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Contemporary accounts of Croatian national identity

According to Benedict Anderson, 'communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined'.¹ This chapter investigates how the Croatian nation was imagined in the 1990s. It focuses on four sets of accounts that attempted to provide contemporary resonance to the abstract frames of national identity discussed in the previous chapter. These accounts attempted to either interpret what it meant to be Croatian in order to secure support for a political programme, or – as in the case of the dissident intellectuals – to challenge such accounts. However, they all attempted to give resonance to abstract ideas in the contemporary context. After a discussion of the so-called 'Franjoist' narrative offered by President Franjo Tuđman and his party, I will discuss alternative conceptions of identity that were articulated by opposition parties, dissident intellectuals and the Croatian diaspora. I argue that each of these 'political entrepreneurs' drew upon, and offered interpretations of, the historical statehood thesis in order to legitimise their programmes or to challenge the manifestos of others. The abstract frames discussed in the previous chapter therefore presented common frames of reference with which to seek legitimacy for political practices or to use to question that legitimacy.

One of the central themes of this chapter is that different accounts of national identity (which draw upon a common stock of narrative or makes use of similar 'frames') inform political discourse and compete with each other. As Michael Billig argued:

Different factions, whether classes, religions, genders or ethnicities, always struggle for the power to speak for the nation, and to present their particular voice as the voice of the national whole, defining the history of other sub-sections accordingly. 'The voice of the nation' is a fiction ... Thus, national histories are continually being re-written, and the re-writing reflects current balances of hegemony.²

These narratives of national identity should be seen as a political battleground. Ideas about national identity provide a framework for political discourse. In the case of a nation that has only recently achieved statehood, issues of state politics are 'nationalised' and particular rules of engagement are developed.

The dominant narrative: HDZ and 'Franjoism'

HDZ – *zna se* – was the most oft-used election slogan of Tuđman's party, the HDZ. *Zna se* means 'of course', 'it is normal' or 'it is so', and thus the slogan called the reader to equate the Croatian nation with the HDZ, because 'it is so'. This linking of the HDZ with Croatia was a recurrent theme in the party's rhetoric. For example, the *Sahovnica* coat of arms became both the symbol of the HDZ and the state's flag. In a speech to the party faithful in which Tuđman identified the main threats to the political well-being of his party, he expressed alarm at the 'teaming-up of the internal and external opponents of the HDZ and of independent Croatia'.³ Thus, opponents of the HDZ were also viewed as the enemies of Croatia. This linkage extended into the lexicon of political science. The *Croatian Political Dictionary* contained entries for 'snake in bosom' (opponents of Croatia and Tuđman), 'Croatian Communist Gulag', 'Falian strategy of Tuđman the warrior' (taking up three pages) and 'best' (describing this as the HDZ).⁴ A reviewer in the *Feral Tribune* noted the exclusions from the new Croatian political lexicography. The words 'fascism', 'antifascism', '*Ustaša*' and 'Ante Pavelić' were not to be found.⁵ Tuđman, the good shepherd of the Croatian nation, also became its most significant historical figure. In a book of Croatian 'heroes' published by the Ministry of Defence, the medieval kings received three pages between them, Starčević received eight pages, Radić received nine pages and Tuđman received thirty-two.⁶ The linkage between party, president and state was a deliberate policy that formed the cornerstone of the HDZ project in the 1990s.

Franjo Tuđman described himself as a 'Croatian historian, politician and statesman'.⁷ He was born in 1922 north of Zagreb, in the same district that Tito was born in. His parents were Radić supporters and when the Second World War broke out he joined Tito's communist Partisans. After the war, he rose to the position of Major-General in the JNA. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the causes of the 1941 uprising in Belgrade and in 1961 decided to leave the army in order to focus on historical research. He was later appointed Director of the Institute for the History of the Workers Movement in Croatia.⁸ In December 1971 he was arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for 'maliciously misrepresenting the socio-political situation in Croatia'. In February 1981 he was imprisoned again, on similar charges, for three years.⁹ In a letter to the United States Congress, Tuđman recalled that he fought Nazism in the Second World War, losing his brother in 1943, that his parents were killed by the Partisans in 1946 and that he was jailed for his 'anti-totalitarian political views'.¹⁰

According to David Owen, who negotiated with Tuđman when he was acting as a UN envoy, ‘Tudjman’s [*sic*] nationalism is worn openly on his sleeve, his soldiers know that he is ready himself to fight for Croatia ... Unlike Milosevic [*sic*] who is a pragmatist, Tudjman [*sic*] is an opportunist in the cause of Croatia’.¹¹ Jovan Rasković, founder of the Serbian Democratic Party in the so-called Krajina, held a similar view. He stated, ‘he is a tough politician of clear conceptions who represents what most Croats accept. Tudjman [*sic*] is the kind of character who speaks quite openly about his intentions’. Rasković also described the President of Croatia as ‘Croat-centric’ but not *Ustaša*.¹²

To sell the HDZ’s vision of a unified and independent Croatia, Tuđman established a political movement in which he embodied the Croatian nation, through the ideology of ‘Franjoism’.¹³ Franjoism held that the extremes of Croatian political ideology – from fascism to communism – could be represented and expressed in the person of Franjo Tuđman.¹⁴ Tuđman argued that the transition from a communist system to independent and democratic statehood could only be achieved if these cleavages were bridged. The programme of ‘national reconciliation’ involved instigating co-operation between first generation descendants of Partisan and *Ustaša* supporters. Tuđman believed that he could personally bridge the gap between the fascists and communists. Not only did ‘Franjoism’ include a commitment to unite the ‘bright and dark chapters of Croatia’s past’ it also sought to bring Croats living in Croatia together with those living abroad.¹⁵ As one commentator suggested, for Tuđman, Franjoism meant that he was ‘the president of all Croats’.¹⁶

The HDZ saw itself as a national movement rather than a political party in the normal sense. Tuđman argued that:

Unlike all the political parties present until that moment [the formation of the HDZ] and based on neither class or ideological-political (middle-class, peasant, workers, Christian, liberal, socialist) differences, the HDZ appeared as a nationwide democratic party focused on bringing together all nation-building forces in all layers and classes of society, from the radical right through the moderate position to the revolutionary left.¹⁷

Tuđman saw himself as the personification of Croatian unity – through him national cleavages would be overcome. He tried to foster that unity through his party. The HDZ was founded illegally in June 1989 and announced its first political programme in 1990. It announced that it would be a pan-Croatian movement that would mobilise the entire nation by unifying the diverse strands of its political traditions. The rallying call for this mobilisation was the fight for Croatian sovereignty. The attainment of sovereignty was the self-declared reason for the HDZ’s existence and some argued that sovereignty and national independence remained its only substantive interest throughout the decade.¹⁸

The goal of a united Croatian national identity required particular policy and rhetorical orientations. Tuđman had to establish a unified narrative of the ‘centuries-old dream’ of Croatian statehood by arguing that the different

thinkers and politicians (discussed in the previous chapter) all shared that dream even if they disagreed about the most desirable type of state. In 1981 he wrote that 'from medieval times the Croatian nation has preserved its national-state individuality, which has been encroached upon in the Habsburg monarchy, but never shattered'¹⁹ and continued by arguing that the wealth and diversity of Croatian historical and national literature could be reduced to a national aspiration 'for centuries to realise its full national independence'.²⁰ Tuđman found no problem with unifying the Illyrianist ideas of Gaj and Strossmayer with the socialist-confederalist ideology of Radić, the nationalism of Starčević and the fascism of Pavelić. In each, he simply saw a desire for Croatian statehood.

