

He's Just Not That Into Yu(goslavia)

By Jelena Macura

The Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is an interesting case study that is applicable to various aspects of international relations scholarship. During a time where different regions struggled to coexist, questions of nationalism and ethnicity evolved into conflict. Slobodan Milošević was a Serbian politician, and capitalizing on the discontent of the Serbian nation, rallied support, and mobilized an army dedicated to achieving the dream of a "Greater Serbia". It can be argued that rhetoric and discourse played an important role in formulating the view of a superior Serbian nation, while assembling a population ready for war. Long after Milošević's death, his words still resonate with the Serbian nation, and severely impede reconciliation efforts. To illustrate how ancient hatred prevents states from moving forward, in the Serbian context, this essay specifically takes into consideration Milošević's 1987 Kosovo Polje Speech and his 1989 Gazimestan address.

Introduction

In one of two important addresses, then leader of the Serbian Communist Party, Slobodan Milošević stood before a wave of supporters. At the now famous Kosovo Polje Speech, delivered on April 24, 1987¹, he preached:

"The premise of an ethnically pure, economically and politically autonomous, untethered Kosovo isn't possible by political ideals or ethically, but at the end of the line, that premise isn't in the interest of the Albanian nation. This kind of nationalism would exclude it from all circles, and it wouldn't just slow down, but stop its growth in both economic and a completely spiritual sense. [...] the tiny Albanian nation still one very

¹Roberson, Agneza Božič, "The Role of Rhetoric in the Politicization of Ethnicity: Milošević and the Yugoslav Ethnopolitical Conflict," in *Razprave In Gradivo- Treaties & Documents* 52 (April 2007): 274. *SocINDEX with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 11, 2015).

underdeveloped people, isolated from Europe, shut off from any possibility of taking part in the dynamic life of today's world".²

In a 2012 interview with German newspaper "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", current President of the Republic of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić made the following remarks:

"Vukovar (a Croatian city) was a Serbian city, and my dream of a Greater Serbia has been left just that. There are dreams that an individual can never fulfil and how things stand currently, [this dream] will never be achieved [...Croats don't belong in Vukovar]".³

It is interesting to note how attitudes from more than 20 years ago are significant enough to pervade contemporary politics. Milošević used specific rhetoric to facilitate nationalist discourse in his first Kosovo speech, ultimately rallying ethnic Serbs behind his political cause. While this is only an excerpt from a larger work, it is evident that Milošević is attempting to segregate the Albanian nation from the Serbian nation. By referring to them as "underdeveloped people", he insinuates that the Albanians are heathens in comparison to the sophisticated and "dynamic" Serbs. Milošević implies that in order for the Serbian nation to move forward, it must cleanse Kosovo of the Albanians that hinder progression. This mentality is carried into 2012, with President Nikolić declaring that Vukovar belongs to Serbia, and Croats are unwelcome to a city that is legally Croatian territory. He also laments that his dream of a Greater Serbia has been stifled to the point where it is a distant thought. Taking both excerpts together, Milošević sets the groundwork for nationalist sentiments of a superior Serbia, and Nikolić echoes these ideals.

Rhetoric and discourse is powerful enough to shape, nurture or enable a certain mentality. This can be seen in various political arenas such as those moderated by Slobodan Milošević. Utilizing specific public settings, such as the backdrop of Kosovo, he was able to successfully mobilize the Serbian nation in a fight against surrounding ethnicities. Armed with words, Milošević is arguably one of the primary instigators for the violent clashes that ensued amongst Balkan states, leaving a legacy of ethnic distrust and hatred. In the midst of attempts at reconciliation and memorialization of shared Balkan traumas, Milošević's employment of divisive discourse and his influence has prevented these processes, thus halting ethnic progress in contemporary Balkan states. This paper will first examine the origins of conflict in the Former Yugoslavia, and will then analyze Milošević's utilization of discourse to perpetuate ethnic hatred. It will conclude by looking at modern examples that echo Milošević mentalities and history, thus impeding reconciliation and memorialization efforts. The case study of Former Yugoslavia offers a wealth of information, and it is often difficult to incorporate all involved entities and narratives. While this paper will mention other regions of Former Yugoslavia, it will focus exclusively on Serbia.

² "Speech of Slobodan Milošević at Kosovo Polje," translated by Tim Skorick, accessed November 11, 2015. <http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/news/milosevic-1987-3-eng.htm>.

