierarchical model based on both gender and age, wherein men are dominant, and elders and ancestors are worshipped.<sup>155</sup> All three traditions were (re)invented and reimagined to such an extent that by the 1990s they were thought to be indelible and ancient features of Yugoslav, and especially Serbian, society. An important step in the process of formalisation is the enacting of regional social practices into national and state law. In this procedure, a practice which exists only in a small or isolated region(s) comes to be part of standard practice for all citizens residing in the state. Through repetition, which I argue includes enacting and enforcing laws, the practice of the *zadruga* came to be perceived as having a “continuity with the past.”<sup>156</sup>

The *zadruga* was organised around patrilineality in which as many as ten branches of extended family lived under one roof. All new households were set up within the confines of the family’s territorial plot. However, other than an overgrowth of family and a lack of space, the founding of new households was the exception rather than the rule. The gruelling agricultural lifestyle depended on men who were expected to stay at home instead of establishing new households, even after marriage. Girls as young as 12 were expected to be married off into families in other villages, preventing intermarriage within families.<sup>157</sup> Historically, the *zadruga* was a highly patriarchal, hierarchical and

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<sup>155</sup> Joel M. Halpern, Karl Kaser, and Richard A. Wagner, “Patriarchy in the Balkans: Temporal and Cross-Cultural Approaches,” *The History of the Family* 1, no. 4 (1996): 427.

<sup>156</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>157</sup> Unless otherwise noted, information for this and other paragraphs on the *zadruga* have been taken from the following sources: Halpern, et al., “Patriarchy in the Balkans”; Ulf Brunnbauer, “Families and Mountains in the Balkans: Christian and Muslim Household Structures in the Rhodopes, 19th–20th

often oppressive family structure which prevailed in pastoral and semi-pastoral South Slav villages.<sup>158</sup> At any rate, romantic and socialist writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries vaunted the *zadruga* for its ostensibly democratic appearance.<sup>159</sup> Family heads were voted upon, and they organised and ran the everyday workings of the land. They appointed women to run the household, plan and organise meals and to help in working the land. Family heads met at village councils to decide on important matters for the village. From these village councils, village elders were voted on to conduct business with Ottoman officials, to negotiate tax rates, deal with village matters on a regional level, and to ensure a comfortable working relationship between the village and the Ottoman authorities. Thus, family heads were expected to protect the family and the village from outside threats and rival villages and families. Certainly the *zadruga* was democratic, but did not reflect universal suffrage, as it were, since only men voted for household heads. Besides, voting was often seen as a customary practice, except for extreme cases, and did not carry any real weight. Typically, the role of household head would default to the eldest male in the household, with his wife taking on the duties as the head-woman. Only once the eldest man relinquished his duties, died or was voted out, again only in extreme cases, did the title pass to the next-eldest man, usually his brother. Village councils were also populated by men, as were the village representatives to the Ottoman authorities. Any notion of democracy, for the most part, was largely symbolic

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Century,” *The History of the Family* 7, no. 3 (2002), doi:10.1016/s1081-602x(02)00107-0; Jones, “Straight as a Rule”; Alenka Puhar, “On Childhood Origins of Violence in Yugoslavia: II. The Zadruga,” *The Journal of Psychohistory* 21, no. 2 (October 1, 1993).

<sup>158</sup> Puhar, “On Childhood Origins of Violence.”

<sup>159</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, [Marxists.org](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin_family.pdf), [1884] 2000, [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin\\_family.pdf](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin_family.pdf), p. 31-32.

and customary rather than a real practice. The result, then, is a reification of gender roles wherein men are expected to be household heads and women relegated to servitude.

Importantly in the invention of this tradition, certain *zadrugal* practices were enacted into law. Common laws practiced amongst peasants were transmitted and enacted orally, but were later written down in Dušan's Code of 1349 which became the basis for Serbian common law in the nineteenth century.<sup>160</sup> For example, only property-owning men were allowed to vote in the nineteenth century Serbian state. In other words, because the Serbian state could not inherit laws from the Ottomans or refused to do so, the state-builders looked back within their own customs and traditions in order to build a state. Though slightly amended, men were the sole, enfranchised citizens well-into the Yugoslav period, based on the assumptions that household-heads spoke for their families. Women only earned the right to vote after the Communist takeover of power and even then, universal suffrage was largely symbolic, with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia typically receiving 98-99% of all votes cast. After Serbia's independence and during its incorporation into royalist and later Communist Yugoslavia, voting practices were also restricted by age, varying between 21 and 18 depending on the period. Of course, such practices were not restricted to just the South Slav lands, but they indicate the inherency of patriarchal practices, and especially those associated with the *zadruga*. Thus, societal practices led to the perception that mature men were superior to women and younger men, based on a perceived tradition, which became legally entrenched. This is one example of an invented tradition which was "constructed and formally instituted."

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<sup>160</sup> Halpern, et al., "Patriarchy in the Balkans," 435; Ljiljana Stankov, "Teachers as Collectors of National Heritage of Customs in Serbia from 1880 to World War I," *The History of the Family* 19, no. 2 (2014): 206; Naoum Kaytchev, "Children into Adults, Peasants into Patriots: Army and Nation-Building in Serbia and Bulgaria (1878-1912)," in *Childhood in the Ottoman Empire and After*, ed. Benjamin Fortuna (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 116.

Despite beliefs to the contrary,<sup>161</sup> the *zadruga* did not exist uniformly across the Balkans.<sup>162</sup> Several studies have shown variance across the South Slav lands in how they practiced the *zadruga* and even what they called it. Dalmatia, Hercegovina, parts of Bosnia, southern Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo have the closest examples of the *zadruga*, yet even there the practices were not uniform. Some villages and families even associated the *zadruga* with negative stereotypes and refused to call their familial structure as such, despite the similarities between the popular constructed notions of the *zadruga* and their practice of family life.<sup>163</sup> This projection, then, is precisely what Hobsbawm calls an invented tradition. The *zadruga* as a sign carries with it connotations which vary across time and space. Yet, certain practices from localised territories become reified and identifiable with what the *zadruga* is, or rather what it should be. Through repetition and custom, patriarchy was entrenched in South Slav society, bringing the village to the state; the *zadruga* was invented and made into tradition.

The patriarchal structure remained largely intact after the Second World War despite Communist intervention to grant women equal status within Yugoslavia.<sup>164</sup> It would not be until the 1960s and 70s, twenty to thirty years after the Communists came to power, that women finally caught up to or surpassed men in certain social and economic categories. By the 1980s, women were more likely to hold jobs than men and were more likely to enroll in and complete school, even within the harsh economic

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<sup>161</sup> A typical example of the reification of the peasantry and the *zadruga* is Ivo Sivric, *The Peasant Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Pr., 1982). This account is much-romanticised and tries to show the uniformity of the Bosnian peasantry. This, however, is false as will be shown.

<sup>162</sup> Stankov, "Teachers as Collectors," 204.

<sup>163</sup> Halpern, et al., "Patriarchy in the Balkans," 435.

