

**FASCISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE:
THE ORGANISATION OF THE YUGOSLAV
NATIONALISTS - ORJUNA, 1921-1929.**

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Abstract

The thesis analyses the history and ideology of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists-ORJUNA, a neglected, but significant fascist movement existing in Yugoslavia in 1920s, which attempted to forge a new integralist Yugoslav culture. In the contemporary Croatian nationalist political discourse, the organization is seen as an anti- Croat and a “Greater Serbian” movement. Departing from this line of interpretation, the thesis puts subsequent emphasis on the ORJUNA’s concept of the Yugoslav nation, especially in relations to the Croat and Serb national identity.

In conducting the research, I employed ORJUNA’s newspapers, as well as doctrinaire books published by the organisation members, which were tested against the theoretical framework of the most outstanding contemporary theoreticians of generic fascism such as Roger Griffin, Stanley Payne, George L. Mosse and Emilio Gentile. They all defined fascism as the palingenetic nationalist revolutionary movement. In order to achieve a better understanding of the organisation’s ideology, the thesis focused on it’s ideology in the historical context in which it emerged and activated, while attempting at the same time to underscore ORJUNA’s compatibility with the model of generic fascism.

The thesis documents the manner in which the organisation gradually elaborated its ideology, from the quite vague notions in the first stage of the organisation existence (1921-1922) to the almost fully fledged fascist ideology in second stage (1923-1925). After 1925 ORJUNA experienced a rapid decline, losing all its fascist characteristics. The thesis concludes that ORJUNA’s notion of integral Yugoslavism was not simply anti- Croat, although it favours the Serb national mentality more than Croatian one.

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Introduction

Since Croatia achieved its independence in 1991, the concept of Yugoslavism has been mostly seen as a pure instrument to conceal Serb hegemony during the existence of Yugoslavia 1918-1991 both in Croatian historiography and Croatian public. This point of view is particularly prominent in the interpretation of the interwar period, when Belgrade government harshly suppressed all non-Serb national movements, and especially Croatian one to achieve the national and the state unity. Moreover, within this canon the idea of unitary Yugoslavism is perceived mostly as Serb invention, especially it's inter-war racial foundation on the Serb 'heroic character'¹, although Yugoslav national thought was to a great extent found by Croatian politicians in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

The most extreme vision of the aforementioned racial Yugoslavism was advocated in the inter-war period by the *Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista- ORJUNA* [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists– ORJUNA]. During its existence 1921-1929, the organisation represented the most brutal way of suppressing of the oppositional movements, especially the communists and the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), the interwar bearer of the Croatian national identity. At the same time, ORJUNA enjoyed the greatest support in the mostly non-Serbian frontier provinces of Yugoslavia, such as Slovenia and Dalmatia, the south region in Croatia, while ORJUNA leaders were mostly Croats from Dalmatia. Furthermore, the organisation's ideological principles, as well leadership, originated from the *Nacionalistička omladina* [The Nationalistic Youth], the *fin-de-siècle* youth network of

¹ See Ivo Pilar, *Južnoslavensko pitanje; Prikaz cjelokupnog pitanja* [The South Slav Question; Review of the Entire Question], 2d ed. (Varaždin: Hrvatska demokratska stranka-podružnica Varaždin, 1990). For the notion of Yugoslavism by Serb inter-war political elites see Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje* [The Memories on the Political Actors and Events], 2d ed. (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1993).

both young Serbs and Croats originating in the Austro-Hungarian South Slav territories, in which Croatian part ideologically played the most important role. Despite of this facts, the extreme Croatian nationalists perceived ORJUNA as the Serb product, using its name especially during the 1990s to stigmatise liberal and left- wing political opponents to Franjo Tuđman's regime which were labelled to be 'Yugo- nostalgic'.²

Despite of all aforementioned features, there have been only three published works about ORJUNA until now: "Organizacija Jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)" [Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)] written in 1963 by the Serbian historian Brana Gligorijević, the feuilleton "Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo" [Dalmatian Orjuna] written in 1991 by the Croatian historian Tonči Šitin, and a recent book by the Croatian literary critic Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna: Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna: The Ideology and the Literature]³. The first two works give quite a detailed historical depiction of the organisation, its social and structural characteristics, as well its political impact. However, their interpretation is set within the official communist dogma about fascism as the reactionary agent of bourgeoisie, with subsequent lack of comprehensive analyses of the organisation ideology, especially in relation to *Nacionalistička omladina*, due to the fact that Yugoslav communist regime interpreted it as the 'progressive factor' of the national and social emancipation of South Slavs. The relation the *omladina*- ORJUNA is outlined in Bošković's book, as well ORJUNA ideological fascistic characteristics. However, he just registers them, labelling them as reactionary; he also simply states that ORJUNA was the radical anti-Croat phenomenon without comprehending the statement. Finally, it is worth to

² In fact, the opposition members were labelled by term 'Orjunaši', which meant something like 'Yugo- fascists'.

³ Brana Gligorijević, "Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)" [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)], *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, 5 (1963), 315-393; Tonči Šitin, „Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo“ [Dalmatian Orjuna], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split), 18 April- 10 May 1991; Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna- Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna- the Ideology and the Literature] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006).

add that ORJUNA is almost unrecognised by the international scientific community dealing with fascism in Yugoslavia.

Considering the lacks of the interpretation in the aforementioned works, this thesis will provide answer to several questions. The most important is to examine to what extent ORJUNA adopted revolutionary palingeneric vision of the nation, i.e. the perception of the perceived decadence of the liberal-democratic system that can be overcome by a nationalist revolution, which is treated by the new scholarship as the core characteristic of fascism⁴. Subsequently, I will investigate to what extent the most important components of palingenetic myth, as a concept of a “new heroic man”, organic society and totalitarian state, stressed by the most important contemporary scholars of fascism, Roger Griffin, George Mosse and Emilio Gentile⁵, are present in ORJUNA’s ideology. Finally, I will explore to what extent we can characterize ORJUNA’s ideology as distinctively fascist, in accordance to Stanley Paine’s division between fascist and proto-fascist movements. He stresses that later, although it adopted palingenetic vision of the nation, ORJUNA did not go for revolutionary transformation of state and society towards totalitarian organic community⁶. Finally, I will investigate the nature of the ORJUNA’s concept of Yugoslavism, especially in relation to previously mentioned presupposition in Croatian national canon that ORJUNA’s idea of Yugoslavism was great-Serbian, i.e. anti-Croat. Moreover, as the mentioned theoreticians stressed that the fascist predecessors were the *fin-de-siècle* youth movements, I will just outline to what extent the ideologies of the *Omladina* and ORJUNA were related. The detail analysis of these relations goes over the frame of this thesis, due to the fact that *Omladina* was a complex movement with various ideological streams.

⁴ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁵ Griffin, *ibid.*; Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity : Nationalism, Futurism, and Fascism* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003); George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999).

⁶ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

Hence, this thesis will show that ORJUNA undoubtedly exhibited fascist features in its ideology, such as the concept of national palingenesis, expressed in the idea of the new national culture, the new man, the totalitarian state and the organic society. Moreover, it will show that ORJUNA's concept of Yugoslavism was not intentionally anti-Croat, because it praised the Croatian heroic tradition and Croat historical contribution to the idea of Yugoslavism, although the movement by its actions unintentionally served to the purposes of Belgrade government in the imposition of Serb dominance in inter-war Yugoslavia.

In order to answer the above-posed questions I will conduct a detailed analysis of ORJUNA's political writings in close comparison to the theoretical framework of recent theories of fascism. Due to the fact that ORJUNA did not develop an ample publishing activity, the main emphasis will be on the analysis of the movement's key weeklies *Pobeda* (Victory) and *Vidovdan* (St. Vidus Day), which provides the most important ideological writings of various movement members, such as Ljubo Leontić, Niko Bartulović, Dobroslav Jevđević etc. Moreover, these newspapers provide ORJUNA's official documents, such as the program and various manifestoes. I will also consult the books appeared in the serial edition the '*Books of Orjuna*', although only two books were published in the edition,⁷ to which can be added separately published book of the selected articles by ORJUNA leader Dobroslav Jevđević.⁸

The research thus far indicates that ORJUNA lacked a developed and systematic ideology. Thus, the organisation focused on violent actions against its political enemies. However, some fascist traces can be identified, such as the vision of the palingenetic revolution of the south Slavs, the concept of the 'new Yugoslav man' and cultural

⁷ Franjo Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju. Fragmenti* [Yugoslavism through the History. Fragments] (Split, Izdanje direktorijuma Orjune, 1925); Niko Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne omladine do Orjune* [From the Revolutionary Youth to Orjuna] (Split, Izdanje direktorijuma Orjune, 1925).

⁸ Dobroslav Jevđević, *Izabrani članci* [Selected Articles] (Novi Sad: Štamparija Jovanović i Bogdanov, 1925).

revolution, as well notion of organic, corporative society and totalitarian state. Despite that, the Organisation did not clearly advocate the complete overthrow of the parliamentary system and liberal democracy, which makes us define ORJUNA as a rather proto-fascist than fully fascist movement. Subsequently, it can be said that ORJUNA inherited ideological concepts from the *Nacionalistička Omladina*, such as vision of unitary Yugoslav nation and heroic Yugoslav man, although *the Omladina* did not develop the concept of the authoritarian state. Finally, considering ORJUNA's relation to Croatian national identity, it cannot be concluded stated that the organisation was great-Serbian, but that it envisaged the construction of the new Yugoslav culture from the moulding of the both Croat and Serb mentality, where Croat mentality should be previously purged of the degeneration caused by the foreign influences (Austrian, Hungarian, and Italian).

The aforementioned findings will provide the Croatian historiography with new comprehensive knowledge about the ideological character of the movement, and its significance in the modern Croatian history. Moreover, I hope that it will at least to some extent 'cool down' the current political "abuses" of the meaning of ORJUNA's ideology, and stimulate a more complex approach that depart from simply labelling the organisation a purely "Greater Serbia" movement.

The thesis will consist of four sections. The first chapter will provide the context of the political situation in Yugoslavia in 1920s, which caused the emergence of the organisation. Moreover, the chapter will also provide the historical, structural and political depiction of the movement. The second chapter will analyze ORJUNA's ideological aspects. It will be divided in the three chronological subchapters, showing the gradual development of Organisation's ideology. Finally, the third chapter will elaborate on ORJUNA's concept of unitary Yugoslav nation, with emphasis on its relation towards Croatian and Serb national identity, relating also ORJUNA's vision to the *Nacionalistička*

omladina vision of Yugoslavism. Finally, the conclusion will present a summary of my research: I expect to show that ORJUNA can be characterised as a proto-fascistic movement, preaching a palinegeneric vision of the Yugoslav nation. Also, it can not simply be said that the organisation was anti-Croat, because it was pursued in accordance to participation of different nations' traits according to movement's label of their vitalism, which was to a great extent inherited from the *Nacionalistička Omladina*.

Such exposure of ORJUNA's intellectual heritage suggests that a broader framework of research might be necessary to follow the two possible streams. The first one is comprehensive research of the genesis of Yugoslav unitary idea in Croatia in twentieth century, with special emphasis on the *Nacionalistička omladina*, as well its relation to ORJUNA. The second one would be to investigate the contest between Dalmatia regional identity and Croatian national one, due to the fact that Dalmatians were the most prominent members of ORJUNA, as well later advocates of integral Yugoslavism in Croatia during Tito's Yugoslavia period.

Chapter I.

Analyses of the Previous Research and Theoretical Considerations

Until now, there were only three works about ORJUNA (The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists): an article entitled “Organizacija Jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna) [Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)]” written in 1963 by Serbian historian Brana Gligorijević, the feuilleton “Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo” [Dalmatian Orjuna] written in 1991 by Croatian historian Tonči Šitin and published in Croatian daily “Slobodna Dalmacija” (Split) in April-May 1991, and a recent book by Croatian literary critic Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna: Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna: The Ideology and the Literature]⁹. The organisation is also briefly outlined within in the body of broader research on inter-war politics in Yugoslavia¹⁰, mostly using aforementioned Gligorijević’s article as the most reliable source. However, the article analyses ORJUNA from a dogmatic communist point of view, based on the interpretation of fascism as a reactionary agent of the bourgeoisie. Bošković’s book, lacking any kind of theoretical framework, does not contribute to the

⁹ Brana Gligorijević, “Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)” [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)], *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, 5 (1963), 315-393; Tonči Šitin, „Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo“ [Dalmatian Orjuna], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split), 18 April- 10 May 1991; Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna- Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna- the Ideology and the Literature] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006).

¹⁰ Ferdo Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata* [Yugoslavia Between the Two Wars] (Zagreb: JAZU, 1961), 388-389; Dimitrije Djordjevic, “Fascism in Yugoslavia 1918-1941,” in *Native Fascism in Successor States*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Santa Barbara, California: ABC Clio, 1971), 130; Ivan Avakumović, “Yugoslavia’s Fascist Movements,” in *ibid.*, 136-137; Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 187-188; Ljubomir Antić, “Nacionalne ideologije Jugoslavenstva kod Hrvata u dvadesetom stoljeću” [The Ideologies of National Yugoslavism among Croats in the Twentieth Century], in *Hrvatska Politika u XX stoljeću* [Croatian Politics in XX Century], ed. Ljubomir Antić (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2006), 54-56.

existing knowledge on ORJUNA. By and large, both works are lacking inside perspective of the Organisation, trying to account for the way “it saw itself and as followers saw it”¹¹.

Thus in this chapter I will firstly indicate the ‘research gap’ in the Gligorijević’s and Šitin’s work, contextualised in the broader framework of interpretation of the fascism in Socialist Yugoslavia. Then I will analyse Bošković’s book, indicating also its insufficiencies. Finally, I will show how that gap is going to be filled by using Roger Griffin’s, Stanley Payne’s, George Mosse’s and Emilio Gentile’s interpretations of fascism, marked as “cultural approach”, which interprets the subject “from the inside.”

I.1. Previous Research of ORJUNA; the Organisation as the “Reactionary, anti- Croat agent of Yugoslav Bourgeoisie”.

Communist interpretation of fascism in Yugoslavia, including ORJUNA, was influenced by the general evolution of communist theories about fascism. Although changed over time, the communist view was generally determined by Comintern’s definition of the fascism as an “open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and the most imperialist element of finance capital.”¹² This theory basically developed on the perception that fascism emerged after the World War I as an answer of middle-class anxieties for its social position, generated by the emergence of mass production capitalism and of working-class mass movement. Moreover, as the “wild, violent nationalism” was already rooted in the masses by the upper class as the instrument of imperialist expansion at the turn of the

¹¹ George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution; Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), X.

