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Social Structure and National Movements among the Yugoslav Peoples on the Eve of the First World War

Little attention has been paid in Yugoslav historiography to the relationship between social structure and the character of the national movements of the various Yugoslav peoples. Enough data are available, however, to compile a list of the problems that should be studied in any systematic comparison of these national movements.¹ The purpose of this paper is to examine some aspects of the interaction of social structures and national movements among the Yugoslav peoples for the twenty-year period before the First World War. The paper is primarily focused on urban society, which took the leading role in national movements.

Conditions for the national integration of the Yugoslav peoples developed from the transformation of social structures, that is, from the transformation of an agrarian, large-estate dominated socioeconomic (estates-agrarian) system into a middle-class and industrial society. In the South Slav areas, as in the whole of Europe, various stages of the feudal system succeeded each other, but in the Yugoslav lands this feudally-based (estates-agrarian) system was quite varied. The society of southern Hungary, northern Croatia, eastern Istria, and the Slovene lands featured characteristics of central Europe; lands which had been dominated by Turkey for centuries had adapted to Muslim society; the Mediterranean society of the Adriatic coast, where the town and its surroundings were the principal economic and social unit, was in marked contrast to the large landowner-class dominated and overwhelmingly agrarian society; and, finally, tribal society among the Montenegrins and Albanians continued well into the nineteenth century.

Because great social, economic, and cultural differences existed within this relatively small geographical area, it is understandable that the change from a traditional to an industrial (capitalist) society was not a uniform process among the South Slav peoples. The diversity and richness of social forms, which to such a large extent determined the character of national movements, reflected not only varied cultural and religious traditions but also the influence of the different

1. Numerous works of economic history give data useful for research into the social foundations of national movements. In this paper I mainly used results of Yugoslav historiography during the last ten years. See *The Historiography of Yugoslavia 1965-1975* (Belgrade: Association of Yugoslav Historical Societies, 1975); and the first two bibliographic volumes, *Ten Years of Yugoslav Historiography 1945-1955* (Belgrade: National Committee for Historical Studies, 1955), and *Historiographie Yougoslave 1955-1965* (Belgrade: Fédération des Sociétés historiques de Yougoslavie, 1965).

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states and political-administrative units under which the Yugoslav peoples lived. These distinctions between the traditional societies gradually toned down during the nineteenth century because of the development of middle-class societies, but they were still a significant factor on the eve of the First World War. The development of industrial societies in this region had been hindered by great economic and political difficulties which retarded the economic and social development of the Yugoslav lands. To a large extent, these difficulties were attributable to the Habsburg Monarchy, Turkey, and the great European powers. Thus it is not by chance that historical research has concentrated traditionally on the political framework of national movements.

Distinctions, based on the external forms of the various national movements, usually are made between national movements in the independent states of Serbia and Montenegro, constitutional and illegal forms of national resistance among the Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, and Muslims of the Habsburg Monarchy, and the revolutionary opposition of Macedonians and Albanians in Turkey.² But this classification does not correspond to the existing social structure of the Yugoslav peoples. Middle-class society in Serbia experienced a period of relative growth before the First World War, while in Montenegro the development of capitalism paralleled the disintegration of clan-patriarchal society. Moreover, certain typical forms in the development of social structures in central Europe were common both to Yugoslavs in the Monarchy and to Serbs in Serbia. The Serbs, however, because of their earlier experience as part of the Turkish empire, also had characteristics in common with the Macedonians.

An examination of the relationship between social structure and national movements must consider the fact that significant differences, or variants, existed within any one nation. Croatian society, for example, had developed in northern Croatia from the "classical" European estates-agrarian system and in Dalmatia from an urban society of the Mediterranean type. The Croatian national movement in these two provinces before the First World War was greatly influenced by the consequences of the developmental patterns. Croatian society in Istria had evolved during the nineteenth century from the Mediterranean and Pannonian systems, while that of Bosnia-Herzegovina still bore the imprint of Turkish feudalism.³ Serbian society in Serbia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina had developed during the process of liberation from a Turkish social and political framework. In southern Hungary, capitalist relations developed relatively early in Serbian society,⁴ but in the Military Border, which had a special social structure adapted

2. For general information on national movements of the Yugoslav peoples, see F. Zwitter in collaboration with J. Šidak and V. Bogdanov, *Les problèmes nationaux dans la monarchie de Habsbourg* (Belgrade, 1960). See also, in Slovene, *Nacionalni problemi v Habsburški monarhiji* [National Problems in the Habsburg Monarchy] (Ljubljana, 1962); and D. Djordjević, *Revolutions nationales des peuples balkaniques 1804-1914* (Belgrade, 1965).

3. M. Gross, "Einfluss der sozialen Struktur auf den Charakter der Nationalbewegung in den kroatischen Ländern im 19. Jahrhundert," in Th. Schieder, ed., *Sozialstruktur und Organisation europäischer Nationalbewegungen*, Abhandlungen der Forschungsabteilung des Historischen Seminars der Universität Köln, vol. 3 (Munich and Vienna, 1971), pp. 67-92; and M. Gross, "Classi sociali e partiti politici in Croazia nella seconda metà del secolo XIX," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia di Trieste*, 3 (1966-67): 115-28.