Tuđman's first move was to unify the writings and actions of Croatia's historical figures by identifying them as 'Croats' and seeing diverse political agendas as products of a shared dream for Croatian statehood. The fact that Strossmayer favoured pan-Slavism and Radić initially favoured trialism within the Habsburg monarchy eluded Tuđman, and he felt adequately qualified to situate Radić the pacifist as having the same yearning as Pavelić the fascist murderer, despite the fact that Radić's successor, Vladko Maček had been imprisoned by the *Ustaša* at the Jasenovac death camp. None of this was problematic for Tuđman. All Croats could rally behind Franjoism, the argument went, because it encompassed every strand of Croatian political thought.

Tuđman attempted to unify the Croatian people by situating them alongside an 'other', the Serbs. He contended that this otherness was constituted on three planes – cultural, historical, and geographical. In the cultural realm he argued that Croats had culture while Serbs did not. For example, contemporary folk music was exiled from Croatian media not only because of its supposed 'low cultural quality' but also because of the belief that such songs 'belong exclusively to the Serbian (un)cultural identity'.²¹ There can be little doubt that Tuđman supported such purification of Croatian culture, given his view that Croatian and Serbian cultures were completely different. He told an interviewer in New York in 1992 that:

Croats belong to a different culture – a different civilization from the Serbs. Croats are part of Western Europe, part of the Mediterranean tradition. Long before Shakespeare and Moliere, our writers were translated into European languages. The Serbs belong to the East. They are Eastern peoples like the Turks and Albanians. They belong to the Byzantine culture ... despite similarities in language we cannot be together.²²

Tuđman insisted that this inherent cultural difference was created by the two nations' divergent histories. In bringing them together in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, the 'Versailles powers' (as Tuđman called them) forced together two nations that had experienced completely separate histories since the east–west schism of AD 395. This schism produced two nations that were different in their national consciousness, cultural make-up and 'general historical, state-political and religious tradition'.²³ Croatia and Serbia were also geopolitically separate, he argued. Croatia was at the heart of Europe, both

geographically and politically. Drawing one of his many historical comparisons, Tuđman recalled that ‘at the time of the Ottoman invasion upon Christian Europe, plundered Croatia received recognition as the *antemurale christianitatis*. Today, still defending freedom and democracy, she remains the bulwark of European democracy against attempts at restoration Communism’.²⁴ Simply put, in a phraseology that Tuđman used on many occasions, the difference between Serbs and Croats was not the ordinary difference between two nations. Instead, it was a difference of civilisations. Croats were European while Serbs were Balkan. Thus all Croats could rally behind ‘Franjoism’ because they were united in not being Serb, Balkan or uncivilised.

The discourse of national unity required a narrative of Croatian history that could bind Croats living in Croatia with those living abroad, many of whom had connections with the *Ustaša*. This included an account of the oppression of Croatia by Yugoslavia and a tentative rehabilitation of the Pavelić regime into the historical narrative. In a discussion in 1991 with the American ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, Tuđman succinctly recounted an account of Yugoslav Croatia that sought to bind Croats together through a story of common suffering. He recalled that:

45 years of communist rule have destroyed the moral values of Croatian society. People don’t know how to accept responsibility for their own future. The one-party system has created disillusion everywhere. The best people have left. Corruption has become a way of life. The idea of Yugoslavia has been a negative influence ... to us Croats, Yugoslavia was built on an illusion.²⁵

For Tuđman, Yugoslavia, communism and union with Serbia caused a moral decline in Croatia. Furthermore, he believed that Yugoslavia was responsible for the economic, social and even demographic problems confronting Croatia.²⁶ These problems impacted on all Croats and united them in suffering.

The main obstacle to uniting indigenous and émigré Croats was the connection that many émigrés had to the fascist regime of 1941–45. The reintegration of émigré Croats therefore proved to be one of the most controversial issues in Croatian politics in the 1990s. Some observers suggested that attempts to rehabilitate the émigrés owed more to the desire to secure important funding from North America, Latin America, Germany and Australia than to an ideological yearning for the uniting of the Croatian nation.²⁷ According to Mark Thompson, these groups contributed \$8.2 million to the cause, giving the HDZ a substantial edge in funding over the other parties.²⁸ One of the most prominent returning émigrés was Gojko Šušak, a Toronto based Croat originally from Hercegovina. Described in the Croatian independent press as the ‘pizza man’, he had made his living as a decorator. Though not possessing great wealth himself, he was instrumental in securing large amounts of money for the HDZ through its offices in North America.²⁹ After returning to Croatia, Šušak was appointed Minister of Defence where he gained a reputation as a hard-line nationalist on the right wing of the HDZ.³⁰

The policy of uniting émigré and indigenous Croats contained three principal elements. First, Tuđman argued that the Serbs exaggerated the scale of the *Ustaša* genocide in the Second World War. Second, he insisted that the NDH state was a legitimate manifestation of Croatia's historical statehood, even if what it became was illegitimate. Finally, he changed the names of streets, places, and institutions to eradicate reminders of Tito and communism and to rehabilitate some of the émigrés' heroes, despite their association with the NDH.