¹² Extract from 13th Enlarged Executive of the Communist International Plenum (December 1933) on “Fascism, the War Danger, and the Task of Communist Parties”, in *The Communist International 1919-1943*, ed. J. Degras (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1965), 3: 296-303; quoted in Roger Griffin, ed., *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London, Sydney and Auckland: E. Arnold, 1998), 59.

century, the middle-class perceived socialist working-class movement as a main danger. Although fascism was initiated by middle-classes, it was nurtured and brought to power by “finance capital” as the instrument of transforming the liberal state into a totalitarian state, perceived as only effective instrument to suppress working-class socialist revolution generated by the deep post-World War I capitalist crises. Thus the fascism was perceived as the most reactionary agent of capitalism which delayed the next, progressive stage of history, the rule of the working class. Subsequently, fascism was seen purely as a violent form of totalitarian nationalist movement without any ideology. Its emphasising on national-socialism and revolution was seen as pure demagoguery serving the manipulation of the masses in order to maintain capitalist society.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the early official Stalinist dogma interpreted fascism as a natural common stage in the development of capitalism, thus labelling all bourgeois political actors, and especially right-wing movements, as fascist (even the social-democrats were labelled “social-fascists”)¹³. This view was replaced in the mid- 1960s by the vision of fascism as an “exceptional stage” of capitalism, which emerged only in specific conditions in specific situations. As such, the communist approach recognised differences between fascist, right wing and liberal movements. Communist theory about fascism further developed in 1970s, when fascism was defined as the mass movement generated independently by the post- World War I crises, and supported by economic elites as a way to preserve their economical hegemony. Nevertheless, fascism was still perceived as an instrument of capitalism, because its political power helped preserve capitalism.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴ Bernt Hagtvet and Reinhard Kühnl “Contemporary Approaches to Fascism: A Survey of Paradigms,” in *Who were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism*, eds. Stein Uglevik Larson, Bernt Hagtvet and Jan Petter Myklebust (Bergen, Oslo and Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1980), 42-44; Roger Griffin, ed., *International Fascism. Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London, Sydney and Auckland: Edward Arnold, 1998) 1-

Apart from the questionable Marxist dogma about the progressive development of history towards its last stage, which was the backbone of communism's *weltanschauung*, Marxist approaches to fascism lack pertinent and insightful analyses of fascist ideology. Although it identifies some of its components, it either regards them as demagogy, as in the case of the call for the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie society and the creation of the new man, or labels them as reactionary and pro-feudal, as in the case of fascist praising the national history and corporative society.

These shortcomings have also characterized the Yugoslav approach to fascism, which was marked until late 1970s by the lack of both theoretical research and comprehensive case studies. During the first two decades of socialist Yugoslavia, both historians and social scientists were mostly concentrated in justifying of the Yugoslav self-conducting system in front of east bloc accusation for "betray of communism". Thus, the interpretation of fascism was expressed in only in the regime's official statement of fascism as "the most reactionary element of bourgeoisie", according to aforementioned Comintern definition.¹⁵ Simultaneously, research about fascist movements in Yugoslavia is concentrated purely on their war crimes.¹⁶ The Yugoslav encyclopaedia from 1965, by lacking a generic definition of fascism, describes all Yugoslav fascist movements as agents either of Croatian or Serb bourgeoisie, or of foreign anti-Yugoslav regimes (Germany, Italy, or Hungary), putting simultaneously the greatest emphasis on the fascist mass slaughters, especially Ustaša ones.¹⁷

14, 42-67; Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 443-446.

¹⁵ Ivan Prpić, foreword to *Fašizam i neofašizam*, [Fascism and Neofascism], by Inoslav Bešker ed. (Zagreb: Fakultet Političkih Nauka Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1976), 7.

¹⁶ Todor Kuljić, „Fašizam i istraživanje fašizma u Jugoslaviji“ [Fascism and Reserach about Fascism in Yugoslavia], *Marksistička misao*, no. 3 (1986): 4-5.

¹⁷ *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* [Yugoslav Encyclopaedia], 1965 ed., s.v. "Fašizam"; Ibid. , 1971 ed., s.v. "Ustaše". It is interesting that although Četnik movement is not defined as fascist, it is depicted in the same way as fascist movements. Ibid. , 1966 ed., s.v. "Četnici";

During the second part of the 1970s the first (and last) broader thematisation of the generic definition of fascism in Yugoslavia was launched by the book *Fašizam i neofašizam* [Fascism and Neo-fascism]¹⁸, which collected works of various Yugoslav and international Marxist philosophers and social scientists about the topic. Generally, the book expressed the reformed Marxist theory typical of the 1970s. Thus, it claimed that fascism represented an independent political force which turned out to be an instrument of capitalism, by playing the most effective role in protecting it from the working-class movement. It was however recognised that fascism was all-embracing mass movement, with a modernising potential in the economic sphere, at least in the first years of its existence.¹⁹ The difference between Italian and German regimes, where fascism emerged as independent mass movement due to relative significance of the middle class, and peripheral East European fascisms, allegedly imposed directly by the ruling classes due to the lack of the middle class, was also stressed.²⁰ However, the book reiterated the Marxist position about fascist ideology as a form of “demagogy”.²¹

Those findings were followed the single theoretical book about fascism in Yugoslavia, authored by Todor Kuljić and entitled *Fašizam: Sociološko-istorijska studija*

¹⁸ Inoslav Bešker, ed., *Fašizam i neofašizam*, [Fascism and Neofascism] (Zagreb: Fakultet Političkih Nauka Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1976).

¹⁹ Branko Pribičević, „Fašizam i neofašizam“, in *Fašizam i Neofašizam*, 28-37; Ivan Perić, „Socijalna priroda i socijalna funkcija fašizma“ [The Social Nature and the Social Function of Fascism], in *Fašizam i neofašizam*, 62-67.

²⁰ Vojislav Stanovčić, “Karakteristike prvih fašističkih programa” [The Characteristics of the First Fascist Programmes], in *ibid.*, 67-78.

²¹ It is interesting to emphasise that the eminent Belgrade professor of Law, Radomir Lukić, interpreted in the same book fascism as a mythical movement based upon the mixture of socialism and nationalism, which by organic notion of the society tends to the totalitarian state and the “new man”. However, his interpretation, which fits into the stream of the contemporary interpretations of fascism, stayed without echo in Yugoslav scientific community. Radomir D.Lukić, “Društvena suština fašizma” [The Social Essence of Fascism], in *ibid.*, 56-62.

[Fascism: The Sociological-Historical Study]²². The book provides a detailed overview of the state of the discipline in the East and in the West, and analyses the background on which the fascist emerged and the functional aspect and ideological components of fascism. Yet, although recognising fascism's independent origins and anti-capitalist discourse, it still defined it as a reactionary instrument of the capital, which had a demagogic nature and culminated in anti-modern ultra-nationalism. It is important to stress that Kuljić in the aforementioned book, as well later, emphasised the importance of the different path of East and West European fascism. It consisted in the fact that former were mostly focused on the "blood and homeland" issue due to undeveloped social structure, while later developed consisted theory of fascist social constitution, mostly expressed in the corporative state vision.²³

However, these theoretical considerations did not find echo in Yugoslav historiographies which followed the volume: the historical studies of fascisms in Yugoslavia, although adopted communist theoretical apparatus in interpretation of fascism, were mostly stuck in the historiographical depiction²⁴. As one of the Yugoslav most prominent historians of fascism, Fikreta Jelić-Butić stated, the undeveloped structure of Yugoslav interwar economic and ideological structure, as well lack of data limited the

²² Todor Kuljić, *Fašizam: Sociološko-istorijska studija* [Fascism: The Sociological-Historical Study] (Belgrade: Nolit, 1977).

²³ Kuljić, *Fašizam: sociološko-istorijska studija*, 159-174; Kuljić, „Fašizam i istraživanje fašizma u Jugoslaviji“, 6-14.

²⁴ Kuljić, „Fašizam i istraživanje fašizma u Jugoslaviji“, 6. The most outstanding research on fascism in Yugoslavia is represented by Croatian historians Bogdan Krizman and Fikreta Jelić- Butić. Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i ustaše* [Ante Pavelić and Ustaše] (Zagreb: Globus, 1978); Bogdan Krizman, *Pavelić između Hitlera i Mussolinija* [Pavelić between Hitler and Mussolini] (Zagreb: Globus, 1980); Bogdan Krizman, *Ustaše i Treći Reich*, [Ustaše and the Third Reich] (Zagreb: Globus, 1983); Fikreta-Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska: 1941-1945* [Ustaše and the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945] (Zagreb: Liber- Školska knjiga, 1977); Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Četnici u Hrvatskoj 1941-1945* [Četnici in Croatia 1941-1945] (Zagreb: Globus, 1986).

research of Yugoslav fascism in a way as was implemented in research of Germany and Italy²⁵.

The previously mentioned Brana Gligorijević's article "Organizacija Jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)" is written in the framework of the above-mentioned approach to fascism. It provides a quite detailed historiography description of the movement, as well data of its social background and organisation's relation towards main political actors, while giving a quite modest insight into ORJUNA's ideology. The article defines the organisation as a "terrorist and nationalistic" instrument on which "[...] Yugoslav bourgeoisie relied on in violent suppression of national and social movements of the masses [...]".²⁶ Although mentioning organisation's ideological components, such as the call for a spiritual revolution, Yugoslav *volks-gemeinschaft*, the drive toward creating a corporatist society, he discards them as "revolutionary phraseology" meant to manipulate the working-class. Instead, he focuses mostly on the organisation combat actions, finally pointing out correctly that ORJUNA was a pro-fascist organisation, because it did not represent an independent political force.²⁷ It is also worth to mention that the article deliberately avoids the analyses of the organisation's ideology in relation to the pre-World War I *Nacionalistička omladina* [Yugoslav Nationalistic Youth] movement. This was because Yugoslav communist regime interpreted the Youth as a 'progressive factor' of the national and social emancipation of south Slavs and thus as predecessors of Yugoslav socialist revolution conducted during World War II²⁸.

²⁵ Fikreta Jelić- Butić, "Ustaše u drugom svjetskom ratu" [Ustaše in the World War II], in *Fašizam i Neofašizam*, 233.

²⁶ Brana Gligorijević, "Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)" [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)], *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, 5 (1963), 315.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 338-345, 367-371, 392.

²⁸ Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna- Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna- the Ideology and the Literature] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006), 86.

The general framework of Gligorijević's depiction of ORJUNA is later adopted by Dimitrije Djordjevic and Ivan Avakumović's articles about fascism in Yugoslavia, as well as by Ivo Banac in his book *The National Question in Yugoslavia*²⁹. Djordjevic even stated that ORJUNA's ideology was not fascist, but only its organisation and political actions, the same claim that could be found in the 1965 Yugoslav encyclopaedia³⁰. Ivo Banac was the first author who identified pro-fascist straits of the *Nacionalistička omladina* and related them, although indirectly, in relation to ORJUNA.³¹ However, contemporary literature about generic fascism lacked any thematisation of ORJUNA. Roger Griffin in his seminal work *The Nature of Fascism* took over the data about fascism in Yugoslavia from Djordjevic's and Avakumović's article, but even lacked to mention the ORJUNA³², while Stanley Payne famous book *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* mentioned ORJUNA as a radical right-wing movement, but without further thematisation³³.

However, just in the eve of the proclamation of the Croatian independence appeared the feuilleton "Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo" [Dalmatian Orjuna], which was continuously published in the one of the most outstanding Croatian daily, *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split) from 18 April till 10 May 1991³⁴. The author, Croatian historian Tonči Šitin, wrote it in a

²⁹ Djordjevic, "Fascism in Yugoslavia 1918-1941", 130; Avakumović, "Yugoslavia's Fascist Movements", 136-137; Banac, *The National Question*, 187-188.

³⁰ Djordjevic, *ibid.* It is also interesting that the Yugoslav Encyclopaedia from 1965 emphasized the connections between the pre-War Youth movement and ORJUNA, yet it simultaneously claimed that ORJUNA's ideology was not fascistic. The 1986 edition of the Encyclopaedia follows Gligorijević's definition, but it does not state the relations between the Youth and ORJUNA. See *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* [Yugoslav Encyclopaedia], 1965 and 1986 eds., s.v. "Fašizam".

³¹ Banac, 97-104, 187-188.

³² Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1996), 119-121.

³³ Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 16.

³⁴ In the last edition of feuilleton, Šitin stated that the feuilleton was his scientific article adopted for the newspapers, which „would appear soon“; Tonči Šitin, „Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo (21); Unitarističke zablude“ [Dalmatian Orjuna (21); the Unitary Illusions], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split), 10 May 1991, 25. However, it has not been published till now. Šitin used in the feuilleton lots of quotations from the ORJUNA's newspapers, so it could be

quite good style, depicting comprehensively ORJUNA's historical, structural and social characteristics, as well its political impact and relation to other contemporaneous political factors in Yugoslavia, so reader can adopt quite good insight into the nature and historical role of organisation. However, his approach is also burden with communist heritage, due to which he labels ORJUNA as a reactionary organisation, opposed to progressive Yugoslav communist movement. Moreover, as Gligorijević, he imposes question of the relations between the *Nacionalistička omladina* and ORJUNA, but in the same manner as Gligorijević, Šitin rejects the fact that Orjuna inherited the *Nacionalistička Omladina* ideology to a great extent. Finally, Šitin lacks to analyse the organisation's ideology comprehensively, putting even a question mark on the Organisation's fascism characteristics by the fact that it did not represented fully fledged fascism due to the fact that ORJUNA did not developed in mass movement, or offered corporatist vision of the society, which is not completely correct.

The last two decades since Croatia become independent did not further developed the stage of the research about fascism. On the contrary, it brought an attempt to general reinterpretation of Ustaša movement during the Franjo Tuđman's nationalist government in 1990s, trying even to neglect its fascist character. Simultaneously, the era was marked by highly burden political usage of the ORJUNA's name, which extreme Croatian nationalists used to stigmatise their liberal and left-wing political opponents by the term 'Sons of Yugo-Orjuna fascists', perceiving them as the advocates of Yugoslavia perceived as the "Great-Serbia". Moreover, the most controversial right-wing intellectual, Hrvoje Šošić, depicted ORJUNA in his *Croatian Political Lexicon* as a pure instrument of the Serbianization of

stated that feuilleton has a credibility of scientific writing, although he did not provide an exact data about the source of quotations (number, date, page), due to media in which the feuilleton was published.

Croatia.³⁵ The two scientific texts which thematised ORJUNA after the fall of communism, Ljubomir Antić's "Nacionalne ideologije Jugoslavenstva kod Hrvata u dvadesetom stoljeću" [The Ideologies of National Yugoslavism among Croats in the Twentieth Century] and Ivan Bošković's *Orjuna: Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna: The ideology and the Literature]³⁶, focused mostly on the relation between Yugoslavism and Croatism in the organisation's ideology. Considering general fascist characteristics of ORJUNA, they emulated Gligorijević's analyses.

Mentioning ORJUNA in the framework of the general thematisation of the Yugoslav theories in Croatia in 20th century, Antić identifies ORJUNA's palingenetic vision of integral Yugoslavism, linking it to the *Nacionalistička omladina* vision. Although he defines their common traits of establishing the future unique Yugoslav nation upon the Serb national spirit, a point already made in Banac's abovementioned book, he does not conceptualizes the relation between Croatism and Yugoslavism in ORJUNA's ideology. Instead, he interprets ORJUNA's anti- Croatism in view of social reasons, arguing that ORJUNA saw Serbia as only guarantee of preserving Dalmatia in the South Slav state³⁷.

The same interpretation is advanced in Bošković's book, focusing on the impact of ORJUNA's integral Yugoslav ideology on the literary works of ORJUNA members, including an outline of ORJUNA's ideology in the first part of the book.³⁸ Bošković's book relates the *Nacionalistička omladina* ideology to ORJUNA's, and thematises ORJUNA's fascist characteristics, but doesn't add to Gligorijević's interpretation. Moreover, stating

³⁵ Hrvoje Šošić, *Hrvatski politički leksikon* [Croatian Political Lexicon], vol.1, *Prvi dio, A-O* [The First Part, A-O] (Rijeka: Tiskara Rijeka, 1993), 613-616.

³⁶ Ljubomir Antić, "Nacionalne ideologije Jugoslavenstva kod Hrvata u dvadesetom stoljeću" [The Ideologies of National Yugoslavism among Croats in the Twentieth Century], in *Hrvatska Politika u XX stoljeću* [Croatian Politics in XX Century], ed. Ljubomir Antić (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2006), 54-56; Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna: Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna: The ideology and the Literature] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006).

³⁷ Antić, 52-56.

³⁸ Bošković, 5-138.

Orjuna's fascist characteristics, he does not quote contemporary theoretical approach to fascism, thus giving the impression that they are part of our "common knowledge." The same method is present in depicting the ORJUNA's anti-Croatism. The author does not nuance ORJUNA's ideology of Yugoslavism, repeatedly stating it simply Anti-Croat without any comprehensive analyses to prove his statement.