<sup>164</sup> Bracewell, "Rape in Kosovo" notes that "Yugoslav socialism had never seriously confronted the persistent gender hierarchy which privileged men and subordinated women," yet the regime claimed the opposite. See *Ibid.*, p. 574.

climate previously discussed.<sup>165</sup> This can perhaps be explained by the still mostly rural character of Yugoslavia in that decade. Illiteracy was relatively low, especially considering what it was in the mid-1940s when the Communists took control.<sup>166</sup> Yet men increasingly retreated from the socio-economic sphere and tended to the family and farm, rather than getting an education or working in industry. It has been suggested that this led to a crisis of masculinity of sorts as men could no longer claim to be the socio-economic breadwinners. This effect has been called an “economic emasculation.”<sup>167</sup> Where previously home-keeping was the domain of women, it increasingly fell to the men to ensure the day-to-day running of the household. During the resurgence of South Slav traditionalism, the expectation for a man was to still be the socio-economic breadwinner, like his forefathers. Without having alternatives to their socio-economic condition on which to rely, Yugoslav men increasingly became frustrated and felt emasculated. Prewar domestic abuse rates were similar to other Eastern European countries, but child and domestic abuse rates skyrocketed as war loomed.<sup>168</sup> In part, it was the Communist legacy of gender equality to which the Serbian nationalists were reacting. Indeed, Milošević even proclaimed that wife-beating was “the right of good Serbs.”<sup>169</sup> Certainly, then, the societal pressures of manliness and the stifling of appropriate avenues to explore one’s masculinity materialised in a brutalised fashion. When war broke out in 1991, it provided

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> For pre-Communist literacy rates, see Stankov, “Teachers as Collectors,” 203.

<sup>167</sup> Marko Živković, “Ex-Yugoslav Masculinities under Female Gaze, or Why Men Skin Cats, Beat up Gays and Go to War,” *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 3 (2006): 259.

<sup>168</sup> Patricia Albanese, “Nationalism, War, and the Archaization of Gender Relations in the Balkans,” *Violence Against Women* 7, no. 9 (September 2001): 1003, 1017.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted in Bracewell, “Rape in Kosovo,” 584.

for some men an outlet to exert one's manliness and to reclaim the domains they perceived to be theirs. The *zadruga* was one such institution to be re-traditionalised.

One way to reclaim perceived dominance was to negate others and an example can be provided from the *zadruga*. The father's brother is called a *stric*, considered to be a closer relation than the mother's brother, the *ujak*. Unlike a *stric*, an *ujak* would often live a village or two away with his own family. During the Yugoslav wars, *ujko* (the accusative tense of *ujak*) became a pejorative for ethnic Croats amongst nationalist Serbs. This semantical construction was also meant to be both ironic and absurd as it paid credence to the relatedness, though distant, between Serbs and Croats while simultaneously recognising the context of war between the two groups. Perhaps not unimportantly, no such epithet was reserved for the Bosniaks. Instead and alongside "Turk," Serb nationalists referred to the Bosniaks as *balije* which does not have a direct translation, but certainly does not carry with it the familial connections that *ujko* does.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> A popular song amongst Serb nationalists at the time was by Baja "Mali Knindza" (a play on words associated with the *Knindza* paramilitary group and translates as "young Knin-Ninja") was called "Ne volim te Alija" ("I don't like you, Ali"). The song was directed toward the Bosnian Muslim leader, Alija Izetbegović and includes the lyrics "I don't like you Alija/Because you're a *balija*." Interestingly, the song asks, "What do you think things are like now in Goražde and Višegrad?" referencing the Serb military victories in those towns, and perhaps indirectly the subsequent massacres there. Similarly, the song's chorus also runs "May the Drina/Take 100 of your mujahedeens/Every day." Interspersed in the music video are images of Mladić, soldiers, presumably Serbian ones, practicing martial arts, and bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church blessing military personnel. The song's music style was a forerunner of the now-famous turbofolk style of music popular in the Balkans. These tropes have been discussed elsewhere and provide interesting contexts for the Hollywood and Western influences on Serbian paramilitaries. See the video Baja Mali Knindža, "Ne Volim Te Alija," YouTube video, 2:55, posted by "Kocayine," 10 September 2014, <https://youtu.be/GAziYLjR-28> (accessed 17 May 2017).

Baja was also involved in a collaboration with Bora Čorba of the famous rock group Riblija Čorba (Fish Soup) called "Ćuti, Ćuti Ujko." The song sings about a Serb soldier speaking to a Croat one over radio communication. The Serb says in the chorus, "Shut up! Shut up, uncle (*ujko*)! I'll kill you!" The video can be viewed here Baja Mali Knindža, "Ćuti, Ćuti Ujko," YouTube video, 2:17, posted by "Kocayine," 24 November 2014, <https://youtu.be/4RdfnURWBs> (accessed 17 May 2017). Please note, the title of the YouTube video has confused the Serbian ċ for ć.

Negation of the other worked on a gendered axis as well. During the Yugoslav wars, instances of male rape occurred.<sup>171</sup> Because of feelings of embarrassment, shame and emasculation, it has been suggested that the official figures for male rape may in fact be much higher than currently are recorded, the victims being too ashamed to admit to it.<sup>172</sup> Besides, with dead bodies, even for those whose bodies have been discovered, it is difficult in most cases to conclude whether rape has occurred.<sup>173</sup> At any rate, male-on-male rape carries with it a stigmatisation for the victim, different ones than those for female victims but no less visceral and emotional. The purpose of male rape is to re-enforce the perpetrators' potency, while "dishonouring" the victim.<sup>174</sup> Raping males, then, is one way in which to (re)assert one's masculinity in juxtaposition to the feminised other. It is a physical act by which to place oneself in the relative position of hegemonic man.

With female rape victims, however, rape not only dishonours the victim but the entire nation as well. Many studies have looked at the gendered notions of the nation through women's bodies, and most seem to confirm the idea that women are "vessels" for the nation.<sup>175</sup> Literally, women carry within their wombs the future children of the nation. Symbolically, as the main caregivers in most societies, and certainly in the former Yugoslavia, women often attain the role of educators of children. Thus, nationalist

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<sup>171</sup> Such instances included rape by guards on detainees as well as guards forcing detainees to conduct sex acts on and with one another. Pauline Oosterhoff, Prisca Zwanikken, and Evert Ketting, "Sexual Torture of Men in Croatia and Other Conflict Situations: An Open Secret," *Reproductive Health Matters* 12, no. 23 (May 2004): 68–77.

<sup>172</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)" (New York: United Nations, 1994), 56.

<sup>173</sup> Oosterhoff, et al., "Sexual Torture of Men," 73.

<sup>174</sup> Bracewell, "Rape in Kosovo," 571.

<sup>175</sup> Yuval-Davis, "Women and the Biological Reproduction of 'the Nation,'" 17–24.

discourse dictates that women are also “cultural vessels” of the nation. Boys are to be raised as future warriors, to die for one’s country and to defend and protect the women and nation. Girls, on the other hand, are meant to be raised as future mothers and educators, future “vessels.” A good ethnic mother, within such discourse, freely, willingly and happily submits and sacrifices her children to the nation. To have more children is to be a good mother of the nation: more boys means more warriors, more girls means more future mothers; of course, the nation always privileges warriors over mothers especially in wartime! To rape a woman, then, is to violate the others’ nation as well as to “dishonour” the victim. Indeed, in 1986 the term “ethnic rape” was included in the Serbian Criminal Code and carried with it more severe penalties than “regular rape.” As Banjeglav says, “rape thus became meaningful when a woman’s body was understood as the body of the whole nation, whose purity and fertility are degraded by degrading its symbol, that is, the woman.”<sup>176</sup>

Hence the creation of a “network” of concentration camps throughout the former Yugoslavia during the war where countless women, mostly Bosniaks, were raped<sup>177</sup> signals an ethnification of gender. While some camps acted merely as detention facilities until the detainees could be moved further along, others existed solely for rape. One camp run by the Bosnian Serb armies, located at the Vilnia Vlas Hotel, was treated more like a brothel where soldiers, officers, and even locals could come at all hours of the day to choose women to rape. Victims of such camps report women, ranging in age from 7 to

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<sup>176</sup> Tamara Banjeglav, “The Use of Gendered Victim Identities Before and During the War in Former Yugoslavia,” *CEU Political Science Journal* 6, no. 1 (February 2011): 22–46.