4. Numerous articles on the development of towns and various strata of the middle

to military service, the development of the Serbian middle class was retarded. After the Military Border became part of Croatia and southern Hungary, military society gradually merged with existing middle-class society in these civil districts.⁵ Serbian society in nineteenth-century Dalmatia had more or less the same structure as Croatian society, partially explaining the common political attitude of Serbs and Croats in Dalmatia during the National Revival.⁶ Though there were few qualitative differences in the social structures of the Slovene regions, the rhythm of development of the Slovenian middle class was very uneven, reflecting mainly the economic strength and pressure of the German and Italian middle classes.⁷ The different stages of middle-class growth among the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina must also be considered.⁸ Finally, in Macedonia the higher stratum belonged chiefly to non-Macedonian society.⁹

In spite of the diverse social structures among the Yugoslav peoples in the various regions, there were also similarities which greatly affected the national movements. By the beginning of the twentieth century, urban groups everywhere had acquired a leading role, both culturally and politically, in national movements. This was even true, to a certain degree, of Montenegro, where an urban mentality had begun to make an impact through young people educated in Serbian towns. The great differences in character between the Turkish oriental town (the Balkan *čaršija*) and the central European town had largely disappeared, but towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and regions under Turkish control until 1912 were still predominantly oriental. In Serbia, however, only relics of the earlier state were visible in most cases. Before the war the towns of Bosnia-Herzegovina were over 50 percent Muslim. The Muslims were, of course, the most tradition-bound group and had the most difficulty in adapting to the new social and economic relations.

At the beginning of the twentieth century German and Italian towns still existed as ethnic islands in the Slovene lands, socially isolated from their ethnically different rural surroundings. The same was true of Istria (Italian towns with Croatian surroundings) and Macedonia (towns with predominantly Wallach, Greek, or Jewish middle-class populations surrounded by Macedonian villages). In general, however, the process of "nationalization" of towns was entering a final phase. Many towns were experiencing relatively rapid growth, mainly in connection with the influx of rural inhabitants.

classes bear witness to this. See *Historiographie Yougoslave*, pp. 194–96; and *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 171 ff.

5. J. Savković, *Pregled postanka, razvitka i razvojačenja Vojne granice od XVI veka do 1873. godine* [A Review of the Origin, Development, and Abolishment of the Military Frontier from the Sixteenth Century to 1873] (Novi Sad, 1964). See also *Historiographie Yougoslave*, p. 167; and *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 174 and 265.

6. See works by R. Petrović, D. Foretić, and I. Karaman, in *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 266–68.

7. F. Gestrin and V. Melik, *Slovenska zgodovina od konca osamnajstega stoletja do 1918* [Slovene History from the End of the Eighteenth Century to 1918] (Ljubljana, 1966).

8. *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 326 ff.

9. D. Zografski, *Razvitokot na kapitalističkite elementi vo Makedonija za vreme na turskoto vladeenje* [The Development of Capitalist Elements in Macedonia During Turkish Rule] (Skopje, 1967). See also *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 314–16.

When we refer to the towns as centers of national movements we must bear in mind that they were not modern towns with developed industrial economies. They were more like villages with an urban appearance—communications, administration, schools, and cultural centers—military garrisons, or Balkan *čaršija* settlements. In 1914, urbanization and industrialization were just beginning and had attained very different stages of development in the various regions. The characteristic structure of urban middle-class societies was gradually being formed, but the Yugoslav lands were still predominantly agrarian. Most of the population consisted of peasants who either owned their own small farms or were tied by various forms of tenure relations—a carry-over of feudal society. This was true in Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Istria.¹⁰ Some of the peasants were under the direct influence of the towns. Although capitalist production and distribution of goods had already begun to erode traditional forms of rural life, the degree to which peasants took part in urban-led national movements differed.¹¹ In some cases peasants formed the basis of an unorganized national movement against a foreign power (the movement in Croatia in 1903 against Hungarian domination); in other instances, they provided an army for national revolt (the Ilinden Revolt in Macedonia in 1903) or for a war of liberation (such as the First Balkan War). Sometimes their interests indirectly influenced political life (in Serbia, in the Slovene lands, and also in Croatia directly before the war), while at other times they stood aside, as in the case of the Croatian and Muslim peasants in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A number of Slovene peasants in Carinthia and Styria were even denationalized.

Peasants could no longer make a living off their small strips of land, and yet the economically underdeveloped towns were unable to provide employment for them. Thus the Yugoslav lands, except Serbia, were characteristically regions of emigration (some foreigners, of course, did immigrate into the agricultural regions of southern Hungary and the eastern part of northern Croatia). Because the stages of commercial and industrial growth varied in the different parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, there were continual migrations from economically backward and nationally subjugated areas—including Slovenia, Croatia, and especially Dalmatia—into Austrian industrial centers. Trieste was also an important immigration center which attracted Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, and Montenegrins. At times there were more Slovenes living in Trieste than in Ljubljana. Some historians have argued that the rhythm of emigration among Slovenes decreased at the beginning of the twentieth century because the stage of development achieved by that time made greater earning at home possible. In Croatian lands the situation was completely different. According to official statistics, about 6 percent of the population of Croatia and Slavonia emigrated in the first decade of the twentieth century, mainly to the United States. This figure excludes illegal emigration. Peasants and craftsmen, who were unemployed because of the disintegration of traditional crafts, emigrated from Macedonia into neighboring

10. See the collection of sources, *Agrarni odnosi u BiH (1878–1918)* [Agrarian Relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1878–1918)], ed. H. Kapidžić, Archives of Bosnia-Herzegovina, materials 5 (Sarajevo, 1969). See also *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 334–35.

11. See papers from the Sixth Congress of Yugoslav Historians in connection with the subject "Urban-rural Relations," in *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*, 1973, nos. 1–2 and 3–4, and 1974, nos. 1–2.

independent countries. Emigration was especially drastic from Montenegro. Small peasant holdings and common property, the relics of a clan society, and poor natural resources made it impossible for the land to support most of the inhabitants. When Montenegro expanded in 1876–78, peasants without land could not settle the new regions and recurrent waves of emigration resulted.¹²

Economic conditions, however, were not the only reasons for emigration. Population shifts caused by war devastation had been occurring in the Slav South for centuries.¹³ In the decades before the First World War, there had been political emigration of Serbs and Macedonians out of Turkey, of Serbs out of the Habsburg Monarchy, and of Turks and Muslims out of Bosnia-Herzegovina and those regions which had come under Serbian and Montenegrin control after the First Balkan War.