To conclude, previous research on the subject exhibits a two-fold "gap". First, it did not conduct comprehensive analyses of Orjuna's ideology, hence it remained encapsulated in the communist approach to the movement as a reactionary agent of Belgrade ruling classes. Second, it preserved its biased nationalist view of ORJUNA as a pure agent of Serbian hegemony over the Croats.

I.2. Theoretical Approach to the Research: Fascism as Palingenetic National Revolution

Until recently, Western theories suffered from the same flaws as the communist theories. They didn't take into consideration the utopian elements of the fascist ideology. Subsequently, although they were usually opposite to each other, they mostly interpreted fascism as an ultra-nationalist, reactionary, totalitarian movement which was in opposition to the "free world." Fascism was explained as a political expression of the frustrated European middle-class at the turn of the century, of alienated masses by European spiritual crisis at the turn of the century, as general totalitarian anti-modernist tendencies which spread through Europe during the middle-war period, or as a particular stage in the process of modernisation of backward countries³⁹. However, they were all too narrow in their interpretation, as they don't provide an operational generic model of fascism. The

³⁹ Hagtvet and Kühnl, "Contemporary Approaches to Fascism", 26-51.

interpretation of fascism has been revolutionalized in the last two decades by so called “cultural approach”, which tends to understand how fascists understood themselves and what their real intentions were. Its most outstanding representatives are Roger Griffin, Stanley Payne, George L. Mosse and Emilio Gentile. According to Griffin, these authors reached a consensual understanding of fascism as

“[...] genus of modern, revolutionary, mass politics which, while extremely heterogeneous in its social support and in the specific ideology promoted by its many permutations, draws its internal cohesion and driving force from the core myth that a period of perceived national decline and decadence is giving way to one of the rebirth and renewal in a post-liberal new order”.⁴⁰

The first elaboration of the aforementioned approach is provided in Griffin’s book *The Nature of Fascism*⁴¹, which defined fascism as a palingenetic ultra nationalism. This definition was broadened later to the definition of fascism as “[...] a genus of modern politics which aspires to bring about a total revolution in the political and social culture of particular national and ethnic community.”⁴² Recognising the very important fact that fascism, in its concrete ideology, can take specific forms from country to country, with various social roots of its support and specificity in the form of the organisation, it identified a fascist minimum, consisting of the myth of national palingenesis, which is to eradicate perceived national decadence and degeneracy caused by liberal order through the revolutionary establishing of the new, post-liberal *volks-gemeinschaft*. Thus, fascism is totalitarian, because it needs to subordinate individual freedom in a way to construct new organic community. However, this does not mean that it is conservative, because it calls for the glorious past only as a prerequisite to achieve the new man and the new community, thus representing an alternative modernisation movement. Moreover, achieving the new organic community means the abolition of all class conflicts as obstacle to it. Thus fascism has a socialist

⁴⁰ Griffin, *International Fascism*, 14.

⁴¹ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁴² Roger Griffin, „The Primacy of Culture: The Current Growth (or Manufacture) of Consensus within Fascist Study“, *The Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 1 (2002): 24, fm 15.

component, expressed in the peculiar class struggle to transfigure 'perverse' capital into national one which servers both producers and owners, and thus the community. Hence violence is not an essential fascist characteristic, but is an instrument of purification to achieve its ultimate goal of national regeneration. The same could be said about fascist anti-Semitism and imperialism, which emerged in the ideological apparatus of fascist countries as dependent of the perception whether they are needed or not for achievement of national palingenesis⁴³. Finally, it is important to stress that these ideologies characteristics are shared by proto-fascist movements, fail to constitute themselves as independent forces with mass support for achieving the political power⁴⁴.

While Griffin provides a general theory on the nature of fascism, Stanley Payne typological description of fascism advanced in his book *A History of Fascism 1914-1945*⁴⁵ offers a practical model of fascist characteristics which can be directly applied to case studies. Payne divides fascist characteristics in three categories: its ideology, fascist negations, and style and organisation⁴⁶. Ideology covers the most important issues of state and society, as a new, idealist and voluntarist philosophy, which with positive evaluation of violence tends to establish new nationalist authoritarian state and integrated economic structure, tended to overcome liberal economic model. Payne separated fascist negations (anti-liberalism, anti- communism, anti-conservatism) in the special group of characteristics, because they are a direct product of the fascist palingenetic vision of the nation. Moreover, Payne mentioned masculine principle and exaltation of the youth, as well notion of charismatic leader within fascism organisational characteristics, although they stem from more ideology. Nevertheless, his typological description of fascism is especially important

⁴³ Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 1-56.

⁴⁴ Ibid. , 116-117.

⁴⁵ Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996)

⁴⁶ Payne, *A History of Fascism*,14.

in differentiating fascist movements from proto-fascism and the authoritarian right, differences which are only indicated by Griffin without broader analyses. Payne emphasises that proto-fascism, while having much in common with fascism palingenetic vision, tended to achieve it through the traditional elites, especially army, praising mostly military dictatorship. Moreover, while calling for national palingenesis, proto-fascist wanted to preserve the existing social structure, so its goal of the corporative state was meant to weaken the proletariat rather than to abolish the class system⁴⁷. This distinction between proto-fascism and fascism is especially important in the case of ORJUNA, which is seen by Gligorijević as proto-fascist, but is not analysed more specifically.

While Payne gives a practical model of all characteristics of fascism, George L. Mosse's book *The Fascist Revolution: Towards General Theory of Fascism*⁴⁸ as a "politico-cultural revolution", by which culture is defined as perception of life "as a whole- a totality"⁴⁹. Thus Mosse approach focused on fascistic *weltanschauung*, "attitude towards life." This is particularly important in the case of ORJUNA, due to fact that the organisation did not seize the power, so its practice of fascism stayed on ideology beside combat actions. As Griffin and Payne, Mosse also approaches fascism as a modernist movement, but it settles its modernism primarily into the ideological field. It called for a spiritual revolution based upon the "experience of life" that should totally transform the human nature and create the new man dedicated to the national community through heroism of ultimate sacrifice for the state. It is embodied in youth as the symbol of masculine values of power and vitality against the old and decadent bourgeois world, against which fascists also shifted socialist notion of class struggle, making it instead as the struggle of the national- conscious capital against the decadent, selfish bourgeoisie capital of the "old men". These

⁴⁷ Ibid., 14-19.

⁴⁸ George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution; Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999).

⁴⁹ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, X.

characteristics are also noticeable in the case of ORJUNA, which emphasised the Yugoslav national decadence caused by the old ruling political class, opposing to it by calling for the cultural revolution which should be conducted by the Youth. Moreover, ORJUNA also launched the notion of decadent capital while calling for the imposition of corporatist society, especially settling it in the foreign capital, which was a quite widespread in the inter-war Yugoslavia.

While the three aforementioned books are dealing with generic fascism, Emilio Gentile's book *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism*⁵⁰ deals with particular Italian case of Fascism as a final product of perception of unfinished national integration, which started with rebellion of Young intellectuals against Italian bourgeoisie society on the turn of the century⁵¹. This approach is relevant for the case of ORJUNA, on two counts: the first one, ORJUNA inherited to a great extent ideology from the pre-war *Nacionalistička omladina*, and secondly, both Italian and Yugoslav fascism were dealing with the perception of the unfinished national integration.

Through the spiritual revolution, Youth would embody in the masses the notion of the nation as communion of destiny, which would finally finished national integration endangered by the politics of old classes which suppressed the entrance of the masses into politics and hence jeopardizes national integration⁵². Gentile finds the Youth relation to fascism in their activist conception of politics, praising of glorious past and vision of the new man and the new spiritual national community. Simultaneously, he emphasized their difference in the fact that, while fascism tried to coerce individual freedom by "total state", young intellectuals were mostly praising the emergence of "a free man able to master his

⁵⁰ Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity. Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

⁵¹ Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity*, 4-5.

⁵² *Ibid.* , 41-77.

own destiny.”⁵³ He also points out that fascism tried to make the new national community by the emergence of the “new Italian”, which was perceived to be moulded in the action squads (*Fasci di Combatimento*) as perceived nucleus of the new communion⁵⁴. Moreover, it will be build by “the myth of organisation”, which will by embracing the all strata of population in various kinds of fascist societies, such as youth, women and workers associations, preserve and individual from liberal chaos⁵⁵. The same tendencies were present in the case of ORJUNA, which glorified the cult of action-squads, as well it established of the various associations trying to embrace the whole society in the organisation.

To conclude, the historiography on ORJUNA lacks comprehensive insights into the nature of the organisation. Regarding its fascist nature, the organisation is still framed by Gligorijević’s approach, which sees it as the instrument of the royal Yugoslav regime for suppressing the regime’s foes, namely communists and the movements of Yugoslav nations, especially the Croatian one. Moreover, ORJUNA’s theory of Yugoslavism, although regarded as hegemonic towards all South Slav nationalities except the Serb one, has not been interpreted “from the inside,” as ORJUNA’s understand it, but catalogued mostly as anti-Croat, as in Bošković’s text. By employing recent theories, my research will re-evaluate the nature of ORJUNA. Griffin’s theory provides me with a general theoretical approach, identifying the most important characteristics of fascism in its vision of national palingenesis, as well as its anti-liberalism, anti-conservatism and special path of socialism. Payne offers a practical model of analysing fascism, which can also supplemented by Griffin’s theory. Moreover, it is important that Payne clarifies the difference between proto-fascism and full fascism movements. Mosses’ cultural approach puts an emphasis on the

⁵³ Ibid. , 87.

⁵⁴ Ibid. , 109-127.

⁵⁵ Ibid. , 77-89.

fact that the fascist revolution was primarily to be conducted in an ideological manner, and not in economic or material ways, which is especially important in the case of ORJUNA which fascism stayed on theoretical level, since it did not seize the power. Finally, Gentile's book provides a valuable insight into the ideology of fascism in Italy, emphasising the myth of the organisation and role of action squads, as well connection of fascist ideology to pre-war Youth movement, which is especially useful in the case of ORJUNA, since it developed the same ideological issues as Italian fascism, while originated from the pre-war Youth movement in Croatia. But in the way to provide the more comprehensive insight into ORJUNA ideology, it should be firstly detected the broader framework of the organisation emergence, as well an overview of the historical development of the organisation.

Chapter II.

Yugoslavia in 1920s: Territorial Disputes, National Question and the Emergence of ORJUNA

Before analysing the ideology of ORJUNA, in this chapter I will briefly present the political context of Yugoslavia in 1920s, in which the organisation emerged. The new south Slav Kingdom, which was established in December 1918 under the name *Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*- Kraljevina SHS [Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes- Kingdom of SCS] was the state composed of “the tree-named people” of Serbs- Croats- and Slovenes, with also respectable proportion of various national minorities. According to the state constitution from 1921 called *Vidovdan* constitution [St. Vidus Constitution]⁵⁶, the state was defined as the constitutional, parliamentary monarchy with centralist organisation of executive power which only allowed local, municipality autonomies.

Although victorious in World War One, the new state faced numerous economic, political and ethnic problems. The two most important political problems were territorial disputes with neighbourhood countries and so called “national question”, i.e. different conceptions of the south Slav nations about the organization and constitution of Yugoslavia. The lack to consensus over different Croat and Serb visions of Yugoslavia produced a state of permanent crisis, which led to the emergence of radical movements such as ORJUNA, opting for fascist-like project of a Yugoslav cultural revolution as the solution of the crisis. In this chapter I will briefly outline the Yugoslav political crises in 1920s, focusing on the aforementioned issues; on this background, I will provide an overview of the historical development of ORJUNA.

⁵⁶ The name *Vidovdan* Constitution [St. Vidus Constitution] is given because the constitution was promulgated on the 28 June 1921, which is in the orthodox calendar the day of St. Vidus, one of the most outstanding Serb Saints.

II. 1. Territorial Disputes and National Question in Yugoslavia in 1920s.

Although Yugoslavia was constituted as the centralist monarchy of the south Slavs, it did not have an homogenous ethnic core. It also inherited a huge proportion of the non-Slavic population, which was already present before unification in the Croat, Serb and Slovenian lands.⁵⁷ Already in Balkan wars (1912-1913), Serbia annexed Kosovo and Macedonia inhabited by non-Serbian population, while in 1918 the new south Slav state incorporated the territory of Vojvodina, Carinthia, and some other smaller ex-Hungarian and Bulgarian territories inhabited in overwhelmingly by a non-South Slav population. Hence, the national minorities amounted to circa 2.1 million out of a total of 12.1 million inhabitants of Yugoslavia in 1921, representing around 20 percent of the population. Moreover, in the new incorporated territories, national minorities made up more than one quarter of the population, such as Hungarians (27,7 %) and Germans (23,8%) in Vojvodina, as well Germans in Carinthia (24,8%), while Albanians on Kosovo made up even more than half of the population of the region (50.4%).⁵⁸

As Austria and Hungary expressed claims to Yugoslav territories inhabited by their kin-minorities abroad, (who were left outside their borders under the peace treaties of St. Germain and Trianon), the relations of Yugoslavia with these two countries were quite tense, generating recurrent border incidents. Diplomatic relations improved in the second half of 1920s; however, ethnic minorities continued to be perceived by the Yugoslav government as a treat to state security.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva: nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941* [The Kids of the Emperors, the Foster- Child of Kings: the National Minorities in Yugoslavia 1918-1941] (Beograd: Inis, 2005), 20-62.

⁵⁸ Janjetović, *Deca careva*, 64-67.

⁵⁹ John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There was a Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 115-116, 155-156.

Subsequently, the most problematic territorial dispute was with Italy, which—under the secret 1915 London treaty signed with the *Antante*— was promised almost the entire Dalmatian coast as post-war territorial gain. Accordingly, the Italian army entered Dalmatia in 1918, but had to withdraw in the course of the next year; yet, its warships stayed in Dalmatian ports. According to the diplomatic settlement of the dispute signed by Yugoslavia and Italia in Rapallo in 1920 and in Roma in 1924, Italy received the province of Istria, the town of Rijeka (Fiume) and some smaller part of the Dalmatian coast. Although this agreement brought about a temporary normalisation of the Italian-Yugoslav interstate relations, these continued to be rather bad, due to constant expression of the Italian pretensions to the whole Dalmatia, especially after the Mussolini gained the power in 1924.⁶⁰

The hostile attitude of the neighbours, coupled with internal ethnic cleavages at home created the acute impression that Yugoslavia was in a state of permanent insecurity. This impression was amplified by the internal political instability caused by the political clash between the Serbian and non-Serbian political elites, especially the Croat, which perceived the new country as ruled by the Serb dominance.

The Serb dominance already was expressed in the before mentioned *Vidovdan* Constitution, by which all previous state municipally rights of Croatia and Slovenia which existed previously in the Austro- Hungary were abolished, and instead imposed centralist system of government which gave huge authorities to the central government under the control of Serbs in Belgrade. Moreover, although the state was defined as parliamentary monarchy, the constitution defined the “over-constitutional” authorities of the King Alexander I from Serbian dynasty Karadorđević. No law could be promulgated without his approval, while executive power was simultaneously responsible to King and the

⁶⁰ Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 113-114, 154.

parliament⁶¹. The role of the King blocked to a great extent any parliamentary attempts of non-Serbian parties to redefine the state towards more equal participation of all south Slavs in the state governing.