³ "Tomislav Nikolić-Vukovar Je Srpski Grad," YouTube video, 2:22, posted by "The Assling," May 25, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pysymLuzF4>.

Yugoslav History and Milošević Motivations

While the history of Yugoslavia dates back to the 19th century, for this research it is necessary to look at its story from World War II. On April 6, 1941 Hitler's Germany invaded the Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.⁴ This invasion revealed the growing ethnic disconnect in the nation, as Croatian nationalists saw the event as an opportunity for independence, while Serbians remained faithful to the Yugoslavia as a Greater Serbia vision.⁵ This conflict spawned the Croatian Ustaša (extreme right-wing nationalists) and Serbian Četniks (a guerrilla resistance group response). What followed was a bloodbath described by researcher David Anderson as "the cruelest of all internecine wars that would torment Europe during the Hitler years".⁶ This statement is further supported with empirical evidence, as an estimated 325 000 Serbians were killed by the Ustaša, prompting increased recruitment and desirability to join the Četniks.⁷ The clash of the Ustaša and the Četniks is only a snapshot of the atrocities committed by many ethnicities within the Former Yugoslav regions. What WWII revealed was a divided state harbouring multiple ethnicities with varied nationalist goals. In this example, the desire for Croatian independence is at discord with the pursuit of a Greater Serbia, prompting an environment for political figures to manipulate. After WWII, a "second Yugoslavia" emerged with new communist leaders pursuing mandates that attempted to unite the divisive competitiveness between Yugoslav states.⁸ Led by President Josip Tito, many efforts were made to mitigate brewing ethnic tensions, however not all methods were mutually desirable. For instance, under Tito internal boundaries were redrawn in Yugoslavia, but they heavily favoured the Croatian and Slovenian population in terms of territory allocation.⁹ Tito can be summed up as a utopian, and while his political tenure will not be forgotten, his death revealed fundamental problems in Yugoslavian internal affairs.

After his death in 1980, Tito's government was scrutinized as weaknesses in institutional functioning were exposed. First, the economy was inefficient, and the absence of a stable public finance system created greater economic disparities between ethnicities.¹⁰ To put it in perspective, in the 1980s the per capita Gross National Product of Slovenia was over twice the average for Yugoslavia, while Kosovo was less than a third.¹¹ Economic inequality proved to be another source of tension between the ethnicities of Former Yugoslavia, as certain individuals enjoyed a higher standard of living than others, while living in the same nation. This revealed another fundamental problem with the Yugoslav regions. Regardless of Tito's efforts to address the needs of different ethnic groups, too many interests were at conflict, with the "national problem" inhibiting national reconciliation.¹² Finally, Yugoslavia lacked a concrete institutional structure that was capable of addressing the aforementioned problems.¹³ Without a

⁴ Parliamentary Research Service, *The Collapse of Yugoslavia: Background and Summary Research Paper 14*, by David Anderson, Department of the Parliamentary Library (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995), 3. <https://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/rp/1995-96/96rp14.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid., 3-4.

⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹¹ Ibid., 5.

¹² Ibid., 5.

¹³ Ibid., 5.

strong government entity to mitigate internal affairs, Yugoslavia became a breeding ground for nationalist mentalities. Taking the above issues into consideration, Yugoslavia was plagued by economic and political crisis for almost a decade. During this time, social issues came to a head and tensions amongst different ethnicities became more apparent. U.S. academic Lenard Cohen describes how the Yugoslav economy was “afflicted by skyrocketing inflation, high unemployment, a huge foreign debt, and serious food shortages”.¹⁴ These issues fostered an atmosphere of citizen discontent and disenchantment with the current system. At times like this, individuals seek an entity that will guide them to a haven from their misery.