Tuđman's claim that the Serbs exaggerated the scale of the Second World War genocide was forcefully put in the most controversial of all his writings, a book entitled *Historical Wastelands*, which was revised and reprinted in 1997 as *Horrors of War*. His main contention in this work was that the historical record of Croatia's role in the Second World War 'has been repeatedly and intentionally altered for political purposes'.³¹ He argued that while the Belgrade government insisted that the *Ustaša* killed nearly 2 million Serbs, the official figures indicated that the real number of people killed within the territory of the NDH was around 60,000.³² While admitting that even the reduced number constituted an appalling crime, he argued that the figures were manipulated to legitimise the suppression of Croatian national consciousness after the Second World War. This was typified by the trial of Stepinac, the deposing of Andrija Hebrang (leader of the Croatian Partisans), the 'Croatian Spring' in 1971 and the imprisonment of Tuđman himself.³³ Tuđman also attacked attempts to imply the historical guilt of the Croatian people for the genocide. After pointing to several works that suggested that the Croatian nation had an inherent tendency towards genocide if left unattended, Tuđman went on to show that prominent Croatian nationalists such as Starčević and Radić proposed anti-fascist programmes and the extent to which Croats themselves participated in the anti-fascist struggle.³⁴

Though a much maligned work, it is important to point out that *Horrors of War* did make some important contributions to the Croatian historical record. It is true that Jews were no better off in Nedić's Serbia than they were in Pavelić's Croatia during the Second World War. It is also true that the number of people killed at the Jasenovac camp was massively inflated and this inflated figure was used to suppress expressions of Croatian national identity. Furthermore, Tuđman's estimates of the total number of people exterminated by the *Ustaša* in death camps and massacres is closer to the figure given by most independent historians than the numbers emanating from Belgrade, but still missed the mark by around 100,000.³⁵ However, it is a worrying piece of work because of its alleged anti-Semitic tone and because Tuđman appeared to be more concerned with the anti-Croatian plot that he was attempting to uncover than he was with *Ustaša* crimes.

Horrors of War fulfilled two purposes for Tuđman's broader mission. First, it purported to unite all Croats as the victims of a Serbian conspiracy to discredit the Croatian nation. Second, perhaps most worryingly and contentiously, it argued that the fascist NDH was a legitimate expression of Croatian

statehood. In 1991 Tuđman argued that, '[b]ased on the historical tradition of Croatian statehood, the Independent State of Croatia [NDH] was established during World War II'.³⁶ Even the post-independence constitution identified the NDH as one of the manifestations of Croatia's historic statehood in its preamble. It insisted that the NDH was responsible for 'laying the foundations of state sovereignty'.

Finally, the integration of the émigrés into Croatian society demanded that they be made to feel at home. One of the most distasteful ways that Tuđman proposed to do this was by deciding that the remains of Croats killed in the Bleiburg massacre of 1945 (which included perpetrators of the *Ustaša* terror) should be buried at Jasenovac alongside the remains of their victims in a memorial to all Croats killed in war.³⁷ Not surprisingly, these plans caused uproar in Croatia and the government also came under immense international pressure, particularly from the USA. The crisis was resolved when Tuđman 'discovered' that among the bones already at Jasenovac were some returned from Bleiburg after the war, so no bodies needed to be exhumed and moved.³⁸

The émigrés were made to feel welcome in their homeland by the changing of street names. A Zagreb street called 'December Victims Street' in commemoration of sixteen Croatian intellectuals hanged by the NDH in December 1943 was renamed 'St Peter's Street'.³⁹ Mile Budak, the *Ustaša* Vice-President, had the former Duro Salaj Street named after him (Salaj had been a prominent anti-fascist fighter in the Second World War).⁴⁰ The 'Victims of Fascism Square' in the centre of Zagreb became the 'Square of Croatian Heroes', and across Croatia thousands of streets, buildings and squares that were formerly named after anti-fascist fighters were renamed after Croatian 'heroes', many of whom had participated in the NDH abomination.⁴¹ After receiving protests about the removal of the names of famous anti-fascists from street names, Defence Minister Gojko Šušak retorted that there was no anti-fascism in Croatia because during the NDH period there was no fascist party.⁴²

The rehabilitation of the émigrés and NDH was the most controversial aspect of the 'Franjoist' project. Rather than emphasising the anti-fascist elements of Croatian national identity, personified by his own past, Tuđman chose to attempt to unify the Croatian nation by emphasising its anti-communism at the expense of accommodating those most ardent of anti-communists, the fascists. This accommodation provoked many commentators to question Tuđman's political integrity.

Three additional Franjoist themes informed some of the government's key policies and shaped its conception of national identity. Each depended on a particular understanding of Croatian national identity and drew upon a particular interpretation of the historical statehood narrative. These were the focus on the primacy of Croatian sovereignty and independence, an exclusivist approach to citizenship, and the promotion of conservative clericalism.

Protecting the sovereignty and independence of Croatia was the one issue that united the disparate strands of the HDZ. This unity was only preserved

through a contradictory discourse of sovereignty that described it, on different occasions, as either the sovereignty of the Croatian territory or the sovereignty of an ethnically defined Croatian nation.⁴³ According to Tuđman, without the HDZ the dream of an independent and sovereign Croatia could not have been realised.⁴⁴ It is not clear, however, whether that independent and democratic Croatia was constituted by its Yugoslav boundaries or whether Croatia extended to all those places where Croats lived. In a message to Croatia's Serbs delivered on the eve of Operation *Oluja* in 1995,⁴⁵ Tuđman seemed to suggest that he equated Croatian sovereignty with the territory of the Republic of Croatia. He noted that 'all the attempts of the Croatian state and the international community to peacefully restore Croatia's sovereignty over parts of Croatian territories alienated by the rebellion have been rejected' and thereby equated the limits of Croatian sovereignty with what was accepted by international society.⁴⁶ Similarly, after signing the Dayton Agreement, Tuđman announced that the 'great and holy aim' of the Croatian people was the attainment of 'total sovereignty over its entire, internationally recognised territory'.⁴⁷

The President was occasionally less reticent about the limits of sovereignty, according it to the Croatian nation rather than the territorial boundaries of the state and focusing particularly on the Croats in western Hercegovina. Tuđman's stance on the Bosnian question caused Croatia to be frequently rebuked by international society. Tuđman was clumsy at best in his dealings with the Bosnian question. In an infamous meeting with Milošević in 1991, he raised the possibility of dividing Bosnia and Hercegovina between Serbia and Croatia. What Tuđman overlooked was the fact that Milošević himself had never publicly mentioned the possibility of partitioning Bosnia and Hercegovina.⁴⁸ In 1995, Tuđman astonished the British politician Paddy Ashdown when he drew a map on a napkin showing a Bosnia and Hercegovina that had been partitioned between Croatia and Serbia.⁴⁹