Subsequently, the Serbian domination was present in the state apparatus to a great extent controlled by the king, especially in the bureaucracy and the army. The new state fired Croats and Slovenes from the administration, but also Serbs inherited from the Austro-Hungarian state apparatus, and employed instead usually non-qualified Serbs⁶², leading subsequently to the non-efficiency and corruption of the state apparatus⁶³. But the situation was even worse in the new army, which refused to incorporate the south Slav ex-Austro-Hungarian officers, treating the ex-Austro-Hungarian south Slav territories (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Vojvodina) as in occupied lands, and not as in an integral part of the new state territory.⁶⁴

In order to confine the Serbian domination, the Croatian political elites were arguing for a federalist organisation of Yugoslavia, in which each nation should preserve its national subjectivity and political autonomy. However, they were not against the regime dogma of the “national and state unity”, which promoted the vision of one nation encompassing all south Slavs organized in a centralist state. They only believed that the Yugoslav nation was to be formed as a result of a gradual moulding of still strong separate south Slav national identities.⁶⁵ The failure of the political class to adopt this vision ultimately pushed Croat politicians to oppose the Belgrade regime. Thus the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and its charismatic leader Stjepan Radić, promoter of a political platform of agrarianism, demanded

⁶¹ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 398-399.

⁶² The word 'Serbian' refer to Serbs from Serbia, while the word 'Serb' is general used for Serb as nationality.

⁶³ Banac, *The National Question*, 220.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

⁶⁵ Tihomir Cipek, „The Croats and Yugoslavism“, in *Yugoslavism, Histories of Failed Idea 1918-1992*, ed. Dejan Djokic (London: Hurst and Company, 2003), 74-75.

the political emancipation of Croatia. His agenda gained the almost consensual support of the Croats in inter-war period⁶⁶.

Serbian political elites promoted radically different ideas on the organization of Yugoslavia. Their vision was encapsulated by the legendary sentence uttered by Nikola Pašić, the president of the ruling Serb Radical party (RS): “Serbia does not want to drown in Yugoslavia, but to have Yugoslavia drown in her.”⁶⁷ Pašić hoped that the new south Slav state would be a simple continuation of the pre-war Serbian kingdom, with the primary aim of uniting all Serbs, and only by extension all south Slavs, which were to be subordinated to the leading role of Serbia⁶⁸. Thus the previously already mentioned *Vidovdan* Constitution, drafted by the Radicals, imposed a centralist organisation of the state, but deliberately avoided to give the new state name “Yugoslavia”, which was perceived by Radicals as a Croat innovation meant to subvert the Serbian identity.⁶⁹

The Radicals were assisted in their effort to impose the centralist system of government by the Yugoslav Democratic Party (DS). Although the party advocated an uncompromised notion of integral Yugoslavism, perceiving the Yugoslav nation as an already existing identity, it supported centralism as the first step towards unification. As the party under the leadership of violent Unitarian hard-liner Svetozar Pribičević defined all south Slav separate identities to be endanger to integral Yugoslavism, the peak of its actions was the harsh suppression of the Croatian federalist claims, which were perceived to be

⁶⁶ Ibid., 76.

⁶⁷ Nikola Pašić to Jovan Jovanović Pižon in London, 5 October 1918, quoted in Banac, *The National Question*, 132.

⁶⁸ Marko Bulatović, “Struggling with Yugoslavism: Dilemmas of Interwar Serb political thought”, in *Ideologies and National Identities, The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, ed. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (Budapest- New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 256.

⁶⁹ Banac, 168-169. The state instead got a name “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes” (SHS).

much more dangerous than the Serb centralist idea.⁷⁰ Pribičević violent politics practised in Croatia during his enrolment in the 1918- 1924 governments compromised the Yugoslav idea in Croatia to a great extent, which was subsequently equated with a Greater Serbia project. The party enjoyed only the support of Croats in Dalmatia and in Istria, who perceived the unitary Yugoslavism as the only protection in front of Italian expansion.⁷¹

The system of political centralism introduced under the 1921 *Vidovdan constitution* promoted by Radicals and Democrats secured the dominance of Serbian parties in the government, but at the same time caused deep political clash with all south Slav nations, especially with HSS. The state was in permanent political crises, which was also reflected in the social and economic spheres. Finally, the crises achieved a peak in 1928 with the assassination of the leader of HSS Stjepan Radić and some other HSS deputies in the National assembly by Radical deputy. This event was followed by the abolishment of the parliament and the proclamation of a royal dictatorship King Alexander on Christmas Eve 1929. The King's effort to solve the national question in the following years of dictatorship eventually failed, with the result that nationalist conflicts remained the main political problem of the South Slav Kingdom until its dissolution in 1941.

⁷⁰ Banac, 181.

⁷¹ Ljubomir Antić, "Nacionalne ideologije Jugoslavenstva kod Hrvata u dvadesetom stoljeću" [The Ideologies of National Yugoslavism among Croats in the Twentieth Century], in *Hrvatska Politika u XX stoljeću* [Croatian Politics in XX Century], ed. Ljubomir Antić (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2006), 55.

II.2. The Emergence and the Fall of ORJUNA, 1921-1929.

Established in 1921, ORJUNA took advantage of the failure of solving the problem of unitary Yugoslavism and came into public with its own idea of a national revolution. It put forward a harsh critique of the parliamentary system and gradually moved to advocating a totalitarian state and corporative society. However, these notions were never fully elaborated and supported, due to the fact that the organisation was deeply dependent on the support of the government, namely DS and its leader Svetozar Pribičević, whose instrument the organisation was to a great extent.

The idea of integral Yugoslavism was launched in 1910s by the *Nacionalistička omladina* [The Yugoslav Nationalistic Youth]. It was the net of the both Serb and Croat students from the Austro-Hungarian south Slav territories, which condemned the legal way of fighting for the political emancipation of south Slavs advocated by the Serb and Croat political elites, and turned to radical, revolutionary actions such as organising various anti-regime riots and assassinations of the outstanding Austro-Hungarian politicians.⁷² Subsequently, *the Omladina* launched the idea of the south Slav spiritual revolution calling for the emergence of the south Slav allegedly racial heroic characteristics embodied to a great extent in Serbs, and subsequent purging of the South Slavs from Hungarian, German, and Italian influences.⁷³

⁷² Assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo was conducted by the member of the *Omladina* Gavrilo Princip.

⁷³ Mirjana Gross, "Nacionalne ideje studentske omladine u Hrvatskoj uoči I. svjetskog rata" [National Ideas of Students Youth in Croatia on the Eve of World War I], *Historijski zbornik* 21-22, (1968-69): 75-143; Vice Zaninović, "Mlada Hrvatska uoči I. svjetskog rata" [Young Croatia on the Eve of World War I], *Historijski zbornik* 11-12, (1958-1959): 65-104.

After the establishing of the new south Slav state, the members of the *Omladina* expressed were deep disappointment by the emergence of the Croato-Serb national dispute, as well by the youth marginalisation in the political life. Thus they tried to gather again at the congress in Zagreb in October 1919. However, the congress failed due to the division of the *Omladina* between supporters of Bolshevik Ideas on the one hand, and the nationalist stream who claimed for “national socialism,” on the other hand.⁷⁴

As all subsequent attempts to organise the members of the pre-war *Omladina* failed, the most agile group of the young nationalist finally established in Split on 23 March 1921 the organisation called *Jugoslovenska napredna nacionalistička omladina* [Yugoslav Progressive Nationalistic Youth]. The main goals of its actions was that of “fighting against all nation and state enemies” which jeopardise “Yugoslav national oneness”.⁷⁵ Although originally envisioned as an exclusively youth organisation, in the following year the movement spread through the whole country, enjoying special support of the peasantry in Dalmatia, Vojvodina and Slovenia, all border regions jeopardised by the Yugoslav territorial disputes with Hungary, Austria and Italy during the first half of 1920s⁷⁶.

In the period 1921-1922, the actions of the movement were to a great extent concentrated on attacks on the members of the national minorities, especially on Italians on the Dalmatian coast and on Hungarians in Vojvodina. The organisation even conducted punishing expeditions on Hungarian villages and various entrepreneurships owed by Hungarians in big Vojvodina towns, such as Novi Sad, Sombor and Subotica, which

⁷⁴ Tonči Šitin, „Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo (4): raslojavanje mladih“ [The Dalmatian Orjuna (4): the Division of the Youth], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split), 21 April 1991, 21.

⁷⁵ Niko Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne omladine do Orjune* [From the Revolutionary Youth to Orjuna] (Split, Izdanje direktorijuma Orjune, 1925), 85.

⁷⁶ Brana Gligorijević, “Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)” [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)], *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, 5 (1963), 316-322.

contained sizeable Hungarian minorities.⁷⁷ Besides attacks on minorities, the new organisation also conducted bloody street struggles against communists in Belgrade, Zagreb and Split, especially after the assassination of the closets political assistant of Pribičević and minister of interior Milorad Drašković in July 1921.⁷⁸ Simultaneously, the organisation started to conduct combat actions against the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), especially after the party's public memorandum in the beginning of 1922 to Genoa Conference of the League of Nations denouncing the Serbian hegemony over Croats in Yugoslavia.⁷⁹

The first turning point in the organisation development started in 1923, when Svetozar Pribičević recognised ORJUNA was as a good instrument for the suppression of the opposition non-unitary movements. Thus, Pribičević started to support ORJUNA with huge financial sources and weapons, obtained from the army.⁸⁰ As a result, ORJUNA evolved from a loose regional network to a well-organised unit with strong, well-armed uniformed action-squads. The squads played an important role in the organisation, especially after it made an alliance with two Serbian World War One veteran organisations, *Udruženje Četnika* [The Association of Četnici] i *Narodna Odbrana* [The National Defence] in early 1923. In the subsequent two years, ORJUNA action squads were spreading fear around the whole Yugoslavia, focusing especially on the fight against the Croatian Peasant Party, and communist branch of the working-class movement. Especially harsh were fights during the state election campaigns in 1923 and 1924, after HSS joined to the Peasant international in Moscow, as well suppressions of miner's strikes organised by the communists in Husinje (Bosnia) in October 1923 and in Trbovlje (Slovenia) in May

⁷⁷ Gligorijević, „Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna), 329.

⁷⁸ Šitin, „Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo (6): okršaji kod Svete Mande [The Dalmatian Orjuna (6): the Clash by Holly Manda Church], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split), 23 April 1991, 30.

⁷⁹ Gligorijević, 324.

⁸⁰ Gligorijević, 340-342.

1924.⁸¹ Simultaneously, the organisation started to fight Serbian Radicals, especially in Vojvodina, trying to suppress their “separatist Serb politics”.⁸²

Simultaneously, ORJUNA increased its autonomy from government tutoring, conducting independent actions suppressed by government, like the “march on Baranja”⁸³ following an arm incidents on the Hungarian-Yugoslav border in 1923, and armed fights with Italian *Fasci di Combatimento* on the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria in early 1924, following the signing of the Roma treaty which recognised Italian rule over the Istria and small parts of Dalmatian coast⁸⁴. Moreover, the movement also started to support working-class strikes outside the influence of the communists, especially in factories owned by foreigners and established worker’s sections throughout the country, followed by sections enrolling all strata of society (students, secondary school pupils, women and peasants)⁸⁵. However, as the organisation lacked a strong, charismatic leader, it never managed to achieve coherence similar to fascist movements which emerged in other European states.

Unsatisfied by the state government, especially after Svetozar Pribičević withdrew in opposition in 1924, the organisation planned a “March on Belgrade” with the aim of imposing its own dictatorship. However, the grandiose march turned out to a big mass meeting of the Organisation in Belgrade in May 1925, estimated to gather around 100 000 members from the whole country, with a special parade of the action squads.⁸⁶

⁸¹ These two strikes were the interpreted by the Yugoslav Historiography as the biggest criminal deeds of the organisation. The song of the miners from Husinje later became one of the most important communist regime songs in Tito's Yugoslavia. See Gligorijević, 386-387.

⁸² Gligorijević, 325-326.

⁸³ Baranja (Hungarian Baranya) was Yugoslav- Hungarian border region, which southern parts belonged to Yugoslavia, and northern to Hungary. In 1919 Serbian troops occupied the whole region, but were forced to withdraw according to Trianon Treaty in 1921. See Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History*, 116

⁸⁴ Gligorijević, 349

⁸⁵ Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune*, 109-110.

⁸⁶ Šitin, „Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo(15): „Pohod na Beograd“ [The Dalmatian Orjuna (15): „The Expedition on Belgrade“], *Slobodna Dalmacija (Split)*, 3 May 1991, 20.

Despite its failure, the Belgrade meeting marked the second turning point in ORJUNA's history. Left without state support after Pribičević defected in 1925, and even harshly persecuted by the Serbian Radical's government, ORJUNA rapidly declined starting in 1926. The most important section of the movement, the action squads, was almost dismissed, while the movement stayed noticeable force only in the few Dalmatian towns and Ljubljana and Belgrade.⁸⁷ In addition, its most prominent members practically left the organisation, and openly activated in the now oppositional Svetozar Pribičević's Independent Democratic Party (SDS). These defections affected the organisation to a great extent. A final attempt deems to revitalize the organisation by moving its headquarters to Belgrade in early 1928 had no impact at all. Finally, ORJUNA was dismissed soon after King Alexander proclamation of dictatorship on January 6, a regime which ORJUNA praised as the final fulfilment of all its purposes and aspirations.

The political development ORJUNA was stimulated by the agitated and tense political background of interwar Yugoslavia. First, ORJUNA blamed the decadence of the "old", mostly "separatist" political classes. Second, against the perceived crisis in the country ORJUNA advanced the concept of a new cultural revolution out of which will emerge the new, heroic Yugoslav community, organized in a strong Yugoslav state. The new state was to resolve all conflicts among the Yugoslav "tribes," as well between social classes, allowing Yugoslavia to enter a new post-liberal era of the prosperity.

⁸⁷ Gligorijević, 356

Chapter III:

The Fascistic Characteristics in the Ideology of ORJUNA

Although the Organisation of Yugoslav nationalists- ORJUNA was praising the concept of the Yugoslav palingenesis, it did not develop a systematic and elaborated ideology. Instead, as many other fascist interwar movements, it favoured action over written words. The fact that ORJUNA did not have an elaborated ideology was occasionally stressed by the movement's prominent members, with the justification that the organisation was too busy fighting against "nation and state enemies" to take time to develop a systematic ideology.⁸⁸ The feature was equally noted both by ORJUNA's contemporaries⁸⁹ and the pioneering scholars studying the movement⁹⁰.

However, a careful analysis of ORJUNA's primary source shows that the organisation adopted key fascist concepts such as of the national revolution with the emergence of the new national culture, new man, totalitarian organisation and corporative state, stressed by the contemporary fascist discipline as common to all fascist movements, as is already elaborated in theoretical chapter of this thesis⁹¹. Moreover, the materials show

⁸⁸ c.f., "Pokret integralnog Jugoslavenstva" [The Movement of Integral Yugoslavism], *Pobeda, glavni organ nacionalista* (Split), 8 July 1923, 1; Ćiro-čičin Šain, "Kult i disciplina" [The Cult and the Discipline], *Pobeda*, 18 September 1924, 6.

⁸⁹ Miroslav Vaupotić (ed.), *Stanislav Šimić, Josip Bogner, Otokar Keršovani*, vol.102 of *Pet stoljeća Hrvatske Književnosti* [The Five Centuries of the Croatian Literature], ed. Ivo Frangeš (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, Zora, 1975), 464.

⁹⁰ Brana Gligorijević, "Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)" [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)], *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, 5 (1963), 315-393; Tonči Šitin, "Dalmatinsko Orjunaštvo" [Dalmatian Orjuna], *Slobodna Dalmacija* (Split), 18 April- 10 May 1991; Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna- Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna- the Ideology and the Literature] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006).

⁹¹ Roger, Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1996); Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity. Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers, 2003); George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution; Toward a*

that the organisation was gradually developing the ideology according to the changes in organisation's membership and leading factions, on the background of political life in Yugoslavia in 1920s. Thus in this chapter I will analyse ideology of the organisation in respect of its development according to changes of its position within the political system.