Emigration, which primarily involved the mature male working force, undoubtedly retarded economic progress in the Yugoslav lands and thus weakened the power of national movements. On the other hand, some emigrants who had acquired middle-class status in foreign lands by the beginning of the twentieth century systematically began to give financial aid to national movements in their homeland. Many emigrants also returned to participate in the liberating Balkan War.

Serbia was the only Yugoslav land into which Yugoslav people migrated throughout the nineteenth century. Whatever its economic difficulties, Serbia had a relatively high standard of living in comparison to the surrounding areas controlled by the Turks. Peasants from Montenegro, Serbian peasants from Bosnia-Herzegovina and even southern Hungary, Macedonian peasants, various craftsmen, merchants, and professional people were all attracted to Serbia, and these immigrants contributed to its economic, political, and cultural rise before the First World War.¹⁴ The eastern regions of northern Croatia (Slavonia and Srijem) and southern Hungary (Vojvodina) were also immigration centers, but these immigrants were rich Hungarian and German peasants and members

12. J. Pleterski, "Položaj Slovencev pred prvo svetovno vojno" [The Position of the Slovenes on the Eve of the First World War], in *Jugoslovenski narodi pred prvi svetski rat* [The Yugoslav Peoples on the Eve of the First World War], ed. V. Čubrilović (Belgrade, 1967), pp. 761–88; I. Čizmić, *Jugoslavenski iseljenički pokret u SAD i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1918* [The Yugoslav Émigré Movement in the U.S.A. and the Formation of the Yugoslav State in 1918] (Zagreb, 1974); H. Kapidžić, "Ekonomska emigracija iz BiH u SAD početkom XX vijeka" [Economic Emigration from Bosnia-Herzegovina into the U.S.A. at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century], *Glasnik Arhiva i Društva arhivista BiH*, 7 (1967): 191–220; Dj. Pejović, *Iseljavanje Crnogoraca u XIX vijeku* [Montenegrin Emigration in the Nineteenth Century] (Titograd, 1962). For the Macedonians, see *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, p. 305.

13. B. Djurdjev, "Les changements historiques et ethniques chez les peuples slaves du sud après la conquête turque," *Actes du premier Congrès international des Études Balkaniques*, vol. 3 (Sofia, 1969), pp. 575–78; and S. Gavrilović, *Prilog istoriji trgovine i migracije Balkan-Podunavlje XVIII–XIX stoleća* [A Contribution to the History of Trade and Migration, Balkans-Danube Region, Eighteenth–Nineteenth Century] (Belgrade, 1969).

14. Lj. Doklešić, "Makedoncite vo Srbija i nivnoto učestvo vo nejziniot stopanski i opštestven život vo XIX vek" [Macedonians in Serbia and their Participation in Serbian Economic and Social Life in the Nineteenth Century], *Glasnik na institutot za nacionalna istorija*, 1969, nos. 1–2, pp. 5–34. See also *Istorija Beograda* [The History of Belgrade], ed. V. Čubrilović (Belgrade, 1974), chapters 5 and 9.

of the middle class, who bought peasant holdings and parts of former large estates.

If one excludes the regions where disintegration of clan societies among the Montenegrins and of feudal-clan societies among the Albanians was occurring, a similarity in social strata did exist among Yugoslav peoples at the beginning of the twentieth century. The social structure was composed of a small number of owners of large estates and of members of the upper middle class, representatives of financial capital, which was just being formed;¹⁵ the lower middle class, which was more numerous but which made up a very small part of society as a whole; the peasants, still the great majority of the population in all Yugoslav societies; and the emerging working class.

The large estates in the Slovene lands, northern Croatia, southern Hungary, and Macedonia were still partly owned by foreigners, but many of them had already passed into the hands of the rich local middle class (Serbian, Croatian, and Jewish) in northern Croatia and Vojvodina. The parceling up of large estates and transactions in connection with them were important sources of capital accumulation for Yugoslav financial institutions.¹⁶ The role that the owners of large estates played in the national struggle thus depended on whether they sided with the interests of large foreign estates or with those of the Yugoslav middle class.

The situation of the Muslim estates in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which colored Muslim society, was quite different. The estate owners identified their class interests with those of the whole of Muslim society in Turkey and with Islam. Although a few great estates belonged to aristocratic families, most were middle-sized and small holdings. Many *rentiers* wished to adapt Turkish feudalism, which had not been abolished by the Austro-Hungarian government, to the new conditions, that is, they wanted to ensure the exploitation of serfs on their holdings under a tenant relationship.¹⁷

Landholdings also had a very important role in Montenegro, where the clan chiefs became landowners in the areas that Montenegro acquired in 1879.¹⁸ Among Albanians, both clan and feudal relations existed, and frequently they commingled and came into conflict, giving a special quality to the Albanian national-liberation struggle.¹⁹

15. The accumulation of capital at the beginning of the twentieth century had already reached a level which allowed the linking of banking and enterprise capital (see, for example, M. Gross, *Vladavina hrvatsko-srpske koalicije 1906-1907* [The Rule of the Croato-Serbian Coalition 1906-1907] (Belgrade, 1960), pp. 23-47.

16. Ibid.; and N. Gačević, "Posedovni odnosi u Vojvodini pred prvi svetski rat" [Ownership Relations in Vojvodina on the Eve of the First World War], in *Jugoslovenski narodi pred prvi svetski rat*, pp. 157-80.

17. F. Hauptmann, "Bosansko-hercegovački aga u procjepu između privredne aktivnosti i rentijerstva na početku XX stoljeća" [The Aga of Bosnia-Herzegovina Between Business Activity and Living off Rent at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century], *Godišnjak Društva istoričara BiH*, 17 (1969): 23-40.

18. Ž. Bulajić, *Agrarni odnosi u Crnoj Gori (1878-1912)* [Agrarian Relations in Montenegro (1878-1912)] (Titograd, 1959).