One of the key events that expedited conflict was the appointment of Slobodan Milošević as leader of the Serbian Communist Party in 1986, and then as President of Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1989.¹⁵ Before examining Milošević, Vesna Pešić, a Serbian academic and politician, outlines a concept called ‘ressentiment’. According to Pešić, the mid-1980s created an environment for the breeding of the Greater Serbia movement.¹⁶ In this context, Pešić defines resentment as a psychological state that is the result of suppressed feelings of hatred and jealousy.¹⁷ She describes this term as a mentality that produces an atmosphere of fear amongst ethnic groups, with one viewing the other as a threat that would lead to extinction.¹⁸ At this time, Serbs had already been affected by the Ustaša and neglected during post-WWII reconstruction. These events created divisiveness and fostered animosities, leaving fragile minds susceptible to external influences. This concept can be applied to the region of Kosovo, where Milošević delivered speeches both when he was a party leader and later as President. In the 1980s, without Tito alive to sweep away the ethnic tension, Milošević began his verbal conquests. In order to understand the significance of the 1987 Kosovo Polje Speech and the 1989 Gazimestan Speech, some context must be established. By 1985, Kosovo was a state in perpetual crisis, and its instability raised questions with regards to the relationship between Serbia and Yugoslavia, as well as the fate of a unified Yugoslavia.¹⁹ During this time, the majority population of Kosovo was Albanian, and Serbs felt threatened that their ethnic group was going to become extinct. This is what Pešić describes with resentment as a motivating factor in the Yugoslav conflict. What must also be stressed, is that Kosovo is important to Serbs because it is the site of several critical battles that encompass Serbian history and mythology²⁰; Kosovo is the crown jewel in Serbian pride. Former U.S. Ambassador to the SFRY, Warren Zimmermann, outlines how his personal discussions with Milošević predominantly focused on Serbian history. He suggests that Milošević’s obsession with Serbian history encouraged his followers to leave their “hearts in the past, not the future”, and how he went to “fetishistic lengths” to achieve the dominion of Greater Serbia.²¹ This fixation on history can be seen in Milošević’s Kosovo

¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹⁶ Pešić, Vesna, *Serbian nationalism and the origins of the Yugoslav crisis / Vesna Pešić*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1996), 14. *Government Printing Office Catalog*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 11, 2015).

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Roberson, Agneza Božić, “The Role of Rhetoric in the Politicization of Ethnicity: Milošević and the Yugoslav Ethnopolitical Conflict,” 272.

²⁰ Ibid., 273.

²¹ Zimmermann, Warren, “The Last Ambassador: A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia,” *Foreign Affairs* 74: 2 (March 1995): 3. *American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 30, 2015).

Polje and Gazimestan speeches, in addition to acting as an inhibitor for Yugoslav reconciliation and memorialization.

Kosovo Polje and Gazimestan

The Former Yugoslavia was a multiethnic state, and because of this, political leaders would assume the position of spokesperson for their specific nation or ethnic group.²² As such, these speakers often utilized techniques of “statesman’s oratory”, where speakers project an appearance of intelligence, rationality and steadfastness of ideology.²³ Watching clips of Milošević’s Kosovo Polje and Gazimestan speeches reveals that he is not overly passionate or behaving trivially to gain attention. Rather, Milošević utilizes a booming and authoritative voice free from extraneous diction, and with each passing word, it is clear that he is operating with a clear objective in mind. During the 1987 Kosovo Polje Speech, he addresses supporters firmly, projecting an image of stability, something that the Serb nation needed in a time of uncertainty. By the time of his presidency, his 1989 Gazimestan Speech garnered increased support, and with this, Milošević increased his use of “charismatic oratory” skills.²⁴ With this progression, Milošević was publicly viewed as someone with extraordinary powers, similar to that of an apostle, ready to lead his people to safer ground.²⁵ After WWII, the subsequent ignoring of Serbian territory allocation, the economic inconsistencies across Yugoslavia, and an absence of a stable authority figure or institution, were all contributors to the discontent of Serbs. Milošević emerged as an answer to their grievances. He became a beacon of hope that painted Serbs as victims, not just at the hands of Ustaša, but sufferers in the aftermath as well. With his speeches, Milošević evoked a strong nationalist attitude amongst Serbs by creating a new hierarchy of Yugoslav ethnicities, where Serbs reigned above all others.

The importance of public speaking is something that should not be undervalued. This is especially true with the speeches of Slobodan Milošević. Rhetoric is the utilization of language to induce a degree of social control, thus dictating political outcomes.²⁶ Oration is interesting because utilizing specific diction can enable the speaker to conjure up certain emotions of past traumas from the audience, thus rallying support and encouragement that ignites “violent passions”.²⁷ In her examination of the role of rhetoric in ethnic politicization, Agneza Roberson defines a rhetorical act as a public speech where a major political party addresses a large audience about political issues.²⁸ Roberson dissects the anatomy of a speech by dividing it into four sections: the context and audience, the speaker, the speech, and the results/aftereffects.²⁹ Before dividing up the speeches, it is important to once again analyze Milošević’s rationale behind diction choice. Former Ambassador Zimmermann argues that Milošević viewed people in terms of groupings, or as abstractions³⁰, and therefore his approach to politics was group oriented.