<sup>177</sup> UNSC, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts,” 53.

65,<sup>178</sup> often returning in catatonic states, if they ever returned at all.<sup>179</sup> Indeed, in the forests surrounding the camps female bodies were discovered by investigators and have since been confirmed to be rape victims who were executed and/or left for dead after being raped.<sup>180</sup> In such camps, women were purposefully impregnated and released, if ever, only once obtaining an abortion was not feasible.<sup>181</sup> In this way, the systematic campaign of rape was intended to “purify” the other nation by instilling within it the seed of one’s own nation.<sup>182</sup> Indeed, the term “ethnic cleansing,” though often associated with massacre, takes on a significantly more complex meaning when thought of in these terms.

In a related way, the extermination of military-aged men and boys had – as noted – a practical element to it. However, it also takes on symbolic and semantical tones. As Jones notes, “battle age” is “effectively a synonym for *reproductive age* and constitutes for men the period of expected heterosexual activity and identification.”<sup>183</sup> Therefore, the destruction of 8,000 men and boys in Srebrenica, as well as in other towns and villages throughout the former Yugoslavia, not only removed past and potentially future combatants, but also destroyed reproductive elements of that community. The wartime rape camps and the killing of men and boys, and the way in which such atrocities took place – the separation of military-aged men from women, children and the elderly – are two ways in which the victims’ nation was attacked through reproductive means. Such an assertion is evidenced by the fact that the ICTY Appeals Chamber concluded in 2004 that

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Jill Trenholm et al., “Constructing Soldiers from Boys in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo,” *Men and Masculinities* 16, no. 2 (2012): 214.

<sup>180</sup> UNSC, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts,” 55.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>183</sup> Jones, “Straight as a Rule,” 455, italics in original.

“genocide was committed in Srebrenica.”<sup>184</sup> This conclusion is based on the United Nations definition of genocide, which is

any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>185</sup>

Yet the expression of masculinity in wartime also takes on another meaning and can be tied to the sense of traditionalism that the Milošević regime had promoted. Jones’s definition of battle age includes the victims’ identification as heterosexual. Like the rape of men, the killing of men also emasculates the victim and, I suggest that like the rape of women, it also emasculates the nation. Within nationalist discourse, it is easy for the hegemonic male to eliminate and emasculate effeminate men but to do so to potentially equally masculine men, whether through rape or murder, is to assert the perpetrators’ masculinity and to subordinate that of the victims’. Necessarily this implies that the victims’ masculinity is homosexual to the perpetrators’ heterosexual masculinity, or at the very least that it is somehow *less* heterosexual. Again, it is a way of reinforcing the dominance of the hegemonic masculine type over other types of masculinity. Within socialist Yugoslavia, parity was emerging between the sexes at the same time as ‘gay liberation’ in the West was occurring. Suppressing and eventually eliminating other types of masculinity, beginning with the most emasculated types, was a way to reassert the supposed heterosexual norms for the hegemonic masculine type. Or, as Jones notes

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<sup>184</sup> *Krstić Case* (Appeals Chamber Judgement) CC/PIS/839-e, 19 April 2004, 2.

<sup>185</sup> Office of the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG), “Analysis Framework” (New York: United Nations, n.d.), 1.

“hegemonic masculinity is not just competitive masculinity...but also *victorious* masculinity.”<sup>186</sup> By definition, hegemonic masculinity is such because it dominates. In other words, removing the other’s reproductive capacities through the male line was one way to attack the nation’s ability to reproduce in the future. Victims allegedly allowed themselves to be eliminated, which necessarily meant that they were feminised and so “not men.” According to the masculine nationalist discourse, even if the victims happened to be heterosexual, they were automatically effeminate by “allowing” themselves to be defeated; if a few homosexuals were killed along the way, all the better.

In his classic work on Balkan societies, Stoian Traianovich talks about the meanings found in certain phrases and sayings amongst the South Slavic peoples. Though his book has not aged well, Stoianovich still provides insights into the semantical constructions of language within Yugoslav societies. For example, Stoianovich points to the South Slav word *obraz* which he says means anything from “form, image, character, person, symbol, face, figure, statue, idol, guise, and mask” and is akin to the Latin *persona*.<sup>187</sup> For one to have a “svetao obraz” was to have an “illustrious reputation.”<sup>188</sup> Conversely, to have a “crn obraz” was to have a “tarnished face.”<sup>189</sup> The face, then, represents one’s honour or shame. And these associations with the face is reflected in the epic poetry. If a member of society or a member of his family, or indeed a character of the epics, was a traitor or an object of shame, for example, they would have a *crn obraz*. The heroes of the epics, such as Marko Kraljević, are always represented as having a

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<sup>186</sup> Jones, “Straight as a Rule,” 454, italics in original.

<sup>187</sup> Traian Stoianovich, *A Study in Balkan Civilization*, 1st ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1967), 47. See also, Ivo Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain: A Political Anthropology of War in Croatia and Bosnia* (United Kingdom: Saqi Books, 2007), 59.

<sup>188</sup> Stoianovich, *A Study in Balkan Civilization*, 48.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

*svetao obraz*, whereas those who betray allegiances, such as the treacherous Vuk Branković of the Kosovo Cycles, earn a “tarnished face.” The face, then, carries the sins, shame, or purity of the possessor. With repeated betrayals the person becomes *bezobrazan* or a *neočovek*, a “man without a face” or a “non-man.”<sup>190</sup> Much like the destruction of men and boys, the scarring or wounding of victims has practical purposes. Repeatedly, the ICTY has found that Serb paramilitary forces conducted a reign of terror against Bosniaks with the intent to force them to move out of the region or town before any massacres would take place and certainly before any Serb migrants or refugees could be moved in.<sup>191</sup> As part of the reign of terror, amongst other things, was the scarring of victims’ faces. The removal of noses or slashes across the cheeks or forehead was a tool used to incite the ‘voluntary’ movement of the Bosniaks.<sup>192</sup>

Such actions had antecedents. In the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, that horrible war which bestowed upon the Balkans and its people the epithet of ‘brutes,’ the removal of noses and ears was commonplace.<sup>193</sup> Of course, the Carnegie Endowment’s report of the Balkan Wars has met with criticism in recent years for various reasons, some of what it records is important and relevant in light of the more recent “Balkan wars.”<sup>194</sup> In that

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>191</sup> Indeed, one piece of evidence which was used by the ICTY was the Army of Republika Srpska’s own Directive for Up-Coming Operations to the Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> KK/Krajina Corps. Within this document are the plans to “separate” Srebrenica from Žepa, to prevent communications between the two towns and “by planned and well-thought-out combat operations create an unbearable situation of total insecurity with no hope of further survival or life for the inhabitants of Srebrenica and Žepa.” Supreme Command of the Armed Forces of the Republika Srpska, “Directive for Up-Coming Operations to the Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> KK/Krajina Corps,” March 21, 1995, <http://srebrenica.sense-agency.com/assets/prologue/pr-05-direktiva7-en.pdf>, 10. Within four months, Srebrenica would be cleansed of its Muslim inhabitants. UNSC, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts,” 34.

<sup>192</sup> *Karadžić Trial* (Public Redacted Version of Judgement) IT-95-5/18-T (24 March 2015), 543.

<sup>193</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 1914), 277.