There were two main reasons for Tuđman's ambiguous stance towards Bosnia and Hercegovina. First, the so-called Hercegovinian lobby provided the President with valuable economic and political support and in return secured several top positions within the HDZ government, forcing Tuđman to take an active interest in Hercegovinian affairs.⁵⁰ Second, Tuđman believed that he was president of all Croats, so he felt obliged to shepherd the strategic interests of his extended flock across the border. His historical research told him that 'Croatia and Bosnia constitute a geographical and political unity, and have always formed a joint state in history',⁵¹ though he was never clear on exactly *when* Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina shared the same state. The President also appreciated the nationalist activism of the Hercegovinian Croats, whose zeal for fulfilling his national dream was not shared by many Croats in Croatia – particularly the Istrians and citizens of Zagreb, as we will see in the following chapters. During a visit to Mostar, the principal city in Western Hercegovina, Tuđman told his audience that 'you Hercegovinians are the ideal to all others in Croatia in many aspects'.⁵² In calling the Hercegovinians 'ideal Croats', Tuđman

was crediting their political judgement. Allowed to vote in the Croatian elections, the approximately 365,000 Croats of Bosnia and Hercegovina voted consistently in favour of the HDZ.⁵³ However, this position towards the Hercegovinian Croats formed only half of the paradox of HDZ's position on Croatian sovereignty. Therefore, the government fell short of openly and consistently advocating the secession of Hercegovina, attempted (unconvincingly) to distance itself from the Croat–Muslim war of 1993, and after 1995 supported cross-border ties with the Bosnian government in Sarajevo.

The HDZ's interpretation of the historical statehood narrative and its understanding of Croatian national identity also prompted it to adopt a particular position on the citizenship question. Although the constitution defined the state in national terms, this was not done at the expense of the rights of people of other nationalities residing in Croatia. Article 1 of the constitution proclaimed that 'in the Republic of Croatia power derives from the people as a community of free and equal citizens'. This community, we were told, consisted not only of Croats but also of 'Serbs, Muslims, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews and others'.⁵⁴ Clearly, such a formulation did not fit with the HDZ's belief that the Croatian state was intimately linked to the Croatian nation and the HDZ itself as the party of all Croats, but was necessary to persuade other states that Croatia was prepared to fulfil its international human rights obligations. The government therefore passed a citizenship law which, according to one observer, 'allow[ed] selective application of the right to citizenship based on whether the applicant is of Croatian or Serb nationality' in contravention of the constitution.⁵⁵ The UN's special rapporteur, Elisabeth Rehn, noted that Article 8 of the Law on Citizenship demanded proof of continuous residence in Croatia of at least five years and 'proficiency in the Croatian and Latin script'.⁵⁶ Rehn found evidence that this was being used to deny citizenship to Serbs and Muslims, many of whom had been long-time residents in Croatia.⁵⁷ Additionally, Article 26 of the law allowed the Ministry of Interior to employ broad discretion in denying an application for citizenship on the grounds of the 'interests of the state'.⁵⁸ Similarly, the Croatian Helsinki Human Rights Watch group showed that the law stipulated that people not born in Croatia, nor of Croatian parentage, should be denied citizenship.⁵⁹ The Helsinki group argued that this provision did not take into account the fact that Croatia was formerly part of Yugoslavia. People who had lived and worked in Croatia for the best part of their adult lives were therefore denied citizenship and thus employment and property ownership rights.⁶⁰ While not denying the constitutional rights of Serbs to be citizens of the Croatian state, the law did represent an attempt to define the Croatian state as a manifestation of Croatian national identity. This position reflected a particular understanding of the historical statehood narrative which viewed statehood as a political manifestation of an ethnic Croatian community rather than viewing the nation as one constituted by the state and thus defined as simply consisting of those people who inhabited the territory of the medieval kingdom.

The HDZ's interpretation of the historical statehood thesis was also evident in its overt clericalism. While Orthodoxy shaped the Serb national consciousness, Catholicism did not play a significant role in the historic statehood thesis.⁶¹ Indeed, national heroes, such as Jelačić, Archbishop Strossmayer and Stjepan Radić, either vehemently opposed clericalism (Radić), promoted ecumenicalism (Strossmayer) or emphasised the political rather than religious and ethnic nature of the nation (Jelačić). Tuđman, however, propagated clericalism and promoted the Catholic Church as the moral conscience of his Croatian nation in order to differentiate Croats from the Serbs, Bosnian Muslims and Yugoslavists, and hence provide a foundation for a unified Croatia. He began by rehabilitating Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac from the ostracism of communist historiography. Tuđman argued that Stepinac had been the shepherd of the Croatian flock during the troubled years of the Second World War and had helped many Serbs, Jews and Croatian opponents of the regime to escape the fascists. Stepinac's status as a martyr to the Croatian cause was exemplified by his trial and imprisonment and by his ceaseless attempts to protect the clergy from communist purges.⁶² In his 1996 State of the Nation address, Tuđman identified the establishment of good relations with the Vatican as a cornerstone of his foreign policy.⁶³

The HDZ's clericalism did not bring the nation together, however. Polls conducted before 1991 showed that Croatia had the lowest proportion of religious believers of all the Yugoslav republics.⁶⁴ Furthermore, policies that were inspired by the HDZ's clericalism, such as strict abortion laws, met with considerable opposition and resentment, especially among the urban young in Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Osijek and Dubrovnik. The slogan, 'Even a Foetus is a Little Croat', designed to expose the connection between rigid Catholicism and 'good' Croatianism, did little to further the cause of Franjoism among liberal Croats.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the Church-HDZ union produced many instances of religious intolerance and the presence of priests among the HDZ's representatives did much to discredit Catholicism.⁶⁶

The HDZ, a broad coalition of nationalists with Tuđman as the linchpin, therefore attempted to transplant its own unity of thought on the subject of the Croatian nation on to the nation itself. Observers pointed out that Tuđman was perpetually struggling to restrain the more extreme elements of his party who wished to extend Croatia into Hercegovina and create an ethnically pure and Catholic state.⁶⁷ According to his political opponents, in attempting to bridge the differences between Croats and create the myth of a common yearning for statehood, Tuđman made too many concessions to extremists and expatriates. This left him hamstrung on a number of issues. Tuđman, the anti-fascist, never publicly distanced himself from the NDH. Widely credited with going to great lengths to avoid the 1991 war with the JNA,⁶⁸ he was seen to vacillate over the Croat-Muslim war in 1993. The HDZ failed to transform the abstract historical narrative of the 'centuries-old dream' into a less abstract and materially resonant narrative of contemporary Croatian national identity with which different Croats could associate.⁶⁹