²² Roberson, Agneza Božič, “The Role of Rhetoric in the Politicization of Ethnicity: Milošević and the Yugoslav Ethnopolitical Conflict,” 271.

²³ *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 270.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 270.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 270.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 270.

³⁰ Zimmermann, Warren, “The Last Ambassador: A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia,” 5.

This correlates to the work of Rogers Brubaker. Brubaker characterizes individuals who seek to capitalize on the discontent of others through speech as ethnic entrepreneurs. As Brubaker argues, these individuals “invoke” groups in an attempt to “evoke” them.³¹ Ethnopolitical entrepreneurs tailor their speeches so that they “stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle, and energize” an audience.³² He also looks at how the reifying of groups, that is giving life to something abstract, enables these capitalists to “contribute to producing what they apparently describe or designate”.³³ Taking the aforementioned into consideration, Milošević is an ethno-political entrepreneur. He carefully calculated the economic, political and social situation of Serbs, and created speeches that specifically encompass the categories that would garner enough support to incite violent confrontation in order to be achieved. Ethnic entrepreneurs are individuals that are capable of driving the process of the politicization of ethnicity. In this sense, individuals utilize rhetoric to emphasize ethnic differences, prompting the perpetuation of hatred and stereotyping.³⁴ This is again seen with Milošević and his vision for a Greater Serbia. With various public speeches, Milošević denounced other ethnicities, declared Serbs were the dominant group, and rallied support to achieve his dream.

The Kosovo Polje Speech is significant because it symbolizes Milošević’s first foray into grand stage politics. In 1986, the Kosovar Serbs, a radical faction, invited Milošević to speak at well publicized event.³⁵ What is “legendary” about this speech is that he was able to accurately harness the emotions that Serbs were feeling at the time.³⁶ The sentiments of Kosovo Serbs can best be described in video footage of the event, where a woman asserts, “If I have to leave [Kosovo], I would rather die before I leave”.³⁷ Milošević consistently utilizes the words “brotherhood” and “unity”, and preaches that Kosovo is the land of the Serbs, and that it is their physical home, as well as a home for their history.³⁸ He urges that the Serbs must stay in Kosovo because of “forefathers and [...] decedents” or else they risk “shame” and humiliation.³⁹ These words and phrases strongly emphasize the importance of history. Milošević almost hypnotizes his audience by discussing how Kosovo was and always will be Serbian territory. He also alienates and creates a feeling of hatred towards the Albanian people by insulting their intelligence and blaming them for the halting of Serbian progression. According to political observers, the Kosovo Polje Speech transformed the image of Milošević “from faceless bureaucrat to charismatic Serb leader”.⁴⁰ After his address, Milošević acted in a manner that supported his statements. First he fired the Albanian Kosovo chief of police, then commenced reducing the autonomy of Kosovo.⁴¹ Milošević’s actions indicate to the public that he is a man of his word, and that under his leadership, everything promised to the Serbs will be carried out. This being said, the Yugoslav regions continued to suffer, and divisions

³¹ Brubaker, Rogers, “Ch. 1: Ethnicity without Groups,” in *Ethnicity without Groups*, 10: Harvard University Press, 2004.

³² *Ibid.*, 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁴ Roberson, Agneza Božič, “The Role of Rhetoric in the Politicization of Ethnicity: Milošević and the Yugoslav Ethnopolitical Conflict,” 270.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 273-74.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 274.

³⁷ “Slobodan Milošević 25. IV 1987. u Kosovom Polju: ‘Ne sme niko da vas bije,’” YouTube video, 7:07-7:21. Posted by “Duklja-Zeta-Crna Gora,” March 22, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m__csVX8-Vg.

³⁸ “Speech of Slobodan Milošević at Kosovo Polje,” translated by Tim Skorick, n.p.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, n.p.