<sup>194</sup> Such a term emerged in the 1990s and even continues into the present day. Of course, it is false. “The

war, as in the later war in Yugoslavia, aggressors attacked their victims and removed facial appendages such as noses, ears and eyes. For Balkan peasants, and especially those in the former Yugoslavia, “human reasoning” was “localised” in the ear.<sup>195</sup> Similarly, pathos was located in the eye, “the principal nonoral [sic] agent for the expression of anger, surprise, interest, contentment, indolence, mockery, disdain, deceit, humility, coquetry or desire.”<sup>196</sup> To attack one’s face, then, was to remove his/her honour and to bestow shame. That so many recipients of such actions were Bosniaks suffering at the hands of the Serb paramilitaries, meant in both wars, at least symbolically, that the paramilitaries were shaming their victims. It is no surprise that the scarring of faces should occur, as it equates to betrayal. Bosniaks were largely seen as treacherous beings to the Serbian nation for they, (or their ancestors) had taken on the Islamic religion, so ultranationalist paramilitaries targeted the face for symbolic and practical purposes. By doing so, the paramilitaries not only took from their victims their honour, but also their emotions (pathos), desires, and the ability to reason; they rendered their victims *bezobrazi*, without faces, and *neočoveki*, non-men. In this light, the English phrase “to lose face” takes on macabre tones.

The male appendages usually associated with sex, virility, desire and manliness, the penis and testicles, were also targeted by Serb paramilitaries. In one gruesome account, one detainee was forced to bite off another detainee’s penis in front of other

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Balkans” did not experience the war. Rather, it was a portion of the Balkans which did, Yugoslavia, whereas other Balkan countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and Turkey did not descend into warfare even with the collapse of Communism. Even so, the usage of the word “Balkan” is problematic as definitions of the region differ. Slovenia, for example, insists it is not part of the Balkans yet it is a former Yugoslav republic. Such misuse of language has only managed to perpetuate Western notions of the “the Balkan brute” and the relative backwardness of the region. See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) for more.

<sup>195</sup> Stoianovich, *A Study in Balkan Civilization*, 55.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

prisoners and guards. Similarly, there were reports of mutilation and castration prior to execution.<sup>197</sup> Practically, the increasing use of violence has been called a “habituation to atrocity.” Within this model, initially “low-level incidents [violence against civilians] lower inhibitions to more numerous and severe attacks” which can culminate in brutality and genocide.<sup>198</sup> Symbolically, if the victims are allowed to survive, this type of assault renders the victims unable to recreate the nation and forces upon them the shame of having literally been emasculated, just as in the execution of males. This also necessarily locates gender within the genitals: to have a penis and testicles is to be a man. Castrated, one is no longer a man.

The types of rhetorical practices and actions recounted above attempt to define masculinity as male, heterosexual and victorious. Those attempting to achieve the hegemonic masculine, the perpetrators of atrocity within the Serbian paramilitaries, necessarily defined their masculinity in relation to the Bosniak other. By carrying out campaigns of rape, mutilation and atrocity, and through the act of killing, the perpetrators attempted to construct themselves into an ideal masculine type: by having two ears, two eyes, a working penis and a virile, victorious heterosexual sexuality, the perpetrators proved their masculinity by disproving that of others. They negatively asserted their masculinity, defining it by what the other *is not* instead of what the self *is*. The means of such an approach were based on a return to what was perceived to be traditional notions of Serb males: a militarised masculinity characterised by the “Dinaric man.”

In the early twentieth century, the anthropologist-geographer Jovan Cvijić

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<sup>197</sup> UNSC, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts,” 54. Also, Oosterhoff, et al., “Sexual Torture of Men,” 74-75.

<sup>198</sup> Charles H. Anderton and Edward V. Ryan, “Habituation to Atrocity: Low-Level Violence Against Civilians as a Predictor of High-Level Attacks,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 4 (August 5, 2016): 542.

reimagined the “inferior and servile” class of the Ottoman period, the *rayah*, as “Dinaric man” and gave them regenerative qualities based upon the warrior mystique.<sup>199</sup> Dinaric man can rise from his humiliation and transform himself into an unbeatable, revenge-seeking paragon of masculinity. Dinaric man inhabits the same areas as the idealised *zadruga*, namely the Dinaric mountain range stretching from the rural territories of Dalmatia, Montenegro and southern Serbia and Bosnia. For Cvijić, the Dinaric man embodies martial tendencies: he carries arms, is physically fit, brave and exhibits violence, which he uses freely. Against his enemies, Dinaric man does not hold back his retribution and punishment. With his loved ones, he is tender but firm and employs a sense of fair justice. To both friend and foe, he is judge, jury and executioner, as needed. Necessarily, he is “a true Christian,” which for Cvijić means Orthodox and therefore Serbian. Cvijić emphasised Dinaric man’s “deep connection” with his ancestors, culture and “race.”<sup>200</sup> It was his duty to “take part in their sufferings.”<sup>201</sup> Dinaric man is necessarily the opposite of the urban man who is cosmopolitan and “degenerate” because the city “pollutes” the mind, body and traditions of Dinaric man. Interestingly, and not unimportantly, it is worth noting that despite some changes to demographics, Christians, and thus Serbs, resided mainly in the countryside while Muslims lived in the cities of Bosnia. Necessarily, this provided certain opportunities for urbanites that were not reserved for the country-dwellers. It is the duty, then, of Dinaric man to “assuage his

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<sup>199</sup> Xavier Bougarel, “Yugoslav Wars: The ‘revenge of the countryside’ Between Sociological Reality and Nationalist Myth,” *East European Quarterly* XXXIII, no. 2 (June 1999): 161.

<sup>200</sup> Jovan Cvijić, “Seobe i etnicki proces u našem narodu,” in *Cvijićeva Knjiga* (Beograd: Srpska Književna Zadruga, 1927), 35.

<sup>201</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 176-77.

pain” of being relegated to the countryside by “kill[ing] many a Turk.”<sup>202</sup> For Cvijić, only the purest men exhibit all of these qualities and, as the purest of all Dinaric peoples, the Serbs have the greatest potential. Thus, it is from these men, the Dinaric Serbs, that the *hajduk* emerged.<sup>203</sup> The rapid development of the countryside and population movements from the rural to the urban in the twentieth century did not “assuage” much in terms of perception. In 1948, 73% of Yugoslavia’s population lived in the countryside, but by 1981 this number was reduced to only 27%.<sup>204</sup> Though demographics changed, perceptions did not. The country was still perceived, and it saw itself, as rural because of the reification and glorification of the folk by the likes of Cvijić and Vuk. Despite this, modernisation was not uniform as some areas developed more quickly than others. This meant that ethnic minorities were “economically marginalised” and looked to re-centre themselves. Unsurprisingly, those economically marginalised minorities were amongst the first to seize state institutions in the 1990s, especially the Serbs of Dalmatia.<sup>205</sup> Dalmatia, as well as Montenegro, was the ideal location for the Dinaric man in Cvijić’s conception. Dinaric man, then, was reimagined and reapplied to modern contexts and the purity of the Serbian nation was tied to its rurality.<sup>206</sup> To be Serbian was to be Dinaric man and Dinaric man was masculine in quality. It is no surprise, then, that Cvijić singled out the *hajduks* as the ideal-type of Dinaric men. They opposed the state, got revenge for injustices and refused to lay down their arms in the face of a fight. Semantically, this is the type of masculinity that Milošević recalled when he stated, “No one shall ever dare

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Cvijić, “Seobe i etnicki proces u našem narodu,” 29.

<sup>204</sup> Bougarel, “Yugoslav Wars,” 165.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 165-166.