The so-called 'Zagreb crisis' shows that the HDZ thought that there were times when the cause of national unity demanded that democracy be subverted to prevent its (and thus Croatia's) enemies coming to power. In the 1995 local assembly elections, the opposition secured thirty-one of the fifty seats in the Zagreb municipal council. Tuđman was faced with the possibility of an opposition mayor in the economically vital capital city and feared that an opposition council would take too much of an interest in the HDZ's financial affairs.⁷⁰ At the very least, property and institutional services previously at the disposal of the HDZ would become tools for the opposition. Tuđman invoked a national security clause in the constitution that allowed him to veto the appointment of top officials. He rejected four opposition choices for mayor of Zagreb and named his own commissioner to run the capital's affairs.⁷¹ This was justified by two typically Franjoist arguments. First, Milan Ivković, writing in the government-friendly newspaper *Hrvatski Obzor*,⁷² argued that the immature opposition parties were acting undemocratically because the HDZ was the single largest party in Zagreb and should therefore have the right to select the mayor.⁷³ Second, Tuđman explained that his actions represented those of a caring father forced to do unpleasant things to protect an errant child from itself:

It is important that our public understands that the situation in which Croatia finds itself regarding the problems of the liberation of the remaining occupied territories and the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina is such that we cannot allow that sort of opposition which would rock Croatia's stability to take root in the city of Zagreb, capital of Croatia where a quarter of the Croatian population live.⁷⁴

A political threat to the HDZ was thus reconstituted as a threat to the stability of Croatia itself.

Much of the HDZ's rhetoric was imbued with the language of war, threat and instability. Throughout the 1990s, illiberal measures were justified by the necessities of war. The war ended in 1995 and the last piece of territory administered by the UN (UNTAES) was returned to Croatian administration in January 1997. However, the HDZ failed to reinvent itself. Instead, Tuđman embarked on a search for new enemies for the (right-minded) Croatian people to unite against. This constant threat required the unity and vigilance of the Croatian people mobilised through the HDZ.

The Franjoist project of national integration continued after the war through the construction of new threats for the nation to unite against. On one level, Franjoist rhetoric could be construed as being little other than the employment of rhetoric to accommodate disparate groups in a nationalist movement. Each of the pillars of Franjoism can be seen as appealing to different sections of the HDZ and its policies were designed to reinforce the ruling party's power. Certainly, this instrumental account can explain why Tuđman, the former Partisan, included the rehabilitation of fascists within his political discourse. It also explains his paradoxical views on Herzegovina and the dualism deployed in his discourse on sovereignty. However, many observers described

Tuđman as a ‘true believer’ of nationalist rhetoric. He was both its founder through his historical writings and its guardian against anti-Croatian tendencies. He did not, however, persuade all other Croats that the Franjoist account of their national identity was the real manifestation of their centuries of shared statehood. Despite claiming to bridge the cleavages within Croatian society, he defined those cleavages narrowly, as being only those between fascism and communism. He was vehemently opposed to internal regionalism for instance, because this posed a challenge to his carefully constructed unity. He also used all the bureaucratic power of the state to silence those who claimed that he was not a good shepherd of the Croatian flock and was not even a particularly important character in the play of Croatian history. One of the reasons why Tuđman’s Franjoist account of national identity remained dominant throughout the 1990s was precisely that there were so many alternative accounts. There was no single alternative that stood in opposition to Franjoism. The rest of this chapter will consider these other accounts showing how they made different use of the frames provided by the historical statehood thesis.

Opposition voices: political parties

In contrast to the ideas of national unity articulated by Franjoists, opposition politics was highly fragmented in the 1990s and failed to offer a cohesive counter-narrative. One of the central points of dispute among opposition parties was the question of how they should relate to Tuđman’s HDZ. On the one hand, the eventual partners in the winning coalition of the 2000 parliamentary elections, Ivica Račan of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Dražen Budiša of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (*Hrvatska Socijalno Liberalna Stranka – HSLS*) advocated a co-operative approach to the HDZ to ensure a peaceful transition from HDZ governance. Others, such as Vlado Gotovac of the Liberal Party (*Liberalna Stranka – LS*), and the leaderships of the Istrian Democratic Assembly (*Istarska Demokratska Sabor – IDS*), Croatian Peasants’ Party (HSS) and Croatian People’s Party (*Hrvatska Narodna Stranka – HNS*), suspected that any dialogue with Tuđman would be unproductive and would only reinforce the President’s claim to democratic credentials.⁷⁵

Opposition politics had two important features in the 1990s. First, opposition politics operated in a hostile environment. The HDZ was better funded, controlled the media and manipulated the electoral system to its own advantage. The second characteristic was fragmentation. Opposition parties organised themselves into coalitions that tended to change from election to election. In the 1991 elections the Croatian Peoples Party headed by the leaders of the 1971 ‘Croatian Spring’, Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Mika Tripalo, joined with the HSLS to form the Coalition for National Accord. The socialists formed a second coalition, and the nationalist Party of Rights (HSP) joined with the HDZ to form a third coalition.⁷⁶ In 1997 the HSLS was joined by the more conservative-

minded Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS), while the HNS joined with the SDP, as did the newly formed Croatian Independent Democrats (HND), which was established by HDZ defectors Stipe Mesić and Josip Manolić. More often than not, it was clashes of personality rather than policy differences that caused the coalitions to change, though the overriding factors were the questions of relations with the HDZ and the electoral success or failure of each coalition. Within this context of shifting alliances there were broadly four groups of parties. These were: extreme nationalists, socialists, liberals, and regional and centrist parties.

The HSP, founded by the extreme nationalist, Dobroslav Paraga, claimed to be the direct descendent of the nineteenth-century party with the same name, which had been established by Starčević and Kvaternik.⁷⁷ It insisted that the Croatian people had an inalienable right to their own state, a right that drew directly from the historical statehood narrative. It was even more radical than the HDZ in calling for Croatian independence, a unitary national state and the revision of the republic's borders. Paraga was himself jailed in 1980 for collecting signatures demanding the release of political prisoners. In the eleven years following this he came to embrace many of the ideas and organisational facets of the pre-war *Ustaša* movement, even becoming a self-proclaimed fascist.⁷⁸ Paraga demanded '*Hrvatska do Drine*' (Croatia to the Drina), which meant that the HSP advocated the revision of borders so that Bosnia and Hercegovina, up to its River Drina border with Serbia, could be incorporated into Croatia – something that not even the fascist *Ustaša* state had achieved. This policy drew directly on Starčević's observation that the Bosnian Muslims were simply Muslim Croats, and that the Bosnian (and Croatian) Serbs were merely Orthodox Croats. Interestingly, the far-right HSP concentrated on matters of religion and ethnicity much less than the HDZ did. For Paraga, the Croats were an explicitly political nation, incorporating all the peoples and territories of the farthest reaches of the medieval kingdom, regardless of their religion or ethnicity.