19. V. Stojančević, "Društveno-političke prilike među Arbanasima u Kosovskom vilajetu na početku XX veka i arbanaski otpor protiv turskih reformama 1902/1903. g." [Social and Political Conditions among the Albanians in the Kosovo Province at the Be-

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the emergence of a small group of upper middle class from the lower middle class was characteristic for the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. Before that time, the lower middle class had been the basis of political life and national resistance, but the accumulation of capital through commerce, usury, and various transactions (mainly in small financial institutions) finally had reached a point which gave those engaged in it the economic strength to become an important factor in political life and in directing the national struggle. Among the Slovenes, the Liberal Party, which represented the interests of the larger entrepreneurs, was opposed by clericalism. The clerical faction organized a cooperative movement, temporarily freed the small and middle peasant from the town usurer, and turned the peasant into the basic component of the clerical organization. Support was also received from proponents of Christian social ideology, who were fighting for the reform of capitalist society. But gradually the cooperative organization became a basis for the accumulation of clerical capital, represented by the Clerical Party. This party, like the Liberal Party, finally became the party of the rich middle class, and the most powerful political force in Carniola.²⁰ In the 1890s social and economic conditions were sufficiently developed in Croatia for the appearance of a more prosperous middle class. Its political representatives brought a completely new quality (the "New Course") to political life and the national movement. For the first time it was possible to formulate a general Croatian policy which not only joined Croatia and Slavonia (then under Hungarian dominance) and Dalmatia (under Austrian dominance) but also meshed with Serbian policy in these regions. Thus, in 1905, the Croato-Serbian Coalition was formed to pursue the interests of the Croatian and Serbian upper middle classes through economic and political activities.²¹

The formation of the Radical Party among the Serbs of southern Hungary and Serbia reflected the rise of the rich middle class in political life. The radical movement had grown out of the economic and social needs of the lower middle class and the peasants. When it turned from democratic opposition and developed into the constitutional party it changed qualitatively, becoming the protector of the interests of the upper middle class.²² A similar political current developed under different conditions among the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Shortly before the war, Croatian political leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina also organized a group to support the interests of the Croatian middle class.²³

gining of the Twentieth Century and Albanian Resistance to Turkish Reforms 1902/1903], *Istorijski časopis*, 11 (1960): 170–212; and M. Barjaktarović, "Plemensko uredjenje kod Albanaca" [Tribal Relations among the Albanians], in *Is istorije Albanaca* [From Albanian History] (Belgrade, 1969).

20. Gestrin and Melik, *Slovenska zgodovina*.

21. R. Lovrenčić, *Geneza politike "novog kursa"* [The Genesis of the "New Course" Policy] (Zagreb, 1972); M. Gross, *Vladavina hrvatsko-srpske koalicije*; J. Šidak, M. Gross, I. Karaman, and D. Šepić, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860–1914* [The History of the Croatian People 1860–1914] (Zagreb, 1968).

22. L. Rakić, *Radikalna stranka u Vojvodini (do početka XX veka)* [The Radical Party in Vojvodina (until the beginning of the twentieth century)] (Novi Sad, 1975).

23. M. Imamović, "Osnivanje i program srpske narodne organizacije u Bosni i Hercegovini 1907. godine" [The Foundation and Program of the Serbian National Organization

In defending their class interests, middle-class political groups had to consider the masses. The introduction of general suffrage for the central parliament elections in Vienna, for example, forced Slovene and Croatian parties in Dalmatia to turn to the masses as voters. In Serbia, the strengthening of the parliamentary regime prompted a similar development. The Croato-Serbian Coalition, under heavy pressure by the Austro-German and Hungarian ruling classes, needed the support of the masses in the national struggle. Middle-class parties, however, were virtually helpless because they could not influence legislative bodies. In northern Croatia, for example, the Croato-Hungarian Agreement called for legislation on crucial economic and financial questions to come under the competence of the Hungarian parliament. Moreover, political reasons sometimes dictated that the middle-class parties depart from their social programs—as when the Serbian Diet representatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina gave up their insistence on solving the question of serfdom by obligatory purchase.²⁴

By the eve of the war it was obvious that the political and economic tactics of the Austro-German and Hungarian ruling circles in the Monarchy, designed to prevent the growth of a middle class among the peoples under their control, including the Yugoslav peoples, were fruitless. Moreover, in the Serbian state, where the middle class had begun to develop at the beginning of the nineteenth century under even harsher conditions than in the Monarchy, the possibilities for accelerating its progress were more favorable. Only in Serbia could the middle class depend on efficient state assistance to businesses and in the founding of new firms.²⁵ Members of the Yugoslav middle class under the Habsburg Monarchy were aware that they were living within a state that not only did not care about their progress but even hindered it in various ways. This realization increased their desire for a state of their own and was an important mobilizing force in the national movement.²⁶

The development of the middle class in Macedonia does not fit into this general framework. Turkish society was composed chiefly of landowners, civil servants, and officers, and the middle class was of varying ethnic origins. The small stratum of the rich and economically influential middle class was recruited from Wallach, Greek, and Jewish families, while the Macedonians mostly came

in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1907], *Istorija XX veka*, 12 (1972): 85–105; and M. Gross, "Hrvatska politika u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1878 do 1914" [Croatian Policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1878 to 1914], *Historijski zbornik*, 19–20 (1968): 9–68.

24. M. Gross, *Vladavina hrvatsko-srpske koalicije*; V. Krestić, *Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba* [The Croato-Hungarian Agreement] (Belgrade, 1969); and H. Kapidžić, "Agrarno pitanje u Bosni i Hercegovini za vrijeme austrougarske vladavine (1878–1918)" [The Agrarian Question in Bosnia and Herzegovina during Austrian Rule (1878–1918)], in *Jugoslovenski narodi pred prvi svetski rat*, pp. 315–39.