<sup>206</sup> Jovan Cvijić, “Psihičke osobine Šumadinaca,” in *Cvijićeva Knjiga* (Beograd: Srpska Književna Zadruga, 1927), 108.

beat you again!” The first rebellion, which occurred amongst the Serbs of Croatia, the archetypal Dinaric men, was “a rebellion of the suddenly aware but previously unacknowledged male, an announcement of his unquenchable, untameable and inexhaustible sexual potency.”<sup>207</sup>

One avenue of inspiration for Cvijić was undoubtedly derived from the epics. Certainly Mladić’s quote, which began this chapter, conveys the influence of the epics rather clearly. If the patriarchal order was inscribed into South Slav society then the oral epics ensured the dominance of militarised masculinity. Unsurprisingly, the epics sing of warfare between Serbs and Turks, between Orthodoxy and Islam, and are perhaps the most exciting of the various types of oral tradition amongst the South Slavs. Perhaps one reason for their popularity and excitement is that they are at least based on real people and real events. Vuk’s anthology contains mostly epics, as opposed to romances and aphorisms or folk proverbs, which certainly provides a selection bias for anyone wanting to read the collection. At any rate, the popularity of the epics means that the messages they convey are widely propagated in the home and in schools. Indeed, during the socialist period school textbooks taught the epics without much commentary or scholarship attached to them. Only once folklore studies began in the 1960s and 70s did real scholarship, critique and scrutiny of the South Slav epics begin. Within Yugoslavia, though, the focus was less on a cultural critique of the epics than it was on aesthetics. In other words, the epics were taken for granted, were understood to be ‘truthful’ history or, what Gerolymatos calls “ethnic truth.”<sup>208</sup> It is precisely because these “ethnic truths”

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<sup>207</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 280.

<sup>208</sup> Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars: Myth, Reality, and the Eternal Conflict* (Montreal: Stoddart Publishing, 2001), 90-95.

have not been explored in any serious manner that they could become part of the arsenal of the political elite, allowed to take hold of the populations of the former Yugoslavia and to become the basis for identity construction for Serbia's paramilitaries.

One epic which has undergone more scrutiny than others, at least in the West, is the Montenegrin poet-bishop-prince Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath*. The poem is in play format, but inspired by the epic tradition of previous generations, is usually counted as an epic, and recounts an allegedly real massacre of Muslim Slavs by Montenegrin *knezes*.<sup>209</sup> The historical record does not reflect any such massacre having taken place, yet the poem is still thought to be accurate and historical truth. Indeed, the gangster, Yugoslav state security assassin and wartime paramilitary leader, Arkan, was said to have been an admirer of the play and its author.<sup>210</sup> Rather, it is precisely an example of ethnic truth: it probably did not happen but is widely believed to be more truthful than truth itself. At any rate, I argue that the historical reality of the event does not matter, at least not within the context of this chapter. Instead it is the perception that it occurred, and the results of its occurrence, which matters for its influence upon the events of the 1990s.<sup>211</sup> An example below will help to illustrate my intention.

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<sup>209</sup> *Knez* translates as either prince or duke and prevailed amongst the emerging "rural class" of Ottoman occupied, South Slav territory. See Wayne S. Vucinich, "Introductory Remarks: Genesis and Essence of the First Serbian Uprising," in *The First Serbian Uprising, 1804-1813*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 7.

<sup>210</sup> Andrew B. Wachtel, "How to Use a Classic: Petar Petrović Njegoš in the Twentieth Century," in *Ideologies and national identities: The case of twentieth-century southeastern Europe*, ed. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003), p. 145.

<sup>211</sup> Here, I follow Pavlović's model of interpreting events surrounding *The Mountain Wreath* in which "every new generation of South Slav historians and politicians appropriates Njegoš's work, hoping to find enough quotations to validate their own views." Srdja Pavlovic, *Balkan Anschluss: The Annexation of Montenegro and the Creation of the Common South Slavic State* (Baltimore, MD: Purdue University Press, 2008), 8-10.

The household heads are gathered to discuss what should be done with the “dragon with seven heads” (i.e. “the Turks,” the Slavic Muslims).<sup>212</sup> Prior to the meeting the Montenegrin leader, Bishop Danilo, is troubled by what he perceives needs to be done:

When I think of today’s council meeting,  
flames of horror flare up deep inside me.  
A brother will slaughter his own brother,  
and the arch-foe, so strong and so evil,  
will destroy e’en the seed within mothers.  
O wretched day, may God’s curse be upon you!  
when you brought me to the light of this world.

In this passage, the bishop laments his existence because he knows that the Turks must be slaughtered, but he does not want to be the one to have to make the decision. And yet, he is the only one who can unite the other tribes. This passage places the killing of Turks as a necessity for survival of the Serbian people. If “the Turks” are not slaughtered, then “the Turks” will surely slaughter “the Serbs.” Such a view is upheld by one of the heads, Vuk Mičunović, who says “Our struggle won’t come to an end until/we or the Turks are exterminated.” The characters who advocate for war within the play argue from the point of view that because “the Turks” had converted to Islam, “the world’s scourge,” they cannot be trusted with their word of honour. If they could betray the true God, then surely they would betray those who were once their kin. Thus, ethnic coexistence between the Serbs and Turks is an improbability.

Several times, the play makes the point that “God is angry with the Serbian people/because of their many mortal sins,” in other words, for losing to the Ottomans in 1389, for having allowed Islam to gain a foothold within their country and nation, and

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<sup>212</sup> Petar II Petrović Njegoš, “The Mountain Wreath,” trans. Vasa D. Mihailovich, *Rastko: Internet Library of Serb Culture, Literature*, accessed June 5, 2017, [https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain\\_wreath.html](https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain_wreath.html).

most importantly for converting to or allowing the conversion of others to Islam. Serbian leaders had “trampled upon the Law” by abandoning the patriarchal tradition embedded in Dušan’s Code, opting instead for the Ottomans’ *sharia* law; servants had “disobeyed” their masters by converting to Islam against their masters’ will; and the “entire Serbian tribe” had been “poisoned” by Islam. The latter point fits particularly well with the Serb nationalist war program of ethnic cleansing discussed above, in which a pure national seed is seen as capable of cleansing, or poisoning, the other’s nation.

If the Serbs should lose in the upcoming battle, says Vojvoda Stanko, then “May God remove all the trace of our race/if we should live in cowardice and disgrace!” History and the Kosovo epic is playing out in cyclical form: if the Serbs were to allow themselves to once again be caught under-prepared, if they should not strike before the Ottomans do, if they should again lose to “the Turks,” if they should fail to remove themselves from the “yoke” of the Ottomans, then the complete annihilation of the Serbian people would be better than to again face defeat and emasculation at the hands of the Ottomans. Here, implicitly, is the presence of the hegemonic masculinity which refuses to be defeated. It is mobilised and becomes militarised.

Also present within *The Mountain Wreath*, as in other epics, is the conflation of time. When recounting a confrontation between the Serb heads and the Ottoman officials at a meeting, one Serbian head exclaims to one of the officials

Weren’t we both on the Field of Kosovo?  
I fought then and I am still fighting now,  
you were traitor then and you are one now.  
You’ve dishonoured yourself before the world,  
blasphemed the faith of your own ancestors.  
You have enslaved yourself to foreigners!

In this way, the speaker positions himself as a member of a family which participated in the Battle of Kosovo. Because his ancestors fought in the battle, he too fights in it in the present day. Similarly, to the speaker, the official is as much a “traitor,” “blasphemer,” “dishonoured person,” and “slave” as his ancestors for continuing to hold onto the Islamic faith. Conversely, the speaker is the official’s opposite: loyal, faithful, honourable and free; he is the *čovjek* to the others’ *nečovjek*. Time and temporality bend to include the present with the past, medieval Kosovo is transposed onto nineteenth century Montenegro:

Time is stopped in the ancient moment of primary evil, the coming of Islam to the Balkans, and everything that has happened since then and is still to come is just a reproduction of the relationship between Good and Evil established and frozen at that time, right up to the final settling of accounts the outcome of which would be the disappearance of one or the other.<sup>213</sup>

Within such rhetoric, “the Serb” is constructed against the Muslim other and only the survivor exists as a manly expression of victory. If “the Serb” should happen to meet death then he would do so on his feet, *yatagan* in hand and Turkish heads in his bag.