According to the genesis of ORJUNA ideology, this chapter is divided into three subchapters. The first one will thematise the early stage of the organisation, chronologically restricted to the period 1921-1923, when ORJUNA launched a rather vague and ambiguous concept of the Yugoslav palingenetic revolution. The second one will focus on the full blow of the organisation's ideology during 1923-1925, when the concepts of total organisation and corporative state were launched, as well as the concept of the revolutionary takeover of the power. Finally, the third subchapter focuses on ORJUNA's decline in 1925-1929, when it lost its revolutionary characteristics and shifted to a federative model for reorganizing the Yugoslav nation. While the relation of ORJUNA's concept of Yugoslavism to the Serbian and the Croat national character will be analysed fully in the following chapter, in the current chapter, I refer to it only insofar it helps the understanding of ORJUNA's concept of palingenetic revolution.

III.1.1921-1923: The Idea of the Decadence and Palingenetic Revolution

The organisation of Yugoslav nationalist, ORJUNA, emerged on 23 March 1921 in Split, Croatia, under the name of *Jugoslavenska napredna nacionalistička omladina* [The

General Theory of Fascism (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999); Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).

Yugoslav Progressive Nationalistic Youth]. In its founding resolution, the organisation stressed its aim of fighting against “the national and state enemies” of the idea of the “unitary and strong Yugoslavia”, who advocate instead “tribe, religious or class separatism”⁹². The scope of the organisation’s ideology in the first years of its existence was thus the idea of fighting against the decadence caused by political parties and advocating the construction of the new, regenerative national culture.

These tendencies were most systematically expressed in ORJUNA’s Program launched on the October 1921,⁹³ just few months after its establishment. The Program emphasised the primacy of the ethical values encapsulated in “the cult of the nation,” which was supposed to be an ultimate purpose of life for each individual. Its erection was the primary task of the organisation, which was supposed to be achieved by the spiritual revolution which would emerge from the “[...] the voices of our blood”, with would finally result in forging the new heroic Yugoslav man. It is especially supposed to be achieved by educating the Young generations for “military and ideal fighters”⁹⁴.

The Yugoslav national culture was supposed to emerge in a “strong state”. However, this state was ambiguously defined, due to the fact that it was envisioned to be organised on the principle of parliamentary representation and people’s sovereignty. Simultaneously, the society was envisioned organic, with the purpose of social classes “[...] to exist only if they protect material interests of the individual, but subordinated to common interests of the nation.” The individual was supposed to “give to society more than it receives”. Moreover, the program did not stress open enmity to political parties. These features, corroborated with ORJUNA’s vision of parliamentary state places organisation more close to the radical right

⁹² Niko Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune* [From Revolutionary Youth to Orjuna] (Split: Izdanje Direktorijuma Orjune, 1925), 81-82.

⁹³ “Program Jugoslovenske napredno- nacionalne omladine; integralni nacionalizam” [The Program of the Yugoslav Progressive- Nationalistic Youth; The Integral Natinonalism], *Pobeda*, 15 October 1921, 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

movement, characterised by the vision of nationalist revolution, but without overthrowing the existing political system.⁹⁵

However, ORJUNA perceived itself as an organisation of the national future, “where only fascists are perceived to be national elements”.⁹⁶ That exclusivist self-understanding of the organisation was legitimized by the fact that old political classes did not manage to conduct the process of national unification, but “[...] left the state with two hostile nation ideas, made a nation with two national names, and a culture with the two alphabets”.⁹⁷ Thus, the organisation called for a spiritual revolution which would bring about the unique Yugoslav culture. As the precondition of it, ORJUNA emphasized the need to overcome the three main obstacles: the strongest Croatian and Serbian political parties, namely Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and Serbian Radical Party (RS), and communists. They all were perceived to be decadent.

The nationalism of the Croatian Peasant Party was perceived to be an outcome of the Austro- Hungarian feudal system, which caused the degeneration of the Croatian peasants by making them “[...] non-colourful, harmless, and nameless, without soul, and without pretensions [...] to be quiet, peaceful and slavish peasants from Sava”⁹⁸. A similar label was applied to the Serbian radicals who, by militating for the idea of “great Serbia” in opposition to Yugoslavism, made the south Slavs “[...] to stay Slavish and weak, and to continue to be just a toy of the great powers”.⁹⁹ The communists, on the contrary, although they stressed the notion of a unitary Yugoslav nation, were perceived as the materialist force

⁹⁵ Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 16.

⁹⁶ Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity. Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 7.

⁹⁷ “Problem omladine“ [The Problem of the Youth], *Pobeda* (Split), 1 December 1921, 1.

⁹⁸ Ivo Lachman, “O pokretu Stjepana Radića kao tuđinskoj pojavi” [About the Movement of Stjepan Radić as the Alien Phenomenon], *Pobeda* (Split), 5.2.1922, 1.

⁹⁹ Dobroslav Jevđević, “Srpska stranka” [The Serb Party], *Vidovdan, organ nacionalista* (Novi Sad), 28 October 1922, 1.

opposite to any kind of idealism, thus strange to the Slavic national mentality. Communist followers were seen as “[...] citizens of national minorities, then all social malcontents, delinquent and pathological people.”¹⁰⁰

Decadence was to be overcome by the “[...] the crystallisation of the Yugoslav national organism, intensive feeling of our spirit, to emerge the Yugoslav racial type.”¹⁰¹ It was embodied in the notion of the heroic past, which, although was present in the spirit of all three nations, was to a great extent present in the Serb history. The Serb history was envisioned as a constant historical fight of the Serb peasants against Ottoman occupiers. The history of that fight was translated in the Serb folk myths, full of the heroic values such as fight, revenge, sacrifice for the country and cult of masculinity, which were stated to be a Serbian heroic soul.¹⁰² On the contrary, the history of the Croatian fight for freedom was a history of fight for the constitutional rights of the Croatian feudal state within the framework of the Habsburg Empire. As it was based on legal foundation, only elites participated in it, while common people were suppressed and alienated by Austrian influences. This was the reason why Croatian nationalism adopted a form of patriotism labelled as conservative, and thus incapable to contribute to the Yugoslav spiritual revolution.¹⁰³

ORJUNA presented its nationalism as opposed to liberal democratic nationalism. As one of the organisations leader, Niko Bartulović, stressed, the new nationalism of the organisation was adopted directly from the peasantry, which through history preserved the “equality of the kinsman” against the aristocrats and bourgeoisie patriotism. The national

¹⁰⁰ “Bronsteinove sluge kod nas” [Bronstein’s Servants in Our Country], *Pobeda*, 6 September 1921, 3.

¹⁰¹ Dr. Vinko Krstulović, “Nacionalistička revolucija je nužna” [The National Revolution is Necessary], *Pobeda*, 30 July 1922, 1.

¹⁰² Mirko Ležaić, “Separatizam i unitarizam: srpska nacionalna svijest” [Separatism and Unitarism: Serb National Consciousness], *Pobeda*, 12 November 1921, 2.

¹⁰³ Mirko Ležaić, “Separatizam i unitarizam: hrvatska misao” [Separatism and Unitarism: Croatian Thought], *Pobeda*, 1 October 1921, 2.

revolution was about to abolish all differences by forming a direct mental connection between the intelligentsia and the people:

Intelligentsia adopted from the people the rough material of the unity, its virgin power, to give it back as a merged tool for the life and combat. Simultaneously, the people inspired the intelligentsia all the time, by giving it rough material all the time. Thus intelligentsia cease to be aristocratic, and become democratic, emerge from the people and fitting to people needs.¹⁰⁴

Although the above statement resembles the fascist notion of democracy, based on the abolishment of parliamentarism and the implementation of a direct connection between masses and the leader,¹⁰⁵ in fact, ORJUNA did not adopt such a notion. Instead, it called upon the legacy of the *Vidovdan* Constitution [St. Vidus Constitution], which, in 1921, adopted the centralist system of power in Yugoslavia, simultaneously abolishing all autonomy prerogatives which Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoyed till 1918 in Austro- Hungarian Monarchy.¹⁰⁶ Hence ORJUNA perceived it as revolutionary, because the constitution neglected the existence of the south Slav separate nations, why it was envisioned to be the base in the erection of the unified Yugoslav culture.¹⁰⁷ However, it did not impose the name of Yugoslavia as the state name; but kept in it the “tribe” names, i.e., Serb, Croat and Slovene¹⁰⁸, due to the politics of the Serb Radical Party (RS) which were frighten of the lost of Serb national identity under the Yugoslav name¹⁰⁹. Hence, ORJUNA perceived its task in conducting the second phase of the spiritual revolution by

¹⁰⁴ Niko Bartulović, “Demokratičnost Jugoslovenstva” [The Democracy of Yugoslavism], *Pobeda*, 1 Decembar 1921, 2.

¹⁰⁵ George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution; Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), 2.

¹⁰⁶ For all questions considering *Vidovdanski ustav* [St. Vidus Constitution] see Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 379-406.

¹⁰⁷ Dr. Vinko Krstulović, “Nacionalistička Revolucija je nužna” [The Nationalist Revolution is Necessary], *Pobeda*, 30 July 1922, 2.

¹⁰⁸ The official name of the state given to it by the Vidovdan constitution was *Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca- SHS* [The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes- SHS].

¹⁰⁹ Banac, *The National Question*, 168-169.

fighting for the “Yugoslavia” as the name of the state and symbol of integral Yugoslav nation, which notion should be embodied in the people.¹¹⁰ However, ORJUNA’s writings did not specify how the revolution would be conducted, or who would conduct it. It was only stated that the revolution would occur “not on the barricades, but in people’s heads”¹¹¹. Sometimes, the revolution was envisioned as an evolution process, which would take generations to be fulfilled, while the important role was assigned to the army and the king, perceived to be the only political forces which preserved the spirit of the unitary Yugoslavism. Thus, the organisation showed at an earlier stage its inclination to the king’s dictatorship. As Dobroslav Jevđević, the organisation leader in Vojvodina argued, the prerogatives of the king should be much stronger than in Western European states, because “[...] each monarchy in which king has only the symbolic power is a weak state whose integrity is dependant on the mercy of the corrupted party oligarchy.”¹¹²

Finally, this first phase in the political evolution of ORJUNA finished in November 1922,¹¹³ with its first big congress in Split. The congress statement acknowledged the fact that the organisation spread throughout whole of Yugoslavia, thus indicating the need of structuring the organisation and integrating it within the existing political system. Although is repeated the fact from the previous program that members of the organisation can be members of other political parties supporting a unitary Yugoslavia, the organisation stressed the need that the organisation exists beyond party politics. Moreover, it set the foundation for further development of the core the myth of the organisation, stressing discipline and

¹¹⁰ Ivo Mogrović, „U borbu i pobedu“ [In the Fight and to the Victory], *Vidovdan* (Novi Sad), 29 July 1922, 2.

¹¹¹ Dr. Vinko Krstulović, “Nacionalistička Revolucija je nužna” [The Nationalist Revolution is Necessary], *Pobeda*, 30 July 1922, 2.

¹¹² Dobroslav Jevđević, “Mi prema Monarhiji” [We towards the Monarchy], *Vidovdan* (Novi Sad), 1922, in *Izabrani članci* [Selected Articles] (Novi Sad: Štamparija Jovanović i Bogdanov, 1925), 24-25.

¹¹³ “Prvi kongres Orjune u Splitu: saopštenje o zaključcima kongresa” [The First Congress of Orjuna in Split: The Report about the Conclusions of the Congress], *Pobeda*, 12 November 1922, 1.

nationalist faith as the way of organising masses. The discipline of ORJUNA's members "[...] should go beyond the usual one and should be a factor by which the organisation will impose itself to the modern society."¹¹⁴ Thus the program indicated the next phase in the organisation's ideological development, marked by the better defining of the purpose of organisation, as the development of the concept of a corporative state.

III.2. 1923-1925: The Myth of the Organisation and Corporative State

During the period 1923-1925 ORJUNA spread through the whole country, especially in Serbia by forging alliances with the Serb First World veteran organisations *Udruženje Četnika* [The Association of Cetniks] and *Narodna odbrana* [The National Defence], in 1923. As a result of this expansion, ORJUNA became a respectable organisation with an estimated membership of around one hundred thousand, and strong action squads fighting political opponents throughout the country.¹¹⁵ Apparently, stimulated by its expansion, ORJUNA started to develop the myth of an organisation able "[...] to impose order on the masses and to prevent disintegration of the national collectivity in the chaos of modern time."¹¹⁶ Thus, ORJUNA started to develop its own political myth, which finally developed into the myth of the state, expressed in the concept of corporative organics society. This process reached its peak in 1925, when some ORJUNA members directly expressed the ambition to establish a nationalist dictatorship.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Branislav Gligorijević, "Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)" [The Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (Orjuna)], *Istorija XX veka: zbornik radova*, 5 (1963), 364-371.

¹¹⁶ Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity*, 85.

From 1923, the organisation started to emphasise more directly its ambition to assume an active role in Yugoslav politics. In justifying this ambition, the leader of ORJUNA Ljubo Leontić emphasised the new political situation in the Europe, where

[...] the profound voice of tired masses is roaring, asking for the man of strong hand and firm will [...] to gather the will of the masses in the religion of nationalism as the regenerator of the national organism. But people, who lead a state for this five years, neglect its launching [...], while from the people emerges a new man, which will build the ethical, new modern and strong Yugoslavia.¹¹⁷

While previously the organisation emphasised the Yugoslav cultural revolution without specifying its concrete measures, now the model of the “new, modern and strong” Yugoslavia was supported by concrete measures. Throughout 1923, there were requests to take the nationalist revolution “in our own hands,” which come especially from the side of the Slovenian and Vojvodinan branches of organisation, due to the fact that government, under the pressure of the public opinion, imposed measures against ORJUNA’s violent actions.¹¹⁸ The concretisation of the more aggressive role in the political system comes with the ORJUNA second congress in Split in 1923. Its resolution can be defined as a further development of the previous program from 1921.

The resolution¹¹⁹ repeated the statements from the 1921 program that ORJUNA’s main goal was that of fight against “the nation and state enemies,” militating for the emergence of the unique Yugoslav culture, and for the extension of the state to the south Slav territories which stayed out of Yugoslavia. However, the organisation firmly stressed its independence, and proposed concrete measures to embrace the whole society. In the accordance to the very clearly-defined state crisis which originated from the “partisan party

¹¹⁷ Ljubo Leontić, “Zadatak Organizacije jugoslovenskih nacionalista” [The Task of the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists], *Pobeda*, 31 January 1923, 1.

¹¹⁸ Radovoj Rehar, “Pitanja našeg pokreta” [Questions of our Movement], *Pobeda*, 26 August 1923, 3; Dobroslav Jevđević, “Rat partijama” [The War to the Parties], *Vidovdan*, 6 October 1923, 1.

¹¹⁹ “Rezolucija drugog kongresa Orjuna” [The Resolution of the Second Congress of Orjuna], *Vidovdan*, 12 December 1923, 1.

politics burden with pre-war tribe mentality,” the resolution emphasised ORJUNA’s independence from any form of party politics. Moreover, stating that “[...] there is no strong state without national consciousness and the justifiable demands of the peasantry, working-class and citizens”, the organisation propose concrete measures of improving the situation of these working classes. Thus the resolution requests the nationalisation of the educating system, a solution to the peasant agrarian problem, and an improvement in the material and social position of state officials, and especially of war veterans and their families. Moreover, it also argued for the nationalisation of the national economy. Finally, the resolution claimed that the “[...] nationalist work of the organisation is the first condition of the fulfilling the resolution aims.”