The HSP was a vociferous opponent of the proposed partition of Bosnia and Hercegovina, arguing that Croatia should enter into an immediate confederation with Bosnia and Hercegovina with a view to eventual union should the people of Bosnia and Hercegovina assent to it. This was another of Starčević's legacies. As Starčević had done, the modern HSP argued that the 'Serbs' and 'Muslims' of Bosnia and Hercegovina would naturally come to recognise their Croatianness over time. Therefore (while using *Ustaša* symbols and venerating Pavelić) it insisted that the ethnic cleansing and genocide attempted by the *Ustaša* was a crime against an ostensibly Croatian people. The HSP repudiated attempts to carve out an ethnically 'pure' state of Herceg-Bosna in Western Hercegovina. This led to a major division within the extreme right wing and the creation of another Party of Rights, *HSP – 1861*, which aligned itself more closely with the Frankist and *Ustaša* traditions of violent pursuit of ethnic purity.⁷⁹

Paraga's party imitated the paramilitary structures of the *Ustaša*. The HSP attracted the same sort of disaffected youths that had joined Pavelić's movement

and organised them into the *Hrvatske Obrambene Snage* (Croat Defence Forces – HOS), an armed paramilitary group. Paraga's men helped in the defence of Vukovar, which brought him into conflict with Tuđman. Because he insisted that every centimetre of Croatian land should be defended to the last man, Paraga believed that the government's failure to organise the relief of Vukovar was tantamount to treason. Clearly, there could have been nothing more dangerous to Tuđman's nationalist credentials than to be accused of being unpatriotic.⁸⁰ A year later, Paraga dispatched his HOS forces to Bosnia and Hercegovina to defend the Croatian people and work with the Bosnian government forces fighting the Serbs. He believed that it was incongruous for the Bosnian Croats to fight the Bosnian Muslims because that meant allying with the real enemy, the Serbs. When fighting broke out between Croats and Muslims, he ordered his forces not to co-operate with the official HVO forces and was subsequently arrested on terrorist charges. Tuđman denounced him as an *Ustaša* fascist and forcibly integrated the HOS into the HVO (the Croatian Defence Committee – the 'official' Bosnian Croat army).⁸¹

According to HSP spokesman, Vlado Jukić, the fundamental problem that confronted Croatian politics in the 1990s was not that Tuđman was too strong (on occasions, as in Vukovar and Bosnia and Hercegovina, he was not strong enough), but rather that the opposition was too weak.⁸² Jukić considered Tuđman's national narrative to be too broadly defined and argued that it should have focused solely on the right of Croatian statehood. According to Jukić, the other opposition parties were 'pseudo-liberals and former communists' who were more interested in criticising the HDZ than in securing the Croatian state.⁸³ The HSP's veneration of the *Ustaša* allowed Tuđman to harass and impede it in ways that he could not do with the other parties. The reason for this over-zealous response to what was an electorally small party was that the HSP criticised Tuđman on his own Franjoist terms. According to the HSP, Tuđman was neither an ultimate patriot, strong leader, nor trustworthy historian. None of the other opposition parties attempted to offer an alternative account based upon Franjoism. Instead they argued that Franjoism itself constituted a distortion of the historic statehood narrative.

The Social Democrats (SDP) distanced themselves from their communist past by tracing their roots to the tiny Social Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia, formed in 1894. This party was marginalised by the communists and then abolished in 1941.⁸⁴ The modern SDP had its antecedents in two movements. The first was the liberal reformist movement within the Croatian League of Communists. At the League's congress in January 1990 the reformists won a majority and called for immediate democratic elections in Croatia. The second developed outside the League of Communists in the guise of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia (SDH), under the leadership of Antun Vujić. Initially, the SDH opposed the SDP, viewing it as the perpetrator of a one-party state, but in 1993 both parties came together within the SDP under the leadership of Ivica Račan.⁸⁵ The SDP had to conduct a difficult balancing act, distancing itself from

the former communist regime while maintaining the good will of its traditional supporters, many of whom accepted political pluralism only grudgingly.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the SDP was the only Croatian majority party that contained a large number of Serbs. This cleavage was made more troublesome by the fact that most Serb members of the SDP opposed pluralism while most Croats advocated it.⁸⁷ These cleavages were at the very heart of the social democratic movement and almost resulted in the stillbirth of Croatian democratisation in 1990 when there was an attempt to bring down the liberal wing of the party and impose a purge of the kind witnessed in the 'Croatian Spring' of 1971.⁸⁸

These problems were resolved when most Serbs left the party to join the separatist Serb nationalist parties, allowing the SDP to become more overtly Croatian-centric and politically pluralist. At its inception, the SDP-SDH's views on national identity were full of ambiguity and contradiction. Initially, it sought to emphasise the positive role it played as the former ruling party in carrying out the peaceful reform of the communist system and allowing free elections. It also stressed its independence from the other Yugoslav communists and especially from Milošević. In the first election, the SDP-SDH advocated the maintenance of the Yugoslav federation, although it was alone among the Croatian parties in doing so. As more Serbs joined the Serbian nationalist parties, the SDP-SDH revised its position and advocated the confederal ideas espoused by other parties. It is interesting to note that the official literature produced by the SDP in the run-up to the 2000 elections, in which it became Croatia's largest party, insisted that the party had always advocated confederalism.⁸⁹

The leader of the SDP, Ivica Račan, has a reputation as a liberal-minded social democrat.⁹⁰ According to Račan, the state has a responsibility to look after the social welfare of the people who helped and suffered in the fight to establish an independent state.⁹¹ Račan focused on the social and economic emancipation of the peoples in the Croatian state. For him, the central political goals were 'enhanced economic growth and a greater degree of social security'.⁹² Agreeing with the liberals and the regional parties, the SDP argued that Croatia should integrate into the European Union (EU) as soon as possible.⁹³

The cleavages within the SDP were most obviously exposed by the national question. Račan was adamant in his support for the independence and territorial integrity of Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. He was also keen to reiterate the SDP's multinational traditions, insisting that the 'SDP has always been a multiethnic party which is sensitive to the issues surrounding the protection and integration of ethnic minority communities in Croatia'.⁹⁴ However, he has been criticised for not being critical enough of Croatian nationalism. Noting that it had supported Operation *Oluja*, Bogdan Denitch criticises the party not only for not challenging nationalism but also for exhibiting nationalist tendencies itself.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Denitch notes that by displaying implicit nationalist tendencies, the SDP had betrayed its core interest in the social welfare of the Croatian people since, he claims, the Croats lost the most through the demise of Yugoslavia.⁹⁶

Because the SDP remained uneasy about its own communist history it was unable to constitute itself as a patriotic party on its own terms, as the liberal and centrist parties did. In order to portray itself as patriotic it desisted from criticising Tuđman and actively supported the government abroad. On one occasion a delegation from the SDP attempted to persuade the European Parliament not to pass a resolution that condemned the Croatian government for its human rights record.⁹⁷

By the time of the parliamentary election in January 2000, however, the SDP had almost completely reconstituted itself. Because the key issues at this election were more closely akin to the 'normal' issues of European democratic politics – the economy, welfare and so on – the SDP was able to present itself as the most patriotic party. While the return of Serbian refugees to Croatia, and co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTY) remained vexed questions, they were no longer as significant as the questions of unemployment and the standard of living – questions on which only the SDP had a long track record of activism. Thus, in the 2000 elections the SDP became the single largest party and its leader, Ivica Račan, was appointed Prime Minister.