In a more contemporary example, the song *Vojvoda Momčilo Djujić*, named after the Second World War *Četnik* leader from the Dinaric Mountains in Serbian Dalmatia, time is also conflated.<sup>214</sup> According to the singer, Djujić is “reminiscent” of the *hajduk* Stojan Janković. Both men “do not fear war or struggle” and both “fight so the Serbian name doesn’t extinguish.” Interestingly, there is an unstated connection between Janković and Djujić, but with knowledge of both men the relationship becomes apparent. Janković fought for Venice as a soldier of fortune against the Ottomans in the seventeenth

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<sup>213</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 226.

<sup>214</sup> “Gusle – Vojvoda Momčilo Djujić,” YouTube video, 3:09, posted by “Kapetan Deroko,” 18 February 2013, <https://youtu.be/6L-Xi2Un044> (accessed 17 May 2017).

century;<sup>215</sup> similarly, Djujić collaborated with the occupying Italian fascists in Dalmatia. In both instances, the justification is made that each individual was doing what was necessary for “the Serbian people”; Janković used Venice to fight against the Ottomans, while Djujić leveraged his relationship with the Italians to fight against Communism, the greater of two evils (the other being the fascist invaders). The point is implied, but what is apparent is the linking of the past with the present through nationalist discourse. In both instances, the territorial integrity of the narrative is still intact: Serbs in Dalmatia fighting against “historic enemies.”

To build morale, to expand propaganda and to attempt to enlist more men, new epics were written and the old ones were adapted to fit modern criteria. The invented traditions of the village were elevated. In this case, the same is true for the Second World War as it is for the 1990s. In every instance, the *hajduks* are transposed onto contemporary figures – Djujić walks alongside Janković, Milošević defends Kosovo like Miloš Obilić,<sup>216</sup> Šešelj fights for Serbdom.<sup>217</sup> One interesting example from the 1990s even confuses the narrative of Karadžić’s upbringing.<sup>218</sup> The song celebrates Karadžić’s mother for raising him to protect and defend Serbdom, clearly dealing in nationalist rhetoric. However, by his own admission, Karadžić’s mother and her family were ardent Partisan supporters.<sup>219</sup> Several elements paly into this paradox. First, the Partisan

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<sup>215</sup> Boško Desnica, *Stojan Janković I Uskočka Dalmacija*, ed. Milodrag Djurić and Gordana B. Todorović (Belgrade: Mala Biblioteka, Srpske Književne Zadruga, 1991).

<sup>216</sup> Vojislav Stanišić, “Slobodanu Miloševiću – Narodni Guslar Vojislav Stanišić,” YouTube video, 27:49, posted by “skituljko039,” 16 October 2015, <https://youtu.be/S7Q9XEMkwWQ> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>217</sup> Milomir Miljanić, “Narodni Guslar Milomir Miljanić Doktoru Vojislavu Šešelju,” YouTube video, 24:31, posted by “Srpske Gusle – Srpskom Rodu.” 23 February 2016, <https://youtu.be/mPiHJupqsW8> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>218</sup> Miloš Segrt, “Sprski Guslar Milos Segrt – Majci Radovana Karadzica,” YouTube video, 10:53, posted by “SrpskaCrnaGoraBP,” 6 August 2008, [https://youtu.be/\\_wZIQGJNb6Q](https://youtu.be/_wZIQGJNb6Q) (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>219</sup> *Karadžić Trial* (Transcript) IT-95-5/18 (16 October 2012), 28851.

movement's successes were found in its lack of nationalism and its ability to unite the South Slavs against fascism during the Second World War. Second, such rhetoric brings into nationalist discourse an ability to unite two opposing streams during the resurgence of Serbian nationalism in the 1980s and '90s. Because the Communists were a-national and opposed to nationalist sentiments from all of Yugoslavia's ethnicities, this necessarily made them enemies of the various nationalist parties. For our purposes, this means that the Serbian nationalist *Četniks* and their supporters were opposed to the Partisans and their socialist approach to nation building. Necessarily, this song suggests what was going on during the resurgence of Serb nationalism in the 1980s and '90s: it blends the Communist and nationalist narratives of what it means to be a Serb.

On another level, this song also reifies the roles of women within the nation. According to Karadžić, his mother was "a housewife" just as she is portrayed in the song.<sup>220</sup> However, that the song celebrates her ability to "bear" a son for the nation suggests the women-as-vessels-of-the-nation theme. Where her role was to birth and raise a warrior for the nation, his role was to defend it and fight for it. Though a contemporary example, this song takes its cues from traditional epic poetry in form and certainly in function.

Such didactics as presented in these songs and poems – Serb against Turk, Orthodox and Muslim, Good versus Evil, man/masculine and woman/feminine – simplify reality. Nuance is excised to present a coherent narrative of the 'way things really are.' Mladić's quote at the opening of this chapter, and Milošević's speeches in the 1990s,<sup>221</sup> interpret both history and the present in oversimplified dichotomies. They also recall the

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 36.

*hajduk* epics. Potential battles become predestined and inevitable, fixable problems become ancient hatreds rooted in ethnicity. Critique is forbidden. The “interpretive model” presented by politicians such as Milošević “starts to be put into practice.”<sup>222</sup> The means become a militarised masculinity rooted in tradition, an ethno-gendered Dinaric masculinity. The result is subordinated, invisible women and emasculated and effeminate men. Just as the flow of time stops dead against custom and tradition, the waters of the Drina crash upon corpses piled higher. After such battles, the living memorialise their dead, adapt new imaginings into old forms and look to the past for solace: “All of our tears were always wiped away/by the deft sounds of the lovely *gusle*.”<sup>223</sup> The process begins anew for “Serbian *gusles*/know not how to lie.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 37.

<sup>223</sup> Petar II Petrović Njegoš, “The Mountain Wreath,” trans. Vasa D. Mihailovich, *Rastko: Internet Library of Serb Culture, Literature*, accessed June 5, 2017, [https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain\\_wreath.html](https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain_wreath.html).

<sup>224</sup> Jovan Jovanović-Zmaj quoted in Zanic, *Flag on the Mountain*, 62.

## Conclusion

Ni triti Turskog zuluma;  
I radi su božiji ugodnici;  
Jer je krvca iz zemlje provrelja,  
Zeman doš'o valja vojevati,  
Za krst časni krvcu proljevati,  
Svaki svoje da dokaje stare.

Nor suffer any more Turkish tyranny;  
So, too, the saints were filled with gladness,  
For the blood of innocents had bubbled  
From the earth; the time came for battle,  
For the Holy Cross to shed one's life-blood;  
Every man should now avenge his  
forebears.<sup>225</sup>

“God is angry with the Serbian people” lament the *kolo* dancers in Njegoš's *The Mountain Wreath*.<sup>226</sup> Serb nationalist narrative tells us, He is angry because the Serbian people have allowed the serpent into the bosom.<sup>227</sup> Islam has taken hold of their nation and it is the duty of the descendants of those who did not convert, the Orthodox Serbs, to expunge the nation of the source of God's anger. To please God is to purify the nation.