This resolution shows that ORJUNA was at that time closer to fascism by emphasising concrete nationalist measures for the reformation of the state and the future society. However, it does not still envision the total transfiguration of the existing liberal-democratic system by arguing in favour of a corporative society embraced by the omnipotent state. ORJUNA come very close to that vision in subsequent years, 1924 and 1925. But previously ORJUNA had developed the myth of the organisation, as the prerequisite to the possible national revolution.

Although it was already indicated in the resolution by the organisation role, it was clearly stated after the resolution, when organisation emphasised as a goal “[...] to gather the all Yugoslavs which are spread all around [in various parties, s.dj.], as well these apathetic, which ORJUNA especially wants to incorporate in it”.¹²⁰ Its purpose was to give a sense to the life of the individual, as well as to organise the community to overcome the chaos of modernity. That general aim of the organisation was especially emphasised by Ljubo Leontić, previously mentioned ORJUNA leader. In his article “OR. JU.NA.,” Leontić

¹²⁰ “Naši putevi. Posle kongresa Orjune u Splitu” [Our Ways. After the Congress of Orjuna in Split], *Vidovdan*, 15 December 1923, 2.

stressed that the aim of the organisation is to transform amorphous masses into the discipline individual conscious of the dedication to the welfare of the organisation “[...] not only as the frame of the creating the new moral and material goods; but also as the ultimate meaning of the ones existence, the affirmation of the order, harmony and progress, and negation of the chaos, victory of the work against leisure, and triumph of life against the dead.”¹²¹

ORJUNA’s general purposes were subsequently developed especially by Dobroslav Jevđević, the Serbian Veteran of World War I and the leader of the Vojvodina ORJUNA. Jevđević claimed that, in contrast to the other political parties whose supporters and members were related only in the sphere of political life, ORJUNA’s aim was to embrace the individual in totality “[...] by penetrating in every aspect of the life of our members, from the family life to the physical exercise, as well to all cultural and social needs of the modern man.”¹²²

The nucleus of the organisation were now the “action squads,” perceived to be the starting point of the construction of the new community. Unlike the previous ORJUNA’s ideas on the new man, which is broadly perceived to emerge as a result of the cultural revolution, at this new stage the new men is strictly defined to result from activities within the action squads. As Jevđević argued, the squads erased all class and social differences between their members, educating the combatants in the cult of the discipline and the ultimate sacrifice, preventing them from the “earthy” sins of alcohol, sexual sins and generally immorality. As Jevđević put it:

It (the squad, s.dj.) represents the set of complete men, in which each individual is ultimate agitator of our idea, and in which each member will in the crucial moment be more worth that hundred of blind, unconsciousness followers of the political parties’ ideas.¹²³

¹²¹ Ljubo Leontić, “OR.JU.NA.,” *Pobeda*, 1 March 1924, 1.

¹²² Dobroslav Jevđević, “Brojna snaga Orjune” [The Numerous Power of ORJUNA], *Vidovdan*, 1924, in *Izabrani članci*, 8.

¹²³ Dobroslav Jevđević, “Oružana snaga Orjune” [The Armed Forces of ORJUNA], *Vidovdan*, 1924, in *ibid*, 12.

In its attempt to embrace the whole society, the organisation established in the period 1923-1925 various sections: the workers section, the peasant section, the secondary school section, as well as an academic section, and finally a women section. However, besides the national squads, it is obvious that the organisation, relied mostly on the working-class.

Its thematisation emerged in the 1923-1924, with the second wave of working strikes which stroke Yugoslavia after the first wave in the period 1919-1921, when Communist party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) was abandoned. While the organisation then focused its writings exclusively on the demonising the communism, now it turn to the more positive thematisation of the working-class question. It expressed understanding to the worker's strikes, which are to be supported "[...] to protect interests and rights of the Yugoslav working class if its requests are moderate and justified."¹²⁴, what means if they are not organised by the communists. So, it seems that organisation perceived the solution of the working-class question in the harmonisation with the interests of the whole national community. Subsequently, it was especially prone to support workers in the case when the strikes took part in the entrepreneurships owned by the foreigners,¹²⁵ which is formulated in the aforementioned congress resolution as a policy of the protection of national industry.

Although the organisation did not fully develop the notion of the corporative society, it developed the fascist concept of the class struggle, which George Mosse defined as the fight of the productive against the speculative, parasite capital of the decadent old ruling class.¹²⁶ This concept was based on the notion of the productive working society found in labour, against parasitism and speculative capital, which is stated to be in the hands

¹²⁴ Berislav Anđelinović, "Nacionaliste i radnici" [The Nationalists and the Working-Class], *Pobeda*, 28 January 1923, 3.

¹²⁵ Berislav Anđelinović, "Naši pomorci" [Our Seamen], *Pobeda*, 5 July 1923, 3.

¹²⁶ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, 26.

of “[...]demagogic politicians and the separatists.” The way to overcome speculation was to reorganise capital in the way as to become “[...] not only the exploitation of the workers calluses, but also the productive factor of the earnings,” which is envisioned to be achieved only when both entrepreneurs and working-class adopt national consciousness.¹²⁷ ORJUNA saw the way to achieve that goal in organising workers in the working-class sections, with the ultimate aim of organizing Yugoslavia “[...] as the unitary state, with one nation, in which the Yugoslav worker has the chance of the better success in the entire life.”¹²⁸

The final emergence of the unitary state was the central focus of the second congress of ORJUNA in Belgrade in May 1925. It happened in the time when the unitary Democratic Party and its leader Svetozar Pribičević left the government, which was made by the coalition of the former biggest political opponents, Serb Radical Party (RS) and Croatian Peasant Party (HSS). As both parties were labelled by ORJUNA as “state enemies,” the congress planned the announcement of the some kind of “March on Belgrade.” As Jevđević stated, it was planned to be “[...] grandeur, well-organised manifestation, which has to erase the respect of both enemies and friends towards us.”¹²⁹ He argued that the organisation’s previous efforts to re-educate people acting in the existing political system were unsuccessful. Thus, he emphasised that ORJUNA “[...] have to go far from the false democracy [...] and to enter the political life and drive them away (parties, s.dj.) from it.”¹³⁰ Jevđević found the contemporaneous ORJUNA mission in the necessity to save the state, justifying it by the statement that “The people have never ruled in the world history, and it is not capable to do it at all [...] Only intellectual and moral elites can save our

¹²⁷ “Orjuna i radništvo” [Orjuna and the Working- Class], *Pobeda*, 14 June 1924, 3.

¹²⁸ “Orjuna i radnik” [Orjuna and Worker], *Pobeda*, 18 September 1924, 7.

¹²⁹ Dobroslav Jevđević, “Naš kongres i budućnost Orjune” [Our Congress and the Future of Orjuna], *Pobeda*, 20 May 1925, 2.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

fatherland and our people, which have to lead not only our organisation, but the totality of our people as well.”¹³¹

However, these objections of the Vojvodina branches were not adopted in the congress resolution. Besides repeating the principles already stated in previous resolutions and in the program, namely the non-party status of the organisation and its dedication to the national and state unity, the congress resolution criticized the clash of social classes and “capitalistic exploitation of the working-class.” However, the resolution did not openly stated the intention of the overthrowing the existing parliamentary monarchy and party system. It emphasised again its loyalty to the monarchy, the king and the army, as the “only guarantee of the nation and state unity.”¹³²

It seems that the resolution was a compromise between the two leading branches in the movement, the leadership in Split and the Vojvodina branch represented by Jevđević. The leadership followed politically Svetozar Pribičević, who after leaving the government established the Independent Democratic Party (SDS), starting simultaneously to shift from unitary to the federalist notion of Yugoslavia.¹³³ In the debate over the new program of the organisation, which followed the congress, the leader of ORJUNA Ljubo Leontić proposed a program similar to the one from the 1921, adding to it the notion of class harmony as well as parliamentary democracy.¹³⁴ The Vojvodina branch firmly opposed Leontić’s

¹³¹ Aleksandar Tabaković, “Naša propaganda” [Our Propaganda], *Pobeda*, 13 February 1925, 2.

¹³² “Rezolucija II kongresa Orjune” [The Resolution of the Second Congress of Orjuna], *Vidovdan*, 11 June 1925, 2.

¹³³ There are numerous books about political career of Svetozar Pribičević. For his adoption of the Yugoslav federalism see Hrvoje Matković, *Svetozar Pribičević i Samostalna demokratska stranka do šestojanuarske diktature* [Svetozar Pribičević and Independent Democratic Party till the Six-January Dictatorship] (Zagreb: Institut za hrvatsku povijest-Liber, 1972).

¹³⁴ Ljubo Leontić, “Misli vodilje Orjune: Osnovica za nacrt programa predložena od predsjednika dr. Ljube Leontića na kongresu Orjune 31.V.-3.VI. u Beogradu” [The Guiding Principles of Orjuna: The Basis for the Program Proposed by the President Ljubo Leontić on the Congress of Orjuna 31. V- 3.VI in Belgrade], *Pobeda*, 24 June 1925, 3.

proposition, continuously calling for the abolishment of the parliamentary monarchy by the nationalist revolution and imposing of ORJUNA “executive governance.”¹³⁵ However, neither was the new program adopted nor ORJUNA conducted any revolutionary attempt. Left without governmental support and even persecuted by the new government, the organisation underwent a rapid decline. As its prominent leaders were strongly tied to Pribičević, who now gradually moved to the federalist notion of Yugoslavia, ORJUNA’s ideology changed as well.

III.3. 1926-1929: The Decline of ORJUNA’s Ideology: From Fascism to the “National Defensive Organisation”.

During 1926, the organisation still retrieved some aspects of the fascist vocabulary. It continued to stress the society envisioned as a productive community, with subsequent eradication of the foreign capital, especially the Italian one.¹³⁶ Moreover, it continued to argue that party politics endangered the “temple of Yugoslavism,”¹³⁷ and believed that the country could be saved only by ORJUNA’s ultimate sacrifice for the realisation of the unitary Yugoslav state and culture.¹³⁸ However, the myth of the organisation and notion of palingenetic revolution gradually declined, and finally totally disappeared in 1927.

¹³⁵ Dobroslav Jevđević, “Putevi orjune poslije kongresa: antiparlamentarizam” [The Ways of Orjuna after the Congress: anti-Parliamentarism], *Vidovdan*, 21 June 1925, 2; Aleksandar Tabaković, “Nacrt programa Orjune, Nacionalizam” [The Sketch of the Program of Orjuna, Nationalism], *Vidovdan*, 12 July 1925, 1.

¹³⁶ Niko Bartulović, “Značenje nacionalne akcije u odbrani Dalmacije” [The Meaning of the National Action in the Defence of Dalmatia], *Pobeda*, 29 July 1926, 2.

¹³⁷ “Snaga državne misli” [The power of the State thought], *Pobeda*, 26 January 1926, 1.

¹³⁸ Vladimir Lalić, “Jugoslovenstvo u odricanju” [Yugoslavism in the Renouncement], *Pobeda*, 16 February 1926, 1.

Although ORJUNA did not abandon its notion of the unitary nation, it switched to an evolutionary, non-violent conception, where the organisation did not perceive itself to represent the totality of the nation. As one member clearly expressed it:

Yugoslavism will erect neither our resolutions, nor our combat methods. It will be erect only by the equality of all Yugoslavs in the state, by disappearing of the various regional and tribe mentalities- which can be overcome only by the flowing of time.¹³⁹

These notions were especially emphasised on the Fourth Congress of ORJUNA in October 1927, held in Zagreb. Following the Third Congress from February the same year, which debated the crisis of the organisation caused by the suppression of the government,¹⁴⁰ the fourth congress finally registered an ideological switch. Contrary to the claim of the young members of organisation, expressed in the credo “to combat or to die” for the unified, monolithic Yugoslavism and a centralised state, the president Marko Kranjec, the most prominent ORJUNA member from Slovenia and ex-chief of its action squads, emphasised:

ORJUNA shall at least start with realistic approach to the world and situation in our state, because with our fanaticism and idealism we achieved nothing. The people stayed totally phlegmatic on our previous actions. We need to define the new tasks, and by the new tactics.¹⁴¹

However, these new tasks were not defined. The organisation continued to criticise the ruling political parties for their state politics, especially on the question of the 1927 Nettun conventions, which gave to Italy an unfavourable economic concessions, especially in Dalmatia.¹⁴² In response, ORJUNA called for an alliance of all nationalist forces in defending Dalmatia against the prospective Italian invasion. The organisation thus redefined

¹³⁹ Čedomir Medini, “Orjunaškoj svesti i savesti” [To the Orjuna’s Awareness and Conscience], *Pobeda*, 30 September 1927, 2.

¹⁴⁰ “Zaključci III kongresa Orjune u Zagrebu” [The Conclusions of the Third Congress of Orjuna in Zagreb], *Pobeda*, 24 February 1927, 1.

¹⁴¹ “Tok i zaključci kongresa Orjune održanog u Zagrebu,” [The Course and Conclusions of the Orjuna Congress in Zagreb], *Pobeda*, 14 October 1927, 1.

¹⁴² Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije: 1918-1988* [The History of Yugoslavia: 1918-1988], vol.1, *Kraljevina Jugoslavija 1918-1941* [Kingdom Yugoslavia 1918-1941] (Beograd: Nolit, 1988), 247.

itself as the “people’s defensive military organisation” which by gathering of all “national consciousness elements” will help political parties and the state in the defence of the state territory.¹⁴³

That notion was covered by a more ample switch in the relationship of ORJUNA to political parties. Although in October 1927 the forth congress stated that the future of ORJUNA was in keeping out of party politics, gradually the leadership argued that ORJUNA can improve politics in the state.¹⁴⁴ This new strategy was fully implemented in November 1927, when Svetozar Pribičević made a coalition with Stjepan Radić (Peasant-Democratic coalition, SDK), insisting on the parliamentary struggle for the reformation of Yugoslavia towards federalism. As the most prominent members of the organisation were coalition deputies, the organisation proclaimed that the nation unity is realised, and Croatian separatism disappeared.¹⁴⁵ In fact, it recognised national identities as constitutive of Yugoslavism, stating that “the aim of our fight for Yugoslavia [...] is in the guarantee to the all citizens, Serbs and Croats, that there would not be any imposing of any tribe (nation, s.dj.) mentalities to other tribes (nations, s.dj).”¹⁴⁶

ORJUNA praised the proclamation of King’s Alexander dictatorship in January 1929, which imposes the notion of unitary Yugoslavism against separate south Slav identities, thus trying to suppress SDK which jeopardise his power. ORJUNA hoped to become instrument in implementing the new dictatorship. Yet, the proclamation of the new regime led to the dissolution of the organization, together with all the other political parties of the country.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Damir Vrbić, “Pro domo,” *Pobeda*, 18 May 1928, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Vrbić, “Pro domo,” 2.

¹⁴⁵ “Uskrs” [The Christmas], *Pobeda*, 6 April 1928, 2.

¹⁴⁶ “Između beogradske cincarije i zagrebačke hysterije” [Between Belgrade Cunning and Zagreb Hysteria], *Pobeda*, 24 August 1928, 2.

¹⁴⁷ Gligorijević, “Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (Orjuna)”, 356-357.

To conclude, the genesis of ORJUNA ideology shows that the movement can be labelled fascistic, or more precisely proto-fascistic, due to the fact that it did not try to seize the political power. It adopted a palingenetic vision of nationalist revolution centred on the creation of the new, heroic Yugoslav man and on the new unitary Yugoslav culture founded on the supreme racial attributes of Yugoslavs in the stage of its emergence 1921-1922. In the culmination of the organisation's activities its ideology developed to an almost fully fledged fascist ideology by erecting the myth of the organisation, which was there to abandon the liberal-democratic system and impose a totalitarian state and a corporative society. However, due to the unfavourable evolution of the political context, ORJUNA declined during the period 1926-1929. On the one hand, it lost its key fascist attributes, being reduced to the role of an auxiliary party force and countermovement against the perceived threat of an Italian invasion. On the other hand, its vision of unitary Yugoslavism was gradually replaced by federal plans of reorganizing Yugoslavia. Since in the case of Yugoslavia, fascism aimed not at completing the process of national integration, as in the case of Italy,¹⁴⁸ but at forging the new Yugoslav nation. Thus in the following chapter I turn to a closer analysis of ORJUNA's idea of Yugoslavism, and its relations to the existing national identities, especially of Serbs and Croats.