Of all the opposition parties, the SDP was least certain in articulating a Croatian national narrative. This was because historically the SDP had a large number of Serbs within its leadership. However, since most of the Serbs left the party and because the SDP needed to attract Croatian voters, it had to appear patriotic. It did this by defending what it believed were Croatia's interests even at the expense of defending the HDZ and de-emphasising some of the other central tenets of its political programme such as multinationalism. This approach saw it climb from virtual extinction in the middle of the 1990s to being the largest party in Croatia in the first post-Tuđman elections.

The liberal parties were undoubtedly the parties of the Croatian intelligentsia. The three most prominent members of the liberal movement, Dražen Budiša, Vlado Gotovac and Ivo Banac, were all well-known academics, and were all considered to be dissidents during the communist era. With the arrival of democracy, 'the Liberals were then the showcase of Croatia – all the bearded intelligentsia, all the liberal professors of sociology, artists, feminists, even anarchists'.⁹⁸ In other words, the liberals were the 'chattering classes' of Croatian urban society, 'interested in Croatia as a modern, yet decidedly Mitteleuropean country'.⁹⁹ For the liberals (as for Tuđman), Croatia was meant to be everything that Yugoslavia was not. It would be a modern, free and democratic state based on romantic visions of what it was to be Western European.¹⁰⁰ However, despite having the same rhetorical orientation as the HDZ, the liberals looked upon Tuđman's party with disdain, seeing it as little other than a populist manifestation.

Founded in 1989, the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSL) was the first non-communist political party to be established in Croatia after the Second World War. It contained two distinct wings from the outset: the singularly liberal and nationalist-populist. As with the HDZ, the different wings of the

party were reconciled by their president, Dražen Budiša.¹⁰¹ The first HSLs programmes focused on the economy, privatisation and wealth creation.¹⁰² Its core principles were those of classical liberalism. The HSLs argued that, 'free is the community in which every individual is free and socially secure'.¹⁰³ Its vision for Croatia was one of liberal democracy, social cohesion, the inalienable rights of the individual, the limitation of government, the principle of demilitarisation, and the need for open and tolerant dialogue between different interest groups.¹⁰⁴ On the national question, the HSLs advocated respect for the human and civil rights of the Serb minority, although it did not emphasise this as much as the SDP. Being an explicitly Croatian party, the HSLs described the areas of Croatia held by the Serbs as occupied territories and after Operation *Oluja* sent Tuđman a note of congratulation.¹⁰⁵ As with the other opposition parties, the HSLs saw the Croatian polity as extending only to the republic's border and not to all Croats wherever they lived. It viewed the nation in liberal terms as a diverse group of individuals. The HSLs advocated the decentralisation of power and the promoted regionalism as a way of combating the national homogenisation pursued by the HDZ.¹⁰⁶

Dražen Budiša had good nationalist credentials. He was the leader of the Croatian League of Students during the 'Croatian Spring' and was sentenced to three years in jail for his anti-regime activities.¹⁰⁷ According to Budiša, the HSLs was the 'party of the third direction', which charted a path between socialism and conservatism.¹⁰⁸ This 'third way' drew upon Radić's legacy and a tradition of Croatian middle-class thinking that was developing at the turn of the twentieth century. Budiša gave the HSLs a confident national outlook, arguing that the liberals played a vital role in securing independence for Croatia and that they most accurately reflected the aspirations and history of the Croatian people.¹⁰⁹ Budiša argued that the rule of law should provide equality of opportunity and that the core principle of governance should be subsidiarity, allowing individuals to shape the national destiny rather than the other way around.

The party split following disastrous election results in 1997, in which the HSLs secured only one seat in the *Sabor*. Many of the leading members followed Vlado Gotovac into the new Liberal Party (LS). One of the defectors, Ivo Banac, accused Budiša of legitimising Tuđman's rule by forming what he described as a 'normal opposition' that treated the HDZ as a 'normal' democratic government by co-operating with it.¹¹⁰ The split in the HSLs, while ostensibly about the level of co-operation with the HDZ, was more fundamentally concerned with the place of the nation within liberal political programmes. For Budiša, the relationship between the nation and liberalism was mutually constitutive and the defence of liberalism demanded the defence of the nation. For the Gotovac faction, however, placing the national collective at the centre of the political programme implied a devaluation of the individual and thus a denigration of a view of the nation as a group of diverse individuals pursuing their interests.¹¹¹

The President of the Liberal Party, Vlado Gotovac, was a poet, essayist, philosopher and journalist. He was jailed for four years for his part in the

‘Croatian Spring’, and was given a further two years in jail for giving an interview on Croatia to a Swedish television network. During this period, Gotovac published work with Franjo Tuđman.¹¹² Gotovac defended the importance of the nation, because – *contra* Tuđman – the existence of nations implied difference and ‘diversity makes the world more interesting’.¹¹³

The core principles of the LS were almost identical to those of the HSLs, though with a more pronounced emphasis on the individual. According to a declaration adopted at the end of the party’s founding congress, individual freedom meant ‘freedom from compulsion’ and the interference of state authorities.¹¹⁴ Stronger emphasis was put on limiting state power, individual equality before the law, and the proper functioning of a liberal economy.¹¹⁵ These principles, it claimed, drew from a Central European tradition within Croatian political thought that had not previously been articulated in Croatia, because it was subject to alien and illiberal rule. Much of its programme was concerned with ensuring individual rights and criticising the government’s record. It argued that ‘Croatia is today centralised, bureaucratic and metropolised’, there was ‘no public opinion’, and what public opinion there was ‘cannot have influence on either resignation of any minister or any serious consequence or social treatment’.¹¹⁶

The tension between political programme and national narrative, which caused the ambiguity within the SDP programme, also caused the fragmentation of the liberals into two parties. The HSLs tended to locate liberalism within a prior narrative of the Croatian nation and was therefore mute on the question of what the idea of a liberal Croatian nation meant in relation to Franjoism. This was because the HSLs chose not to challenge the HDZ’s national narrative, only the government’s specific practices. In contrast, the radical liberals who joined the LS refuted Franjoism’s national ideology, contested its ownership of the Croatian political tradition, and rejected the legitimacy of HDZ rule. The LS could claim to be as ‘Croatian’ as the HDZ in a way that the SDP could not and the HSLs chose not to because of its adherence to the Franjoist national narrative. The leaders of the LS had as good a record of Yugoslav dissidence as Tuđman. They argued that the legacy of Croatian political thought was liberal and Central European and should have produced a political vision of national identity rather than one based on ethnicity, religion and language.