25. N. Vučo, *Državna intervencija u privredi* [State Intervention in the Economy] (Belgrade, 1974).

26. For example, the mercantile treaty between Austria-Hungary and Italy contained the so-called "wine clause," which allowed the import of Italian wine with only a very small customs duty. One result of this clause was the destruction of the only important branch of the economy in Dalmatia—wine production. This fact played an important role in the birth of new currents of resistance against the Habsburg Monarchy in Croatian policy (Šidak et al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda*).

from the lower middle class. The varied interests of this society made united resistance against Turkish power impossible. Consequently, the middle class in Macedonia became politically active in multiple directions; some of them supported unification with Greece or with Bulgaria, some supported the creation of an autonomous Macedonia, and others hoped to remain a part of Turkey.²⁷ New social relations had already appeared among the Montenegrins, and to a certain extent among the Albanians also, but a middle class, in the sense of a class capable of leading a national movement, had yet to emerge.²⁸

Although in most cases the upper middle class had assumed political leadership on the basis of its as yet modest but relatively stronger economic position and extended social role, the Yugoslav societies were still typically lower middle class in the structure of economic activity, in social and professional life, and in mentality. Most of the craft workshops employed no workers. The owners were partly craftsmen, partly workers, who no longer could make a living from independent crafts but were forced to join the army of wage earners. The downfall of the small craftsman, mostly through the competition of foreign and some Yugoslav industrial goods, took various forms. Among the Slovenes, however, craftsmen modernized workshops and united in efforts to stave off the decline. To a lesser degree, the same phenomenon occurred in Serbia, where traditional crafts adapted to the new needs of the urban society or disappeared.²⁹

The crafts stratum was constantly dissatisfied and easily manipulated in political struggles, but it could not provide a persistent influence on political life. In that respect, the merchant sector played a much more important role because the basic process of capital accumulation took place in commerce. (In most cases, commercial capital was not invested in industry until the beginning of the twentieth century. Because foreign capital was predominant in industry and because commerce depended on industry to a large extent, there were great obstacles to the development of commercial capital.) Merchants were chiefly recruited from among rich peasants and urban craftsmen in all Yugoslav regions except Montenegro; in Montenegro they came from the chieftan stratum. The merchants directly or indirectly played important roles in political life and in national movements regardless of the degree of development of middle-class society. They frequently served as local political leaders or supported certain parties by financing political and cultural action. In Macedonia, for example, the craftsmen-traders were an essential factor in the revolutionary movement. They stood side by side with the intelligentsia in efforts to shape public opinion through political and national propaganda.

At the turn of the century financial capital began to develop along with merchant capital, and it subsequently played a decisive role in political life. Numerous financial institutions based on the accumulation of capital in commerce were

27. D. Zografski, *Razvitokot na kapitalističkite elementi vo Makedonija*.

28. M. Djurović, *Trgovački kapital u Crnoj Gori u drugoj polovini XIX i početkom XX vijeka* [Mercantile Capital in Montenegro in the Second Half of the Nineteenth and the Beginning of the Twentieth Century] (Cetinje, 1958).

29. N. Vučo, "Zanatstvo i industrija u XIX veku" [Crafts and Industry in the Nineteenth Century], in *Istorija Beograda*, pp. 29–69.

founded by the Yugoslav middle class in the early 1900s. The savings of the lower middle class were invested mainly in cooperatives, in savings banks, and in commercial banks. The largest of these banks played an important part in the concentration of Yugoslav capital by uniting Slovene capital with Croatian capital. In addition, some attempts were made to attract capital from the Bosnia-Herzegovina financial situation. Czech capital also played an important role in the linking of capital of different national centers throughout the wider Yugoslav region.³⁰ Indirectly, these more or less explicit attempts to interconnect capital in the Yugoslav lands influenced the strength of the Yugoslav idea before the war.

The concentration of capital was greatly hindered not only by the ruling circles of the Monarchy but also by the social and political situation, which kept national capital separated and did not even allow capital to concentrate within certain nations. It was impossible, for example, to merge the capital of the Slovene Liberal and Clerical parties.³¹ This situation was in turn reflected in Slovene collaboration with Croatian political groups. Of course, political collaboration did not ensure the concentration of capital. Although the Croato-Serbian Coalition, organized from 1905 to 1918, represented Croatian and Serbian capital, Croatian and Serbian firms and banks generally developed separately. For this reason, the younger prewar Yugoslav nationalists insisted upon the unification of Serbian and Croatian economic institutions.³²

In general, the Yugoslav middle class did not invest capital in industry until the beginning of the twentieth century, and the process took place under highly varied conditions. In the Habsburg Monarchy industrial investment was attended by considerable risk, in the Slovene lands there was considerable competition from stronger German capital, in northern Croatia investment was affected by extra-economic measures against undesirable firms and by the railway tariff policy of the Hungarian government, in Vojvodina the big landowners opposed industrialization, in Bosnia-Herzegovina national industry could not develop alongside powerful foreign industry, and in Macedonia industry was in the hands of a middle class composed of Jews, Greeks, and Wallachians. A special problem in all of the Yugoslav lands was the underdeveloped home market, which is why industry produced chiefly for export.³³

Conditions for industrialization were better in Serbia than in other Yugoslav lands because capitalists could make use of systematic state concessions. But

30. *Češi a Jihoslované v minulosti: Od nejstarších dob do roku 1918* [The Czechs and the Yugoslavs in the Past: From the Oldest Times to the Year 1918], ed. V. Žáček (Prague, 1975), pp. 490–91.

31. Gestrin and Melik, *Slovenska zgodovina*.

32. M. Gross, "Nacionalne ideje studentske omladine u Hrvatskoj uoči I svjetskog rata" [National Ideas among the Student Youth in Croatia on the Eve of the First World War], *Historijski zbornik*, 21–22 (1968–69): 75–143.