¹⁴⁸ Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity*, 6-7.

Chapter IV.

ORJUNA's Idea of Yugoslav Nation.

In the Croatian right-wing discourse in the last two decades, ORJUNA was labelled as “great-Serbia” movement, with the main aim of its program being “to support the idea of Great Serbia, why only manifestly it was dedicate to the idea of Yugoslavism.”¹⁴⁹ Thus, the idea of Yugoslavism of ORJUNA was reduced to its Serbian, i.e. Anti-Croat character, due to the fact that idea of integral Yugoslavism has been generally perceived to be an instrument of Serbian expansionism in Croatian right wing discourse.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, in articulating its idea of Yugoslav unitarism, ORJUNA called upon the heritage of *the Nacionalistička Omladina* [Yugoslav Nationalistic Youth], movement of the Young Serbs and Croats which in 1910s launched integral Yugoslavism. In this chapter I will explore ORJUNA's idea of Yugoslavism, especially in relation to the Croatian national idea. The idea of Yugoslavism was thematised especially in the early stage of movement; until 1927, the program and resolutions of the movement simply repeated previously expressed, when the movement turned to the federalist concept of Yugoslavism in accordance to the new political situation. In order to document the foundations of the ORJUNA's idea of Yugoslavism, I will first depict the main notions of the *Omladina* idea of Yugoslavism.

¹⁴⁹ Hrvoje Šošić, *Hrvatski politički leksikon* [Croatian Political Lexicon], vol.1, *Prvi dio, A-O* [The First Part, A-O], (Rijeka, Tiskara Rijeka), 615.

¹⁵⁰ It is enough to take a look on the webpage of *Fokus*, the Croatian- right wing weekly. Exp. Niko Pezelj, “Brojni krivotvoritelji hrvatske povijesti” [The Numerous Falsifiers of the Croatian History], available at http://www.fokus-tjednik.hr/vijest_arhiva.asp?vijest=1906&izdanje=85, accessed on 25 May 2007.

IV.1. Nacionalistička omladina [The Nationalistic Youth]: Emergence of the Unitary Yugoslav Idea

The *Nacionalistička omladina* emerged in Croatia in 1910s as a reaction to the passivity of the Croatian political parties in fighting for the south Slavs' political emancipation in Austro-Hungary. Besides condemning the political opportunism of "the father's generation," the Youth also condemned the principle of the "Croato-Serb national oneness," under which the coalition of the Croat and Serb political parties was established in 1903. Although the principle of the coalition had the significance of constructing the unitary Yugoslav nation, it in fact included only Croatian and Serb cultural and political cooperation, still perceiving Croats and Serbs as a separate nations, with the assumption that unification would come in time. The unsuccessfulness of the coalition's political actions, with the transformation into a party loyal to the Austro- Hungarian regime in 1910s, brought about the radicalisation of the Youth. In 1912 it established the *Jugoslovenska nacionalistička omladina* [Yugoslav Nationalist Youth] based on the perception that South Slavs' political emancipation could be accelerated only by the emergence of the unitary Yugoslav nation, based upon the cult of the heroic Yugoslav race. Practically, emancipation was expected to emerge by replacing the parliamentary way of political working with non-parliamentary, violent deeds, which would in the prospective future bring the south Slav unification under the leadership of Serbia as the "Yugoslav Piedmont".¹⁵¹

As the previous history of the Yugoslav national thought was marked by quarrels and confrontations between Croats and Serbs, the *Omladina* needed to reshape the whole

¹⁵¹ Mirjana Gross: "Nacionalne ideje studentske omladine u Hrvatskoj uoci I. svjetskog rata" [National ideas of students Youth in Croatia in the Eve of World War I], *Historijski zbornik*, vol. 21-22 (1968-69), 75-143; Vice Zaninović, "Mlada Hrvatska uoci I. svjetskog rata" [Young Croatia on the Eve of World War I], *Historijski zbornik*, vol. 11-12 (1958.-1959), 65-104.

interpretation of south Slav history to justify the emergence of the unitary Yugoslav state. It was done by Milan Marjanović, the politician of the older generation who supported the *Omladina*, and published the book *Narod koji nastaje. Zašto nastaje i kako se formira jedinstveni Srpsko- Hrvatski narod* [The Nation Emerges; The Emerges and Formation of a Unique Serbo-Croatian Nation].¹⁵²

Marjanović interpreted the modern history of the South Slavs as an unbroken historical stream of both Serb and Croat pursuit towards the Yugoslav unity, despite the fact both nations developed as two separate identities. The starting point of his interpretation was the fact that the Ottoman invasion on the Balkans destroyed the separate Serb and Croatian medieval states, and caused the mixture of the two populations which subsequently brought about the ethnical unity of South Slavs. When modern nationalism emerged in the nineteenth century, the Serbian and Croatian national thought did not emerge as two separate identities, but as the two poles of the same nation, separated in the divided states only by historical circumstances. Thus, even the “Greater Croatia” and “Greater Serbia” political projects were expressions of the fight for unification, because they named the whole south Slav territories with one name and worked for a common goal, no matter whether if it was a Serbian, or Croatian, version.¹⁵³

However, Marjanović acknowledged one difference between Serbs and Croats. On the basis of the Croatian tradition of feudal state right, the Croats adopted a patriotic-conservative notion of nation, while the Serbs, due to they tradition of peasant fight for freedom, adopted a modern-national vision of nationalism. Although Marjanović emphasised that both mentalities are equally valuable for the process of the south Slav unification, “the Croatian part of unique Croat-Serb nation” turned out to be somehow

¹⁵² Milan Marjanović, *Narod koji nastaje. Zašto nastaje i kako se formira jedinstveni Srpsko- Hrvatski narod* [The Nation Emerges; The Emerges and Formation of a Unique Serbo-Croatian Nation] (Rijeka: Knjižara G. Trbojević, 1913).

¹⁵³ Marjanović, *Narod koji nastaje*, 10-14, 24-44.

inferior to the “Serbian part of the nation” during the process of unification, due to the fact that Croats are more “contemplative, relativists and intellectualists”, hence passive, while Serbs are more “moral, vital and active.”¹⁵⁴

Subsequently, the superior characteristics of Serbiandom were emphasised by the Serbian anthropologist Jovan Cvijić, who stated that the south Slav vital mentality was developed by the populations from the Dynarian Mountains in the central part of Yugoslavia. Contrary to the people from the Pannonian plain in the northwest part of Yugoslavia and mostly inhabited by Croats, the Dinarian man, which Cvijić found to be mostly Serbs, are supposed to have “[...] something divine inside itself: it foresees great moments, especially for the nationhood, and is eager to sacrifice for the nation due to extremely developed proud and masculine.”¹⁵⁵

Thus, the youth saw the ways to overcome the decadence in Croatia caused by the “Swabian-Magyar culture” through the imposition of the Serb mentality. Or, as Vladimir Čerina, the prominent member of the *Omladina* said: “To this town of cynics (Zagreb, s.dj.), should be imposed the soul and brain of the town, which is called Belgrade.”¹⁵⁶ Although the *Omladina* did not exactly explain how it should go, in its 1912 Program it stated that the Croat national mentality should be purged of the foreign influences, namely German, Magyar, Italian, as well as clericalism, in a way as to participate in the “Yugoslav national soul”.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 103.

¹⁵⁵ Jovan Cvijić, *Jedinstvo i psihički tipovi južnih Slavena* [The Unity and psychological types of the South Slavs] (Niš: no publisher, 1914; reprint, Beograd: Slobodna knjiga, 1999), 30.

¹⁵⁶ Vladimir Čerina, “U gradu Cinika” [In the town of the Cynics], *Vihor, list za nacionalističku kulturu*, 1 March 1914, 1; quoted in Ivan J. Bošković, *Orjuna- Ideologija i književnost* [Orjuna- the Ideology and the Literature] (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2006), 39, n. 104.

¹⁵⁷ Program Kluba “Narodno ujedinjenje” [The Program of the Club “National Unification”], in Oskar Tartaglia, *Veleizdajnik; Moje uspomene iz borbe protiv crno-žutog*

However, praising the Serb national mentality should not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that Serbs were regarded as more worthy than the Croats.¹⁵⁸ Tin Ujević, one of the main leaders of the *Omladina*, clearly emphasised that “If we Serbs and Croats call ourselves Serbo-Croats, that does not mean that we reject the name Croat, for it is an integral part of the term “Serbo-Croat”¹⁵⁹. Some other members, like Milostisav Bartulica, clearly stated that Croats should firstly become Croats on the way to become Yugoslavs. That meant that the heroic spirit of Croatdom should emerge, and should serve, although it was more modest than the Serbian one, as ground “[...] to equalise the content of Croatdom with the Serbdom, in a way not to be parasite of the glory in our future state, but equal in the glory.”¹⁶⁰ Hence, some parts of *Omladina*, like Ujević and Bartulica, argued that the notion of Yugoslavism should in fact enable the flourishing of the real Croat national mentality, which would eradicate the mentality of the obedient serfdom imposed by Austrians, and awake in them “defiance and the action of pride”.¹⁶¹

Beside Serbia, the emergence of heroism in Croatia was envisioned to be added by Dalmatia. As the most *Omladina* members originated from Dalmatia, that province was perceived “[...] as the one which is coming immediately after the Serbia” in terms of

orla; u dva dijela [The High Treason; My Memories from the Struggle against Black-Yellow Eagle; In the Two Parts] (Zagreb- Split: tiskara i litografija C. Albrecht, 1928), 63-64.

¹⁵⁸ Banac, *The National Question*, 103.

¹⁵⁹ Tin Ujević, “Nacionalizam i Hrvatsvo” [Nationalism and Croatdom], in *Sabrana djela Tina Ujevića* [The collected Works of Tin Ujević], ed. Miroslav Frangeš (Zagreb, Matica Hrvatska, 1967), vol. 10, 178-179, quoted in Dušan Puvačić, “Tin Ujević and the Yugoslav idea” in *The Literature of Nationalism: Essays on East European Identity*, ed. Robert B. Pynset (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 166, n. 76.

¹⁶⁰ Milostisav Bartulica, “Hrvatstvo i Jugoslovenstvo” [Croatdom and Yugoslavdom], *Narodno jedinstvo* (Zagreb), 2 April 1914, in *Antologija jugoslovenske misli i narodnog jedinstva 1390-1930* [The Anthology of Yugoslav Thought and National Unity 1390-1930], ed. Viktor Novak (Beograd: privately printed, 1930), 687.

¹⁶¹ Tin Ujević, „Sramotno ćutanje“ [The shameful Silence], in *Sabrana djela Tina Ujevića*, vol. 10, 61, quoted in Puvačić, “Tin Ujević and Yugoslav idea”, 166.

militant spirit.¹⁶² Their mentality was regarded as containing heroism and combatively, symbolised in Dalmatian heroic folk songs “[...] which should inspire the emergence of heroism in shameful dead Croatia.”¹⁶³ However, even the concept of Dalmatiansim within the Youth Yugoslav ideology was ambiguous: while some members emphasised Dalmatia as “[...] the less exclusive Croatian and Serb, and mostly Slav and Yugoslavian”¹⁶⁴, while others regarded Dalmatia as the memory of the great cultural past of Croatia. The synthesis of the Slav mentality and western influences was the contribution Croatia submitted to the future Yugoslav national state.¹⁶⁵

Regardless of these ambiguities, *Omladina* envisioned that the emergence of the Yugoslav national soul would be based on the heroic elements which are “to Slovenes, Croats and Serbs already common”, and which are already present. Thus, there was no need to proceed with the process of gradual unification, which was envisioned by the members of the “old” political classes present in the Croato-Serbian political coalition, because “Croats, Serbs and Slovenes want to be a one nation; thus they are one nation.”¹⁶⁶

In sum, *Omladina*'s notion of the future Yugoslav nation was a quite ambiguous. It was envisioned to be erected by the emergence of the Yugoslav unique culture, which should be moulded upon heroic characteristics of south Slavs, contained mostly in Serb mentality, due to the fact that Croatian national mentality was perceived to be degenerated by foreign influences. However, this did not mean that Croatian mentality was perceived as a less worth, because some members of the *Omladina* envisioned its equality to the Serb one

¹⁶² Dimitrije Mitrinović, „O Jugoslaviji i za Jugoslaviju“ [About Yugoslavia and for the Yugoslavia], *Vihor* (Zagreb), 1 March 1914; in *Antologija jugoslovenske misli i narodnog jedinstva*, 681.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 683.

¹⁶⁴ Marjanović, *Narod koji nastaje*, 47.

¹⁶⁵ Tin Ujević, “Značenje Dalmacije” [The Meaning of Dalmatia], *Jugoslavija*, Antagofasta (Argentina), 7 August 1915; quoted in Bošković, *Orjuna- ideologija i književnost*, 38, n. 100.

¹⁶⁶ Ljubo Leontić, Uvodnik [The Editorial], *Yugoslavia* (Prague), 1 April 1914; in *Antologija jugoslovenske misli*, 689.

after the purging from the decadence. Subsequently, the concrete shape of the future Yugoslav state was also vague. While some members saw it as a republic, some perceived it as a constitutional monarchy ruled by the Serbian king.¹⁶⁷

IV.2. ORJUNA: On the Roots of Turn-of-the-Century Yugoslavism

ORJUNA already in its first manifesto strongly emphasised its heritage of the *Omladina*, stating that “[...] it will finish the job which the Nationalistic Youth started.”¹⁶⁸ Thus the organisation adopted the name *Jugoslovenska napredna nacionalistička omladina* [Yugoslav Progressive Nationalistic Youth], and emphasised in its program as the main task the emergence of the unitary national culture.¹⁶⁹

ORJUNA’s ideology reshaped even further the Yugoslav history by the Franjo Malin’s book *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju* [Yugoslavism throughout the History]¹⁷⁰. His interpretation of the Yugoslav history followed Marjanović, but even going further in reinterpreting it. While Marjanović depicted the history of South Slavs as the achievement of two poles, Serb and Croat, to unite, which was based on the singular national conscience developed in the middle ages by the Turk invasion, Malin depicted the whole history of the south Slavs as the “unitarist millennium”.¹⁷¹ Thus, there was a unified south Slav consciousness from the very beginning, expressed from early medieval time, when the Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian kingdoms tended to embrace the whole south Slav territories

¹⁶⁷ Gross, “Nacionalne ideje studentske omladine”, 112-114.

¹⁶⁸ Niko Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjuna* [From the Revolutionary Youth to Orjuna] (Split: Izdanje direktorijuma Orjuna, 1925), 81.

¹⁶⁹ “Program jugoslovenske napredno- nacionalne omladine; integralni nacionalizam” [The Program of the Yugoslav Progressive- Nationalistic Youth; The Integral Nationalism], *Pobeda*, 15 October 1921, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Franjo Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju; fragmenti* [Yugoslavism Through the History; Fragments] (Split: Izdanje Direktorijuma Orjuna, 1925).

¹⁷¹ Banac, *The National Question*, 180.

under the governance of “national kings”. As Malin stated, this tendency continued through history until now, while separate national identities of the south Slavs emerged exclusively as a result of foreign influence. Although the emergence of the South Slav State was perceived to finally fulfil historical tendency to unity, it failed due to contemporaneous political parties, which keep pushing separate south Slav political identities.