⁴⁰ Roberson, Agneza Božič, “The Role of Rhetoric in the Politicization of Ethnicity: Milošević and the Yugoslav Ethnopolitical Conflict,” 274.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 275.

became even clearer. The streets were plagued with Milošević supporters claiming that “as long as Slobodan walks the earth the people will not be slaves to anyone”.⁴² These rallies translated to the overwhelming support Milošević received at his Gazimestan Speech. On the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Milošević’s address sent a disturbing message to other ethnicities of Yugoslavia. Milošević stated that “we [the Serbs] are being again engaged in battles and are facing battles. They are not armed battles although such things cannot be excluded yet”.⁴³ Not only does he view the situation at the time as a battle, but hints that Serbian nationalism will be protected by any means possible, even with force. Taken in its entirety, the Gazimestan Speech is overwhelmingly dedicated to instilling pride in the Serbian audience. With repeated diction such as “brotherhood”, “bravery”, and “sacrifice”, Milošević imprinted honour into the Serb nation.⁴⁴

In both of the mentioned speeches, Milošević appealed to the emotions of grieving Serbs. With his words, the Serbian ethnic group was painted as victims that deserved compensation by any means possible, even if it included the employment of violence. Referring back to Roberson’s anatomy of a speech, Milošević was extremely calculating in his employment. First, Milošević considered the context and audience in both his speeches. In the Kosovo Polje Speech, he answered the call of Kosovar Serbs and addressed spectators that shared in the ideology of Greater Serbia. By emerging after being beckoned, Milošević was perceived as a heroic and reliable leader that listened to his disciples. This image was translated to the Gazimestan Speech and an increase in support indicated Serbs were receptive to his ideas. By choosing to address his public during a significant event, such as the 600th anniversary of the Kosovo War, he elevated his status into memorialization. Now, when June 28th comes around, Milošević is associated with a day in the history books. Looking at the speaker category, Milošević began his political career as the leader of a political party, and his speeches quickly elevated him to presidency. Starting off as a bureaucrat and climbing to the top of the totem pole in a relatively short time, made Milošević a voice Greater Serbia supporters wanted to hear. The speeches themselves evoke a sense of nationalism through the employment of specific uniting diction. A true ethno-political entrepreneur, Milošević used his speeches to portray the importance and dominance of Serbian history, and argued that the Serbs were robbed and victimized by lesser ethnic groups. Invoking a mentality and evoking action, the aftereffects of Milošević’s public addresses in Kosovo are the perpetuation ethnic hatred, and the encouragement to preserve Serbian nationalism using any means necessary.

The Agony of History

Slobodan Milošević’s employment of public speeches to entrench the idea of Serbian historical dominance, ethnic superiority and victimization from other ethnicities can be seen in contemporary Balkan political systems. With political leaders weaving Milošević diction into political addresses and comments, coupled with nationalist Serbs holding on to the Greater Serbia dream, there is an inhibition to the reconciliation and memorialization process. With Tito’s Yugoslavia a figment of the past, the fragmented and divisive nature still lives on in the Balkans. International relations studies can look to

⁴² Ibid., 276.

⁴³ Political Speeches, “Slobodan Milošević’s 1989 St. Vitus Day Speech,” last modified April 12, 2009, accessed November 24, 2015. <http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/spch-kosovo1989.htm>

⁴⁴ Roberson, Agneza Božić, “The Role of Rhetoric in the Politicization of Ethnicity: Milošević and the Yugoslav Ethnopolitical Conflict,” 280.

Former Yugoslavia to examine traumatic events and to formulate alternative methods that could be utilized for explanation purposes. This is especially the case when looking at how the events were, and are still “experienced, felt, perceived, memorialized and forgotten”, and how they influence/are influenced by aspects of world politics.⁴⁵ Erica Resend and Dovile Budryte argue that when violent or traumatic occurrences happen, they are defined by an individual’s response and the lasting effects resulting from the said reaction.⁴⁶ In their work, both assert that “trauma is a slayer of certainties [and] a shaker of truths”.⁴⁷ With this in mind, looking at the case of Serbs in Former Yugoslavia under Milošević rule, in both of the above speeches, there is an emphasis on history. This being said, this is the history as Serbs would visualize it. Former Yugoslav regions do not share a common narrative, and many are often “exclusive, contradictory, and irreconcilable”.⁴⁸ Looking at the Serbian narratives during this time period, it is difficult to believe one side over the other because all the ethnicities present at the time had, and continue to hold, different ideologies and histories. There is a risk of oversimplification of narrative but there is also a rabbit hole of information that complicates each story. Due to this, reconciliation and memorialization efforts in Former Yugoslav regions are difficult to implement because even certain experiences are shaken in meaning.