33. J. Pleterski, "Položaj Slovencev pred prvo svetovno vojno," pp. 761–88; Gestrin and Melik, *Slovenska zgodovina*; I. Karaman, *Privreda i društvo Hrvatske u 19. stoljeću* [The Economy and Society in Croatia in the Nineteenth Century] (Zagreb, 1972); Šidak et al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda*; and K. Hrelja, *Industrija Bosne i Hercegovine do kraja prvog svjetskog rata* [Industry in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the End of the First World War] (Belgrade, 1961). See articles on industrial revolution in the Yugoslav lands in *Acta historico-oeconomica Jugoslaviae*, vol. 1 (Zagreb, 1974).

Serbia's economic development was retarded by pressure from Austro-Hungarian ruling circles. In fact, the customs war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia undermined the entire political and economic situation in the Balkans. It is significant that industrialization in Serbia attained its highest peak in response to the demand for armaments.³⁴

Lay and ecclesiastical intelligentsia clearly had the greatest influence on political life and public opinion in the Yugoslav societies at this time. Cultural impulses, political programs, national ideologies, stereotypes, and myths all stemmed from a narrow circle of intelligentsia. On the whole, lawyers were the most influential professional group. Only they were able to combine a relatively broad educational background and knowledge of the social sciences with practical activities that linked them to economic interests ranging from large firms to small peasant holdings. The academic intelligentsia also enjoyed great social esteem. After the lawyers, the most important political and cultural role was played by academics and teachers. In Serbia and Croatia university professors and members of the Serbian and Yugoslav academies were most prominent, but secondary school teachers were prominent everywhere. The role of teachers in the Macedonian national movement is characteristic. Writers and publicists must also be mentioned, for without their activities the development of national ideologies would have been impossible.

On the eve of the First World War, students in the academies and the secondary schools were especially important in the Yugoslav lands because of their influence on public opinion. They were not restricted by the same considerations that limited established political parties and groups, who were concerned about jeopardizing their economic positions or safeguarding themselves against persecution. Thus, the students expressed the aspiration for an independent Yugoslav state most openly.³⁵

In a society where industrialization was just beginning and where there was an underdeveloped professional structure, the civil service had an important role. Croatian and Serbian army officers in the Monarchy and Serbian army officers in Serbia also influenced political life.

The clergy was influential in all Yugoslav regions, although their role was not as intense as it had been earlier. The initial phases of the national movements were often led by priests because there was no middle class. In the early 1900s, the national struggle, with its cultural and political tensions, had already replaced ethnic-confessional contrasts, but it had not yet been divorced from the church as an institution. At the beginning of the century Serbian and Muslim leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina still had to struggle for the autonomy of the church and the confessional schools, which they considered basic for a more efficient political movement. Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian nationalist propaganda in Macedonia had its main stronghold in church-school communes.³⁶ Moreover, the church-

34. D. Djordjević, *Carinski rat Austro-Ugarske i Srbije 1906-1911* [The Customs War between Austria-Hungary and Serbia 1906-1911] (Belgrade, 1962).

35. For literature on the youth movement in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, see *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 237, 294, 332.

36. F. Hauptmann, ed., *Borba Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine za vjersku i vakufsko-mearijsku autonomiju* [The Struggle of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina for Religious, Cultural, and Educational Autonomy] (Sarajevo, 1967); *Historiography of Yugoslavia*,

school autonomy of the Serbs in southern Hungary and northern Croatia was an important aspect of Serbian political life because the wealth of the Orthodox church was an essential factor in the accumulation of Serbian capital. It was extremely important, therefore, for certain political groups to gain control over the autonomous church-school institutions.

Catholic clericalism was the strongest political force among the Slovenes. In contrast, the Croatian Catholic clergy did not act as an organized force; rather it played an important role within the various political parties. Sarajevo was the center of Croatian clericalism but the Catholic hierarchy had not organized there until after the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. As it had no roots among the people, the Catholic hierarchy tried to affirm itself by controlling political life, but it failed to gain control over the Croatian middle class. Clericalism did develop, however, among the previously liberal Croatian Catholic clergy, who had been the champions of the Yugoslav idea in the nineteenth century. This development was primarily influenced by the greater-Austrian circle around the heir to the throne and by Slovene clericalism.³⁷

The national movement among Yugoslav peoples can best be observed through the activities of political parties and currents in cultural life, though it must be noted that there were no well-organized parties. Groups of politicians gathered around party organs and backed local leaders who had a varied number of followers and sympathizers. Real parliamentarianism was possible only in Serbia, and there only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even then it was endangered by conflicting party interests and the interests of the army officers.³⁸

Legislative institutions in Croatian and Slovene lands and in Bosnia-Herzegovina (after 1910) could not represent the interests of the Yugoslav middle class because they were dependent on the ruling circles in Vienna and Budapest. In some of these legislative bodies, German or Italian middle classes dominated or had great influence. Consequently, these legislative institutions had a restricted competence.³⁹ In Montenegro and Macedonia conditions were inhospitable for political parties, and in the latter, the political struggle was led by illegal organizations.

p. 329; and S. Dimeski, "Sozdanjeto, strukturata i kompetenciite na makedonskite crkvenoškolski opštini" [The Foundation, Structure, and Competence of the Macedonian Church-School Communes], *Glasnik na institutot za nacionalna istorija*, 14, no. 1 (1970): 35-54.

37. M. Gross, "Hrvatska politika velikoavstrijskog kruga oko prijestolonasljednika Franje Ferdinanda" [The Croatian Policy of the Greater Austrian Circle Around the Heir to the Throne, Franz Ferdinand], *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 2 (1970): 9-74; M. Gross, "Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand und die kroatische Frage", in *Oesterreichische Osthefte*, 1966, pp. 217-31; and J. Pleterski, "Trializem pri Slovencih in jugoslovansko zedinjenje" [Trialism among the Slovenes and Yugoslav Unification], *Zgodovinski časopis*, 22 (1968): 169-84.

38. D. Djordjević, "Parlamentarna kriza u Srbiji 1905. godine" [Parliamentary Crisis in Serbia in 1905], *Istorijski časopis*, 14-15 (1963-65): 157-72; and V. J. Vučković, "Unutrašnje krize Srbije i prvi svetski rat" [Internal Crises in Serbia and the First World War], *Istorijski časopis*, 14-15 (1963-65): 173-229.