The same nationalist narratives tell us that avengers have come throughout the centuries to rid the nation of its impurities, to allow forgiveness for its inequities. They have come in the form of Starina Novak, the ancient *hajduk* who sleeps atop Mount Romanija in Eastern Bosnia until such a time that his services are needed; the avengers have been inheritors of Miloš Obilić, the assassin of the Ottoman sultan, Murad I in 1389; they have taken the name of Petar Mrkonjić, also a *hajduk* of the oral epics who fought Islam and the Ottomans since time immemorial. The latter provides a particularly interesting example of the epic personified.

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<sup>225</sup> Taken from Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, “The Beginning of the Revolt Against the *Dahis*,” Narodna Biblioteka Srbija, <https://www.nb.rs/collections/index.php?id=1914> (accessed 18 May 2017). I have taken the liberty to reformulate the English translation at points to better convey the message of the poem. Therefore, the translation presented here differs from the English one provided at the source. The Serbian version is available in Cyrillic at Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, “Početak Bunje Protiv Dahija,” Narodna Biblioteka Srbija. <https://www.nb.rs/collections/index.php?id=1913> (accessed 18 May 2017).

<sup>226</sup> Petar II Petrović Njegoš, “The Mountain Wreath,” trans. Vasa D. Mihailovich, *Rastko: Internet Library of Serb Culture, Literature*, accessed June 5, 2017, [https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain\\_wreath.html](https://www.rastko.rs/knjizevnost/umetnicka/njegos/mountain_wreath.html).

<sup>227</sup> This is, of course, a tongue-in-cheek reference to Lenard J. Cohen's book of the same name which was a “rise and fall” of Slobodan Milošević, the wartime leader of Serbia. Lenard J. Cohen, *The Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

Though there is no historical record that any person with the name of Petar Mrkonjić has ever existed,<sup>228</sup> a Serbian battalion carried his name during the Second World War,<sup>229</sup> while a medal was named after him during the Yugoslav wars of succession.<sup>230</sup> Petar Mrkonjić was also the *nom de guerre* of one anti-Ottoman *hajduk* warrior of the nineteenth century. Variably a member of the French Foreign Legion or a bandit in and around the Habsburg-Ottoman border, Petar Mrkonjić was awarded the Legion of Honour by France and became a legend in his own right for his record against the Ottomans. In the First World War, Petar Mrkonjić's reputation grew because of his valiant leadership of the Serbian Army's retreat through the Albanian Alps in 1915. The name taken from the oral epics, Petar Mrkonjić would become, after the defenestration of the last Obrenović in 1903, King Peter I of Serbia. Karadjordje's grandson, Peter, carried on the legacy of anti-Ottoman and *hajduk* activity. In a word, Peter I of Serbia embodies the invented tradition of the Serbian *hajduk*.

This thesis has shown the process of incorporating the invented *hajduk* tradition into the Serbian Army, politics, society and culture, and it has emphasised how it was repeatedly activated during wartime. Where actual *hajduks* were part of the revolutionary Serbian army, they were eventually victims of modernisation and marginalised. They became paramilitary units. As the twentieth century dawned, the wild men of the Balkan

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<sup>228</sup> This paragraph is taken from Jozo Tomasevich, *The Chetniks: War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (United States: Stanford University Press, 1975), 119 and Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), 142 unless otherwise noted.

<sup>229</sup> It is worth noting that the Second World War battalion was led by Momčilo Djujić from Dalmatia. His *Dinarska Divizija*, or Dinaric Division, of the *Četniks* was responsible for collaborating with the invading Italian fascists against the Communist Partisans. A contemporary epic is recounted which features Djujić on page 76 of this thesis.

<sup>230</sup> Radovan Karadžić awarded the "Petar Mrkonjić medals" to the Ilidža Brigade and the 1<sup>st</sup> Romanija Infantry Brigade, "amongst others." See, *Karadžić Trial* (Public Redacted Version of Judgement), IT-95-5/18-T, 24 March 2015, 1933.

wilderness were used as extermination units to cleanse the Slavic Muslim, Albanian and even Bulgarian inhabitants of the Kosovo, Methohija and Macedonia regions during Serbia's Great War, operating essentially as paramilitary units. Even competing anti-fascist ideologies found solace in the *hajduk* narratives and traditions, with both Mihailović's *Četniks* and Tito's Partisans employing *hajduk* tactics and rhetoric inherent in the epics. Guerrilla warfare became the most efficient method for both the *Četniks* and Partisans against the invading German and Italian fascist armies, and, most importantly, against each other.

One other aspect which connects the events of 1941-1945 and 1991-1995, is the process of state weakening and collapse in Yugoslavia. After the regency of Prince Paul signed on to the Tripartite Pact in late March 1941, his government was overthrown, creating a political crisis. The state was greatly weakened when the Nazis invaded only two weeks later. The Yugoslav Army capitulated without much of a fight, the state was occupied until 1945. Yet it was the unstable interwar period of the 1930s which created in Yugoslavia, like in much of Europe, conditions conducive to feelings of discontent, and a climate of political intractability and dissent. Similarly, a series of constitutional crises led to an increasingly weak Yugoslav federation by the late-1980s. The succession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 was only the result of state weakness, the war a symptom of its collapse. In both periods, people staking claim to the *hajduk* myths were in abundance. Yet, this was not because of something inherent in Yugoslav society, prevalent in the culture or embedded within the DNA of its inhabitants. Rather, the Yugoslav case shows that in times of pressure, when all legitimate avenues of expression and action are stifled and when there is no overarching structure to turn to – when things

get complicated – people seek out stability, simplicity, community and belonging. For young Serbian men, three avenues existed which seemed to answer these needs: soccer hooliganism, guest worker (*Gastarbeiter*) visas in Western Europe, and gangs. An extreme case, the paramilitary leader Arkan nevertheless represents the three streams of young male identity construction and identification in late-socialist Yugoslavia *and* the three streams of paramilitary recruitment: from *Gastarbeiter*, soccer hooligan, gangster into paramilitary, warrior, *hajduk*. Infused with nationalist sentiment and increasingly acting out through violence, first on soccer pitches then in warfare, perpetrators were “habituated to atrocity”;<sup>231</sup> genocide was but the culmination. The invented *hajduk* tradition was mobilised during crisis and for many emerged as the means of self-assertion. Indeed, “when society fails, the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee.”<sup>232</sup> From the pieces left behind by Yugoslav socialism, *hajduk* mythology constructed the actors’ past, present and future.

Within the nationalist imagination, Peter I, like Arkan, marches alongside the *hajduks* of history and epics. Starina Novak wages war with Šešelj, Djujić with Stojan Janković. Indeed, Peter I actually became in some sense Petar Mrkonjić when he chose the name as his *nom de guerre*: the fictional became real. Likewise, embedding the contemporary heroes in new epics ensures the immortalisation of the protagonists. Not only do the modern heroes fight alongside the fictionalised *hajduks* in the nationalist imagination, they do so in song and poetry too: one reinforces the other. Thus, the *hajduks* of the epics are not replaced with contemporary figures but rather placed

<sup>231</sup> Charles H. Anderton and Edward V. Ryan, “Habituation to Atrocity: Low-Level Violence Against Civilians as a Predictor of High-Level Attacks,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 4 (August 5, 2016): p. 542.

<sup>232</sup> Miroslav Hroch qtd. in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 173.

alongside them. The struggles of the past, whether real or imagined, occur simultaneously with the present and future. This fact seems to fit with Ignatieff's point that simultaneity is "the dream time of vengeance."<sup>233</sup> Where the Serbian paramilitaries were apparently dreaming of revenge against "the Turk," their victims experienced a nightmare. For every Bosniak body in the Drina, the *hajduk* avenged a Serb impaled at the Stamboul Gate. With such sacrifices, God could never be angry with the Serbian people again.