Milošević’s indoctrinating words are still felt in modern day Serbia, and this is one of the contributing factors that prohibit pacifying and remembrance initiatives. While there has been marginal progress in the aforementioned motivations, some of the structures of Milošević’s regime are still present, with the political scene filled with people from his time.⁴⁹ Vladan Batić, the Former Serbian Justice Minister states that “Almost all of the most important posts in the nation are once again filled with Milošević cronies”.⁵⁰ These individuals share the mentality of a Greater Serbia, and this is seen with current President Nikolić’s statements outlined earlier in this paper. What is interesting is that Nikolić served as the Deputy Prime Minister during the Serbian conflict under Milošević.⁵¹ Working close with Milošević, Nikolić echoes previous sentiments with his claims that Vukovar is Serbian land, and should only be composed of a Serb population. In addition, Nikolić announces his support for the Greater Serbia vision, something that Milošević attempted to create. With a political figure high up in the hierarchy of government infrastructure making these statements, it is extremely influencing on the general Serbian public. During the 2012 Serbian election process, Nikolić played a patriarchal role, similar to Milošević. He painted himself as a protector of Serbian history, and made himself relatable to

⁴⁵ Budryte, Dovile, and Erica Simone Almeida Resend, “Introduction” in *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 1. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2015).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁸ Subotić, Jelena, “Remembrance, Public Narratives, and Obstacles to Justice in the Western Balkans,” *Studies In Social Justice* 7:2 (July 2013): 266. *SocINDEX with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed November 20, 2015).

⁴⁹ Clark, N. Janine, “Chapter 7: Serbia After Milošević,” in *Serbia in the Shadow of Milošević: The Legacy of the Conflict in the Balkans*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 118. *eBook Academic Collection*. EBSCOhost (accessed November 24, 2015).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵¹ Aljazeera, “Profile: Tomislav Nikolić,” *Aljazeera*, May 21, 2012, accessed November 24, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/05/2012521865576231.html>.

the Serbian public.⁵² These tactics were similarly employed by Milošević, and successful in gaining public support.

The issue with reconciliation and memorialization processes in Serbia is that there are too many accounts of a shared atrocity. Some scholars argue that in the case of Former Yugoslavia, national memorialization efforts are counterproductive, because they have the capability of deepening the divide between different wartime narratives.⁵³ Because of this, the cyclical wheel of mistrust and injustice continues to spin.⁵⁴ This author has made multiple trips to many countries that make up Former Yugoslavia, and it is safe to say that while there is no threat of extinction of any one ethnic group, there are still rooted tensions present. While there are select groups that rally and project their nationalist tendencies more than others, there have been genuine attempts at moving forward. This being said, Former Yugoslav regions are reminiscent of Tito's practices, where the proverbial rug has made a reappearance, and differences are often suppressed. Because there are still ancient ideologies present in these states, there seems to be no room for meaningful progression. A small, yet revealing example of this concept is when Serbia attempted to rename city streets. The objective was to replace all names associated with extreme politics with heroes or heroic events that exemplified Serbian tradition.⁵⁵ This is counterproductive because the state purposefully wants its people to forget memories of when the Serbian state inflicted pain on others, thus neglecting to acknowledge events beyond Serbian borders and histories.⁵⁶ This is a reflection of Zimmerman's opinion where the Serbs are stuck in their own memories and recollections, hence isolating themselves from other narratives and stifling memorialization efforts.

Conclusion

Slobodan Milošević will be remembered in many ways, with perceptions differing from one ethnic group to another. What is undeniable is that Milošević was an exemplary public speaker. His Kosovo Polje and Gazimestan speeches illustrate how he utilized calculating rhetoric and discourse to disseminate his dream of a Greater Serbia. By systematically herding individuals into specific groups, and stating that the Serbs were dominant, Milošević proved to be one of the significant factors leading to the dismantling of Yugoslavia. Milošević's history is alive and well in modern Serbia, as his influence and words are interwoven into contemporary politics and even bureaucratic processes. In addition, his legacy of perpetuating ethnic hatred and his obsession with Serbian history, has prohibited even the simplest of reconciliation and memorialization attempts. The roots of ethnic hatred still peak in Balkan regions, and they show no sign of being nipped in the bud.

⁵² Gec, Jovana, "Tomislav Nikolić, 'Toma The Gravedigger,' Elected Serbian President," *The World Post*, May 21, 2012, accessed November 24, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/21/tomislav-nikolic-serbia-president_n_1532736.html

⁵³ Subotić, Jelena, "Remembrance, Public Narratives, and Obstacles to Justice in the Western Balkans," 266.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 271.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m__csVX8-Vg.
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