39. V. Melik, *Volitve na Slovenskem 1861-1918* [Elections in Slovenia 1861-1918] (Ljubljana, 1965). See also the survey of political development in Istria by D. Šepić, in Šidak et al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda*.

Cultural growth in the Yugoslav lands had already reached a relatively high level among the middle classes prior to the First World War. Elementary schooling was compulsory, or important steps had at least been taken in that direction. However, with the exception of Slovenia, most of the population was still illiterate. Peasants and workers had barely been touched by the cultural upsurge, for it was chiefly limited to the middle classes. Educational and cultural institutions assumed an increasingly important function in orienting national movements. In the academic world the humanities (philology, history, and ethnography) attracted the greatest attention. In most cases academics had already reached a post-romantic level, but their basic task still lay in mobilizing the middle classes to take part in the national movement. The same was true in literature and art. Furthermore, the rise of the middle class was followed by the conviction that the development of the natural sciences was an important precondition for industrialization and independent economic activity. The typical portrait of modern middle-class society was completed by the appearance of various professional, specialist, and sports societies.⁴⁰

One of the main barriers to cultural development was the exclusion of the Slovene and Croatian or Serbian languages from all aspects of administration and schooling. The situation was most grave in the Slovene lands, in Istria, and in Vojvodina, where strong pressure from German, Italian, and Hungarian middle classes had to be overcome before the national languages could even be introduced in elementary education. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Dalmatia the problem of the official language was only solved just before the war. In northern Croatia the Croato-Hungarian Agreement made Croatian the official language; unfortunately, the agreement was broken by many sections of the Hungarian government. The struggle for a national language was an essential mobilizing factor that led individuals to participate in the national movement.⁴¹

Regardless of the degree of development, it was characteristic of Yugoslav societies that the great gap between the various social strata was bridged to a considerable extent by the common interest of the whole of society in the national struggle. Thus, the intensity of struggle varied between the middle class and the class of declining peasantry and workers. Class consciousness was expressed only at the social extremes: among members of the upper middle class and among the section of the proletariat, mostly craftsmen and workers, who were organized by the Social Democrats. The tactics used by socialists in the class struggle in Croatia and in Serbia illustrate the great differences between them. The common aspiration of all social strata to liberate themselves from the pressure of the Hungarian rulers, thereby speeding up industrialization and creating a source of earnings for the proletariat, forced socialists in Croatia at one moment to collaborate with the middle-class employers in the political struggle and at another moment to work against them. In Serbia, which was an independent state, the common interests of the employers and workers were pushed into the back-

40. See numerous articles on cultural development in *Historiography of Yugoslavia*.

41. Dž. Juzbašić, *Jezičko pitanje u austrougarskoj politici u Bosni i Hercegovini pred prvi svjetski rat* [The Language Question in Austro-Hungarian Policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the Eve of the First World War] (Sarajevo, 1973). On the language question in Dalmatia, see *Historiography of Yugoslavia*, pp. 267–68.

ground, and Serbian socialists stressed the class struggle.⁴² The case of national communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina illustrates how first ethnic-confessional and then national contradictions hindered the class struggle. Muslim society was composed of very different strata. The aristocracy, a large middle class, and the peasantry existed without a class struggle. During Turkish times they stood against the Christians as a homogeneous privileged community, which was especially beneficial to the aristocracy. There was a similar alliance between the Serbian middle class and the peasants. Among the Croats this kind of alliance was uncommon because the middle class appeared relatively late. Thus these three communities confronted each other as closed units, despite inner contradictions.⁴³

It has already been pointed out that the peasants, who were chiefly smallholders or tenants, tied by remnants of feudal relations, formed the mass foundation of national movements and participated in various ways. Only in the Slovene lands was there a cultural and economic assertion of the peasantry, although a certain proletarianization also occurred. In all other regions the process of fragmentation of peasant holdings, expropriation of peasants from the land, and the growth of peasant indebtedness was predominant. The peasant-worker, seeking a living on large estates, in cities, or abroad, became increasingly common. That desperate mass could not, it is true, influence political life directly, but it did have a substantial psychological impact on the forces leading the national movements. Furthermore, the peasantry influenced national movements through the intelligentsia, who frequently were only one generation away from peasant families.

The structure of the proletariat was similar in most Yugoslav countries. On the whole there was no real industrial proletariat in this region. The factories employed a cheap, unqualified work force of peasant-workers, and on the eve of the war skilled workers were still often foreigners. The make-up of the working class can be illustrated by the example of northern Croatia. In 1900, there were more small craftsmen than craft workers and more craft workers than industrial workers in northern Croatia. In 1910, craft workers outnumbered small craftsmen, but each of these categories was still more numerous than the industrial workers.⁴⁴ Thus, it is understandable that the socialist movement was initially led by craft workers and the intelligentsia. The socialist movement was not determined by the social structure alone, however, but also by the whole national and political framework. In Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina the socialists created a special form of Yugoslav ideology; in Macedonia they were an important element in the national revolutionary movement; and in Serbia they were a corrective factor to the aspirations of the Serbian middle

42. See numerous articles on the socialist movement in the Yugoslav lands in *Histography of Yugoslavia*.

43. M. Hadžijahić, *Od tradicije do identiteta, Geneza nacionalnog pitanja bosanskih Muslimana* [From Tradition to Identity, the Genesis of the National Question of the Bosnian Muslims] (Sarajevo, 1974).

44. See the development of the workers' movement and statistical tables in Šidak et al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda*. See also J. Kovačević, *Ekonomski položaj radničke klase u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji 1867-1914* [The Economic Position of the Working Class in Croatia and Slavonia 1867-1914] (Belgrade, 1972).

class, which wanted to solve the national question by simply enlarging the Serbian state.