An abundance of *hajduk* imagery can still be found on social media sites too. Pages dedicated to the *gusle*,<sup>234</sup> the *hajduks*<sup>235</sup> and epic singing are quite popular. However, it is not just a fascination with folklore that is apparent on these pages. Rather, it is the continued mobilisation of folklore, specifically the motifs associated with the *hajduk* epics and tradition. Many of these sites market camouflaged t-shirts emblazoned with skulls wearing the *Četnik* cap, sporting a moustache and evoking a nineteenth century *hajduk*<sup>236</sup> alongside posts glorifying Milan Nedić, the Second World War Nazi-puppet leader of Serbia,<sup>237</sup> posts of flags of "Svesrbija," Greater Serbia,<sup>238</sup> and photos of

<sup>233</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honour: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 186.

<sup>234</sup> "Gusle," Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/guslesrbija/> (accessed 17 May 2017); "Srpske Gusle," Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/gusle.gusle/> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>235</sup> "Hajduk," Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/hajduksrbija/> (accessed 17 May 2017); "Srpska Komiti u Makedonija," Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/Србски-комити-у-Македонија-1222568644493581/> (accessed 17 May 2017); "Istrojia Četničkog Pokreta, 1903-1918," Facebook page, [https://www.facebook.com/Историја-Четничког-покрета-1903-1918-383953345098236/?ref=timeline\\_chaining](https://www.facebook.com/Историја-Четничког-покрета-1903-1918-383953345098236/?ref=timeline_chaining) (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>236</sup> "Hajduk," Facebook page, Photos, <https://www.facebook.com/hajduksrbija/photos/a.583060841801831.1073741833.420476638060253/126159907281334/?type=3&theater> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>237</sup> "Vlada Nacionalnog Spasa – Milan Nedić," Facebook page, [https://www.facebook.com/VladaNacionalnogSpasa/?ref=timeline\\_chaining](https://www.facebook.com/VladaNacionalnogSpasa/?ref=timeline_chaining) (accessed 17 May 2017). Nedić was also included in a list of 100 Greatest Serbs at number 84, as voted by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU). For the complete list, see *Wikipedia*, s.v. "The 100 Most Prominent Serbs," last modified 13 May 2017, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_100\\_most\\_prominent\\_Serbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_100_most_prominent_Serbs). It was also SANU which wrote the leaked draft memo that many cite as the re-awakening of Serbian nationalism in 1986.

Njegoš.<sup>239</sup> Though there seems to be a market for kitsch, there is no recognition of what is actually being peddled by the folklore mongers. The shirt-makers are not thinking of the nose-less remains of people of a different faith, the victims of mobilised folklore. Rather, it is a sanitised history scrubbed of *our* crimes, injected with violence done by *them* against *us*, and pedaled by nationalists. Clearly there is money in glorifying the perpetrators of horror.

More disturbingly, perhaps, is that people still continue to cling to the mobilised *hajduk* tradition. Upon Russia's 'annexation' of Eastern Ukraine and the Crimea in 2014, hundreds of Serbian *Četniks* volunteered for their "ancient" ally, Russia. Their claim was that Russia had been there for the Serbs in the past, so it was their duty to protect Slavdom and Orthodoxy from fascism and the West.<sup>240</sup> Though their claim had elements of truth to it,<sup>241</sup> Russian patronage was not as certain historically as their statements

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<sup>238</sup> "Hajduk," Facebook page, Photos, <https://www.facebook.com/hajduksrbija/photos/a.421367147971202.1073741828.420476638060253/1312752485499326/?type=3&theater> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>239</sup> "Dinarizam," Facebook page, Photos, <https://www.facebook.com/Dinarismus/photos/a.796826187064576.1073741828.794859357261259/809963329084195/?type=3&theater> (accessed 17 May 2017).

<sup>240</sup> This was the sentiment shared by "Hadži" Bratislav Živković, featured in the Vice News video located at Simon Ostrovsky, "Serbain War Veterans Operating in Crimea: Russian Roulette in Ukraine (Dispatch 5)," YouTube video, 10:24, posted by "VICE News," 9 March 2014, <https://youtu.be/pFILN9E2kcY> (accessed 17 May 2017). A slightly more in-depth interview with another volunteer, Dejan Vujić, echoes the reasoning. Dejan Vujić, "Interview with Serbian Volunteer, who came to defend Novorossiia | Eng. Subs," YouTube video, 4:09, posted by "Vox Populi Evo," 4 March 2015, <https://youtu.be/gdynlPVlrrQ> (accessed 17 May 2017). Both men claim to be members of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Paratrooper Brigade, however, this could not be verified independently. The 63<sup>rd</sup> are an elite squad which fought against the Kosovo Liberation Army in the 1998-99 war in Kosovo and were decorated by Milošević.

<sup>241</sup> One example during the 1991-1995 conflict is the presence of Russian peacekeepers who, it was understood, aided and abetted smuggling rings. When shift changes occurred and it was time for the Russian peacekeepers to keep watch of security checkpoints, the Serbian paramilitaries would smuggle goods plundered from Bosniak houses into Serbia, flooding the black market. Russian peacekeepers have even been accused of allowing Serbia's paramilitaries into villages with the knowledge that ethnic cleansing was about to take place. See, Aleksandra Milicevic, "Joining Serbia's Wars: Volunteers and Draft-Dodgers, 1991-1995" (University of California, Los Angeles, 2004), 83-84. Though there are a number of examples of Russia's alliance with Serbia, the alliances are often overstated especially given Russia's historical role as a great, world or superpower: Russian involvement in Serbian affairs always seemed to coincide with Russian geopolitical plans in the Balkans. This last point has been discussed in more recent examples on

implied. Nevertheless, all of the Serbian volunteers were veterans of the Yugoslav wars of succession, having fought in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. At least one has been accused of crimes against humanity for his alleged role in Kosovo. Though the enemy has changed, the goals – and myths – remain the same. Bosnian Muslims transmogrify into Turks, Ukrainians into Nazis, Russians into historical allies, and Serbian soldiers into *hajduk* inheritors. What the struggle for “Slavic Brotherhood” represents is that the possibility still remains for further mobilisation of the invented *hajduk* tradition in the Balkans. Traditions can best be harnessed in times of chaos and uncertainty, and in an increasingly unstable Western Balkans the threat looms.

What separates the *hajduk* tradition from other traditions of mountain men, outlaws, bandits and folk heroes is the reality of their presence in the twenty-first century. While the Scottish highlander, the Greek *klepht* and the Albanian *kaçak* have been relegated to folk epics and history, the *hajduk* walks the Donbass. Serbian folklore continues to be used and abused for nationalistic purposes and with great success. The mythology which nationalists manipulate is necessarily segmented, made bare against its whole self. What is left are scattered ruins, some aspects truthful, others not. The skeleton of nationalist mythology, the underlying material which structures nationalist narratives – the bare bones – is really what such narratives attempt to piece together to construct a distorted and more dangerous reality. Ideals are taken and applied; those which do not fit or cannot be manipulated are ignored, forgotten to time. Mythology, then, is a construction of ruins. It is the job of the historian to un-forget the ignored pieces, to parse that which has been used and render intelligible the narratives, to understand the stories

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Russia's role, and thus personal interest, in the Balkans. See Wayne S. Vucinich, “Russia and the First Serbian Uprising, 1807-1809,” in *The First Serbian Uprising, 1804-1813*, ed. Wayne S. Vucinich (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) as one example.

we tell ourselves, to make the story whole again. I have attempted to make the invented *hajduk* tradition whole so that it may be unusable in the employ of conflict. This thesis lays the groundwork to build anew that which was torn down.

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