Thus, even the notion of Yugoslav federation was perceived to be a conspiracy of Austro-Hungary, aiming to disintegrate spiritually the unified south Slav body. While it was labelled that even the exclusive Serb nationalism, which primarily tended to embrace all Serbs in one state was in the course of the south Slav unity, the idea of Croats and Slovenes insisting for the political was stated to be “remedy of German feudal law which goes against the “[...] Yugoslavism as the highest degree of the national thought of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes”.¹⁷² It was even expressed at the level of the language by ORJUNA’s leader Ljubo Leontić. He explained that the Serb word for Yugoslavism, *Jugoslovenstvo*, is the proper one, because it originated from the word “*slovo*” (Letter), which is supposed to characterise the soul of the South Slavs. On the contrary, the Croatian word for Yugoslavism, *Jugoslavenstvo*, turned to have a root in Italian root “*schivo*”, which means Slave.¹⁷³ Thus, he implicitly argued that the Croat historical contribution to Yugoslavism was somehow less worthy than the Serb one.

Moreover, these tendencies were present in the vision of the new Yugoslav culture, which was to be forged upon the notion of the heroic past, which followed the pattern already depicted by Milan Marjanović in his previously mentioned book *Narod koji nastaje. Zašto nastaje i kako se formira jedinstveni Srpsko- Hrvatski narod* [The Nation Emerges;

¹⁷² “Dve koncepcije Jugoslovenstva“ [The Two Concepts of Yugoslavism], *Pobeda*, 28 June 1921, 1.

¹⁷³ Ljubo Leontić, “Jugoslaveni- Južni Sloveni- Jugosloveni” [Yugoslavs- South Slavs- Yugoslavs], *Pobeda*, 27 May 1925, 1.

The Emerges and Formation of a Unique Serbo-Croatian Nation]¹⁷⁴. Thus, it was argued that the spirit of Yugoslavism is to a great extent present in the Serb history. The Serb history was presented as a constant historical fight of the Serb peasants against Ottoman occupiers. The history of that fight was translated in the Serb folk myths, full of the heroic values such as fight, revenge, sacrifice for country and cult of masculinity, which were stated to be a Serbian heroic soul.¹⁷⁵ On the contrary, the history of the Croatian fight for freedom was a history of fight for the constitutional rights of the Croatian feudal state within the framework of the Habsburg Empire. Since it was based on legal foundation, only elites participate to it, while common people were suppressed and alienate by Austrian influences. This was the reason why Croatian nationalism adopted a form of patriotism labelled as conservative, and thus incapable to contribute to the Yugoslav spiritual revolution.¹⁷⁶

ORJUNA was nevertheless keen on emphasising that its concept of Yugoslavism is projected to blend all three national mentalities. As one of the most prominent members of organisation, Ivo Lachman stated, Yugoslavism is supposed to emerge on the reciprocity of the all characteristics which are present in all three tribes. Although they were labelled to be foreign construct, they were recognised to exist, but as regional mentalities. Thus, in the Yugoslav nation none of these three identities were supposed to loose anything from its characteristics, because

Yugoslavism is meaning the sum of all cultural, material, and physical values embodied in the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. And not, for example: Serb heroism and character + Croatian culture and mildness + Slovenian hard working habits and strength= Yugoslavism, but: Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian heroism, character, culture manners, mildness, working habits and resistance = Yugoslavism¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷⁴ See footnote 118.

¹⁷⁵ Mirko Ležaić, “Separatizam i unitarizam: srpska nacionalna svijest,” [Separatism and Unitarism: Serb National Consciousness], *Pobeda*, 12 November 1921, 2.

¹⁷⁶ Mirko Ležaić, “Separatizam i unitarizam: hrvatska misao,” [Separatism and Unitarism: Croatian Thought], *Pobeda*, 1 October 1921, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Ivo Lachman, “Kompatibilno i inkompatibilno” [Compatible and Incompatible], *Pobeda*, 16 June 1921, 2.

In that matter, ORJUNA was praising all contributions Croats gave to Yugoslavism. According to its vitalist, fascist notion of the unique Yugoslav culture, the emphasis was on the historical events which could contribute in the emergence of the new Yugoslav man. Thus the organisation praised the Croatian national heroes which rebelled against Austrian power in the history, such as counts Petar Zrinyi and Fran Krsto Frankopan¹⁷⁸, in which “Croats should respect the ancient Croatian vitalism against invasion from Vienna, while Serb should respect these two martyrs as something the most worthy which the Croatian tribe enters in the spiritual community of Yugoslavs.”¹⁷⁹

Moreover, it was also emphasised by the organisation writings that Serbs should respect the contributions of the Croats to the idea of Yugoslavism. As Niko Bartulović, the most prominent member of ORJUNA stated, the Yugoslav idea firstly emerged in Croatia in the nineteenth century:

If Karađorđe, Prince Mihajlo and King Peter were the great national leaders who build our Yugoslav Piedmont (Serbia, S.Dj.) and finally our Yugoslavia, it is equally truth that still have not been the more ideal ideologists and prophets of Yugoslav idea as were Croats Strossmayer, Rački, Nodilo and Botić.¹⁸⁰

The notion of Croatian historic passivity in the fighting for idea of Yugoslavism was justified by the Croatian specific historical circumstances, which were otherwise used to

¹⁷⁸ Counts Petar Zrinyi and Fran Krsto Frankopans were the leaders of the Croatian nobility rebellion against Habsburg power, which happened in 1671. The both were executed in Vienna, later becoming the Croatian national heroes.

¹⁷⁹ “Kult Zrinjsko- Frankopanski“ [The Cult of Zrinyi and Frankopans], *Pobeda*, 24 April 1924, 1. Karađorđe and Prince Mihailo were Serbian rulers in 19th century, while King Peter was the Serb king 1903-1918, and the first Yugoslav king 1918-1921. J.J. Strossmayer, Franjo Rački, Natko Nodilo and Luka Botić were prominent Croatian advocates of Yugoslavism in 19th century.

¹⁸⁰ Niko Bartulović, “Sinteza Jugoslovenstva” [The Synthesis of Yugoslavism], *Pobeda*, 1 January 1922, 1.

label them as a degenerated. So, even the restricted contribution in the field of political though was seen as the expression of the Croatian racial strength, because Croats

[...] were in the much more difficult situation than Serbs, which were forced by the cruelty of the Turk occupiers on this legendary cultivation of nationalism through the history of the Turkish Slavery, while Croats were melting as a spring snow under the sophisticated and systematic national alienation conducted by Austrians. The emergence of Austrainism in Croatia thus is not blame on Croats due to conditions of its history.¹⁸¹

However, these notions were quite rarely expressed. The Croatian national mentality still stayed in the subordinate position, due to its perceived degeneration. The notion of Dalmatia as the only vital part of the Croatian nation, “[...] which preserves heroic mentality of our nation, thus preserving the bright cheek of Croatism.”¹⁸², was still widespread in ORJUNA writings. Moreover, the organisation emphasised that Serbs did a great sacrifice for the Yugoslav idea by renouncing their “[...] own national insignias, by which they were combating for the centuries for its glory and freedom.”¹⁸³, emphasising subsequently that the foundations of Yugoslavia are laying exclusively on the numerous sacrifices of the Serbian combatants in World War I. Thus, it could be stated that ORJUNA adopted the *cult of the liberator*, which was advocated by the great part of Serbian political and intellectual elites in the inter-war period as a main argument for recognising the Serb supremacy in Yugoslavia.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Dobroslav Jevđević, “Frankovci” [The Franck Party], *Vidovdan* (Novi Sad), 1924, in *Izabrani članci* [Selected Articles], (Novi Sad: Štamparija Jovanović i Bogdanov, 1925), 42.

¹⁸² Mirko Korolija, „Uzvišena misija naše Dalmacije“ [The Supreme Mission of Our Dalmatia], *Pobeda*, 7 November 1922, 3.

¹⁸³ Dobroslav Jevđević, Srpski Separatizam [The Serbian Separatism], *Vidovdan*, 1924, in *Izabrani članci*, 69.

¹⁸⁴ The one of the best depiction of the cult of the liberator can be found in Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje* [The Memories on the Political Actors and Events], 2d ed. (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1993). Ivan Meštrović was the most famous Croatian sculptor, which on the turn of the century become the hero of the *Omladina* by the sculptures which depict mythical heroes from the Serb past. In the inter-war period he was a close friend of the Yugoslav king Alexander I.

ORJUNA opposed any kinds of national demands which would go against unitary Yugoslavism until late 1927, when the political patron of the organisation, previously the biggest unitaristic hardliner in Yugoslav politics Svetozar Pribičević, went in opposition and made a coalition with Stjepan Radić, the president of the Croatian Peasant Party (Peasant-Democratic coalition, SDK). As the coalition adopted the notion of federal Yugoslavism, the organisation abandoned the notion of the Croatian separatism as the result of alien influences. Instead, it recognised that Croatian separatism emerged as the result of the imposition of the hegemonic politics of the Belgrade regime against Croats, thus stating that “[...] Yugoslavia can not exist without unity and satisfaction of all three tribes (nations, s.dj.), and especially without non-discriminated and satisfied Croats”¹⁸⁵. In fact, the organisation even recognised that the previously envisioned role of Serbian mentality was compromised by the Serbian political classes, so that Croats were to be the new axis of Yugoslavism.¹⁸⁶

To conclude, the national thought of ORJUNA shows that the organisation was not completely anti-Croat, as the Croatian right-wing political thought was prone to state. Firstly, it opposed the Croatian political identity by arguing that it was under the influence of alien forces, which was in accordance to ORJUNA’s interpretation of history. Moreover, although ORJUNA emphasised the emergence of the unique Yugoslav culture upon the heroic characters of all three Yugoslav nations, it was prone to praise the Serbian component of the nation as the most vital one. However, the ORJUNA recognised the Croatian mentality in a way it contributed to its vision of Yugoslavism, praising its national heroes and intellectual contributions to Yugoslavism. Thus ORJUNA’s relation to Croatism was rather quite vague and ambiguous, as was the notion of the *Omladina* also, and cannot be characterised as perfect and unconditional opposition.

¹⁸⁵ „Pucanje u Jugoslaviju“ [The Shooting in Yugoslavia], *Pobeda*, 22 June 1928, 1.

¹⁸⁶ „Za praktično Jugoslovenstvo“ [For Practical Yugoslavism], *Pobeda*, 26 October 1928, 1.

Conclusions

The available works on fascism in Yugoslavia are still far away from the theoretical complexity that characterizes the scholarships of Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism. This feature is especially visible in research on the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists- ORJUNA. Works on the topic are not only scarce, but also burdened with obsolete Marxist approaches. Moreover, the nature of ORJUNA is misrepresented in the Croatian academic life, its vision of Yugoslavism being misunderstood, in a very superficial and biased way, as nothing more than a “Greater Serbia” project. This flaws in interpretation and the lack of comprehensive monographs proves that the history of the organisation is in need of research attention not only from the point of its fascist characteristics, but also taking also concerning its vision of Yugoslavism and the place it assigned to the Croatian national identity.

This thesis focuses on the ideology of the ORJUNA seen through the prisms of contemporary theories of generic fascism, represented mostly by the work of George Mosse and Roger Griffin, which emphasise the fact that fascism was a revolutionary ideology which envisaged a palingenetic national revolution in order to overcome the perceived decadence of the liberal, materialistic society¹⁸⁷. The degeneration of the nation was to be overcome by erecting the new national culture with its peak in fascist heroic men, dedicated to the ideals of the state and community as the ultimate aim of the individual’s existence. Moreover, the heroic man was perceived to be moulded in the totalitarian state which will preserve the national community from the materialist chaos, enabling subsequently emergence of the corporatist, non-conflict society.

¹⁸⁷ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1996); George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999).

This theoretical model of generic fascism looks at fascism “from the inside”¹⁸⁸, proving that fascism was not “reactionary agent of bourgeoisie,” as Marxists claim. Yet, its application to this model to the case of ORJUNA is a difficult analytical exercise. That is mainly because application of this general theoretical framework leaves the analyses of empirical case studies “in the air”, since it departs from the concrete historical context which makes the nature of organisation ideology more convincing and comprehensible. This thesis focused on ORJUNA’s ideology in the historical context in which it emerges, and in which the organisation existed, while attempting to underscore ORJUNA’s compatibility with the model of generic fascism.

ORJUNA emerged in a situation of deep crisis of the Yugoslav state. The two most important aspects of this crisis were the international instability of the new south Slav state, caused by the territorial claims of the neighbouring states; and the internal instability generated by the Croat-Serbian dispute over the different understanding of the concept of Yugoslavism and the organization of the new state. On the background of this crisis, ORJUNA advocated the concept of the palingenetic revolution based on a new integral national culture as the only remedy to overcome the perceived state decadence, caused by the clashes of the “old” Croatian and Serb political elites.

The concept of national palingenesis in the ideology of ORJUNA developed gradually. In the early years of the organisation’s existence, 1921-1922, one encounters only ambiguous references to the need for a radical change. At this stage, ORJUNA’s discourse was mostly dealing with various factors which produced the state decadence, against which the organisation proposed the cultural revolution based on the emergence of the new man. However, this transformation was envisioned to be peaceful, and the means of

¹⁸⁸ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, X.

transformation were not precisely defined, as ORJUNA still adhered to parliamentary democracy.

1923 marked the critical point in the organisation's life, when it gradually evolved to fully fledged fascism. Stimulated by governmental support, ORJUNA developed the notion of palingenetic revolution focusing on the emergence of the new man within its actions squads. Subsequently, it developed the myth of the organisation which led to establishment of the various sections which planned to embrace all strata of society (women, students, workers, peasants), with subsequent emergence of the corporatist society. By losing the government support in 1925, ORJUNA even called for the overthrow of the parliamentary system and the establishment of its own dictatorship. However, left without external support, in subsequent years the organisation declined, losing its radical fascist characteristics. ORJUNA was finally disbanded in 1929 under King Alexander's dictatorial regime.

While the organisation undoubtedly called for the palingenetic revolution of the nation, it was not stimulated by the urgency of the "unfinished nation" (Emilio Gentile), as is the case with most fascist movements, but it was dealing with a "nation which emerges" from the moulding of the Serb, Croat and Slovene nations. Although the organisation envisioned the emergence of the new Yugoslav culture from the moulding of the all three south Slav branches and identities, it believed that its strength was given first and foremost by the Serbian national identity, which was not "degenerated" by foreign influence as the Croat identity. Although praising the Serbian national identity, ORJUNA was not indisputably anti-Croat, due to the fact that it praised the heroic deeds in Croatian history, as well its historical contribution to the idea of Yugoslavism. Finally, ORJUNA inherited the notion of Yugoslavism to a great extent from the *Nacionalistička omladina* [Yugoslav

Nationalistic Youth], the net of Serb and Croatian students that emerged in Croatia in the 1910s.

Finally, these findings on the ORJUNA intellectual heritage suggest that the idea of integral Yugoslavism should be approached in the more sophisticated way than it is used to in the Croatian national “cannon.” My thesis thus opens two main two possible avenues of study. The first one would be research on the historical genesis of the Yugoslav Unitarian idea, starting with its genesis by the Nationalistic Youth, through ORJUNA, until its development in the 1930’s, with the last stage in the Communist Unitarian concept during Tito’s Yugoslavia 1945-1991. This is especially significant in light of the fact that most prominent members of ORJUNA later joined to Tito’s partisan movement. The second one would be to investigate the symbolic “contest” between Dalmatia regional identity and the Croatian national one, due to the fact that Dalmatians were the most prominent members of ORJUNA, as well as advocates of integral Yugoslavism in Croatia during the Tito’s Yugoslavia.

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