One of the most essential tasks in all of these agrarian countries was to link the interests of the workers and the peasants, especially because peasant-workers were predominant among the proletariat. The development of an agrarian socialist movement in the eastern parts of northern Croatia and in southern Hungary clearly was attributable to the large numbers of peasant-workers with ties in these areas.⁴⁵ Even though a traditional relationship between the great landowners (the employers) and the peasants (agricultural workers and owners of small holdings) existed here, it was only in Croatia and southern Hungary that the socialists tried systematically to disseminate propaganda in the villages. Prior to this, no middle-class party had turned to the peasants for support. On the contrary, socialists were unable to penetrate the villages in the Slovene lands and in Serbia, where Clerical and Radical parties had already gained relatively strong positions.

It is, on the whole, fair to say that the proletariat, in spite of its numerous weaknesses, structural and otherwise, played an influential part in political life through organized mass demonstrations and strikes, through spontaneous unrest, and in connection with political action undertaken by the Social Democrats.

But the decisive factor in orienting individual national movements toward the creation of an independent Yugoslav state was the position and interest of the middle class. Obviously the strengthening of the Yugoslav idea before the war cannot be ascribed only to the pressure applied by the Habsburg Monarchy on the Yugoslav peoples under its control and on Serbia (although this is often the case when only prewar political events are considered). In the nineteenth century the Yugoslav ideology was an effective vehicle for national integration only among the Croatian people. The ideology functioned as a mobilizing force in the process of constituting the Croatian nation,⁴⁶ but did not influence the formation of the Slovene or Serbian nations. In fact, Yugoslav ideology gained importance among the Slovenes and the Serbs only after the process of national integration had already been more or less completed.

Many variants of Yugoslav ideology developed because the ideology was broad, ranging from a simple desire for concord and collaboration between certain nations to political practice that would lead to the creation of an independent Yugoslav state. Before the war, the Yugoslav ideology had attracted a large part of Croatian society, including the upper middle class and middle-class youth; the peasants, who were influenced by the Peasant Party; and the proletariat, where it was spread by the Social Democrats. Conditions were not

45. See, for example, A. Radenić, *Položaj i borba seljaka u Sremu od kraja XIX veka do 1914* [The Position and Struggle of Peasants in Srem from the End of the Nineteenth Century to 1914] (Belgrade, 1958).

46. The national revival among the Croats started with the Yugoslav idea, that is, with the Illyrian Movement, and is older than the national-integrational ideology of Croatian exclusive nationalism (J. Šidak, *Studije iz hrvatske povijesti XIX stoljeća* [Studies from Croatian Nineteenth-Century History] (Zagreb, 1973); and E. Murray-Despalatović, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (New York and London, 1975). For Croatian exclusive nationalism, see M. Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije* [History of the Party of Rights' Ideology] (Zagreb, 1973).

favorable for the development of the Yugoslav idea among the Croatian lower middle class because the economic basis of that class did not enable all who belonged to it to survive. Furthermore, competition between Croatian and Serbian craftsmen and small merchants created an atmosphere of intolerance that weakened their common national resistance to Hungarian and Austro-German hegemony.⁴⁷ Among the Slovenes, before the war, Yugoslav ideology attracted a part of the upper middle class (liberals), middle-class youth, and the proletariat among whom it was spread by the Social Democrats. The clerical middle class, who collaborated with the Party of Right in Croatia, wanted to resolve the national question within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy by creating an autonomous state that would include Slovenes and Croats.⁴⁸ In all social strata of the Serbian nation there was a desire for the Serbian state to expand and include territories inhabited by Serbs. But here, in the matter of determining borders, problems arose with the Croats, the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Macedonians. Both the Serbian and Croatian middle classes considered Bosnia-Herzegovina their territory and wanted to "nationalize" the Muslims living there. In the Serbian middle class, which lived in different social milieus and under varied political conditions in the Yugoslav regions, both a narrow ideology based on the simple expansion of the Serbian state and a wider consciousness concerning the unity of the Yugoslav peoples within a Yugoslav state were evident.⁴⁹ Yugoslav ideology also existed among the Montenegrin intelligentsia, who recognized that the economically and socially backward Montenegrin state was incapable of survival and that their progress depended on becoming part of a larger state.

It is clear that even the sparse data upon which this paper is based indicate that an understanding of similarities and differences in social structure among Yugoslav peoples on the eve of the First World War might greatly help to explain the character of these diverse national movements. Systematic comparative research into this problem may well produce valuable results and thus should be encouraged.

47. See works by M. Gross cited above, all of which give data on the Yugoslav ideology and the contrast between Croatian and Serbian nationalism. See also J. Šidak, *Studije iz hrvatske povijesti*; and J. Šidak, "Die jugoslawische Idee in der kroatischen Politik bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Donauraum—gestern, heute, morgen* (Vienna, Frankfurt, and Zurich, 1967), pp. 93–111.

48. J. Pleterski, "Trilazem pri Slovencih"; L. Ude, "Slovenci in jugoslovenska ideja v letih 1903–1914" [The Slovenes and the Yugoslav Idea in 1903–1914], in *Jugoslovenski narodi pred prvi svetski rat*, pp. 887–941; and M. Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije*.

49. M. Hadžijahić, *Od tradicije do identiteta*; M. Gross, "Hrvatska politika u Bosni i Hercegovini"; V. Čubrilović, *Istorija političke misli u Srbiji XIX veka* [The History of Political Thought in Serbia in the Nineteenth Century] (Belgrade, 1958); D. Janković, "Jugoslovenstvo u Srbiji 1903–1912" [Yugoslavism in Serbia 1903–1912], *Analiti Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu*, 17, nos. 5–6 (1969): 523–35; and M. Ekmečić, "Sudbina jugoslovenske ideje do 1914" [The Fate of the Yugoslav Idea before 1914], in *Politički život Jugoslavije 1914–45* [Political Life in Yugoslavia 1914–45], ed. Aleksandar Acković, Radio Belgrade third program (Belgrade, 1973).