Along with the Party of Rights (HSP), the other party that could claim a direct antecedent in pre-communist Croatia was the Croatian Peasants’ Party (HSS). The HSS resumed its activities in 1992. It was the leading party in the so-called ‘group of four’ (a coalition with HNS, LS and IDS) coalition that came third in the 2000 parliamentary elections. Like the HSP, the Peasants’ Party attempted to emulate its predecessor both organisationally and ideationally. According to Vladko Maček, one of the strongest elements of the party’s pre-war organisation had been its activity at the grassroots level.¹¹⁷ Accordingly, the contemporary HSS put a great deal of effort into building a network of local organisations, which saw it increase in popularity from its first election where it won only 4 per cent of the vote.¹¹⁸

The HSS advocated decentralisation of the state and the democratisation of local government as ways of promoting participation in politics. It combined Radić's anti-clerical nationalism with a revised citizen-oriented republicanism that contested many of the conclusions reached by the Franjoists.¹¹⁹ Because of its conservative orientation, it concurred with the HDZ's handling of the war effort but disagreed with the idea of annexing parts of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The HSS believed that Tuđman hindered progress towards the democratic republic aspired to by Radić. This was clearly a major problem for Tuđman, who, like the liberals, had to make a leap of interpretation when claiming to represent the views of Radić, while the HSS did not have to make such a leap. To have the HSS identify Tuđman (rather than Serbs) as the major obstacle to fulfilling Radić's dream was understandably damaging to the Franjoist project.¹²⁰

The Croatian Independent Democrats (HND) were produced by defections from the HDZ engineered by two leading members, Josip Manolić – former President of the House of Counties – and Stipe Mesić, the last President of the SFRY (Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia) and former President of the Croatian House of Representatives, the central legislative branch of the *Sabor*. They argued that Gojko Šušak and Franjo Tuđman had taken the HDZ away from its core principles of freedom and democracy towards authoritarianism. Manolić and Mesić claimed to offer solutions to the Serbian and Bosnian problems that were more prudent than the policies espoused by the right wing of the HDZ. According to Mesić, Tuđman was seduced by the powerful right wing of the party, which tended towards 'Bolshevik' practices. The ruling party, he claimed, had closed Croatia in behind a 'Balkan wall' of totalitarianism that prevented its progress into Europe.¹²¹ In response, Tuđman argued that it was inevitable that there would be 'turncoats', because the HDZ was a movement encompassing every strand of Croatian opinion.¹²² The HND countered by insisting that by 1993 Franjoism had begun to destroy its own principles. Most importantly, the very things it fought for in Croatia it was denying to Bosnia and Hercegovina, and the very things it opposed during communism, such as restrictions on the media and freedom of speech, had become characteristic features of the new regime.

The most radical rearticulation of Croatian national identity by an opposition party was produced by the Istrian Democratic Assembly (IDS). The IDS was originally formed to protect the interests of the Istrian region against what it saw as homogenising Croatianism emanating from Zagreb. It was ideologically oriented towards the liberals and participated in coalitions with the HSLs. It was distinct inasmuch as it demanded the federalisation of Croatia. National identity in Istria is mixed between Croats, Slovenes and Italians, but tends to be subsumed by regional identity. The 1991 Yugoslav census offered the population the opportunity to describe themselves as one of 25 nationalities, as 'Yugoslav' or 'regional'. In Istria, 'despite the Croatian government's efforts to infect Istria with its own virulent nationalism, the townspeople registered the highest number of "regionals" anywhere in the federation: 36 per cent'.¹²³ The

IDS became dominant on the peninsula, controlling all the local authorities and pressing its case for regional autonomy.¹²⁴ The IDS programme constituted a major threat to Franjoism because it involved a large group of Croats denying the idea of national homogeneity and claiming a separate history for themselves and the right to determine their own destiny (see Chapter 6).

The government responded harshly to the IDS threat. On the one hand, it contained the IDS within Istria by denying it access to the national media.¹²⁵ On the other, it portrayed the Istrians as not being 'true Croats' and the IDS as being engaged in a programme of 'de-Croatianisation' in Istria. In order to bolster its position, the government attempted to resettle Croatian immigrants from the USA, South America, Australia, Germany and Bosnia and Hercegovina, in Istria. Because the Croatian diaspora is generally thought to be radically nationalist, it was intended that its influx would diminish Istrian regionalism and 'Croatianise' the region.¹²⁶ However, the scheme was less than popular among the diaspora and the number of people who 'returned' to Istria was relatively small.

The IDS was the only major opposition party in Croatia to fundamentally challenge the historical statehood narrative. The other parties made use of the frames provided by this narrative to challenge Tuđman's interpretation of it and the place that he awarded himself within it. For instance, the HSP drew directly from the teachings of Starčević and the writings of *Ustaša* ideologues such as Mile Budak. In doing so, it was able to argue that Tuđman was not the modern manifestation of Starčević because he was not radical enough in his defence of the Croatian state. Similarly, the HSS exposed how Franjoist rhetoric and practice deviated from the teachings of the Radić brothers by excluding citizens from decision-making processes, contemplating the partition of Bosnia and Hercegovina, adopting clericalist overtones and causing the impoverishment of the many for the enrichment of the few. The other main parties argued that far from Europeanising Croatia, Tuđman was responsible for its Balkanisation. While Tuđman claimed that Croatia belonged to the Central European political sphere, he acted like a Balkan despot. Hence, it was claimed, Franjoism had nothing to do with either the legacy of Croatian state-right or its political and social culture and was thus self-defeating in its attempt to distance Croatia from all things Yugoslav, as it was only through Franjoism that the two were related. The IDS, however, argued that the twin notions of state-right and a Croatian tradition of political thought were not applicable to Istria because the peninsula had a history and political culture that was distinct from that of Croatia proper.

Although opposition political parties provided the most significant organised opposition to Franjoism in the 1990s, they were not the only source of opposition. Another, more radical, source of opposition were dissident intellectuals. There were many such writers, including Roman Ratković, Boris Buden and Dubravka Ugrešić, but there is only space here to consider two as indicative of the types of challenges to dominant modes of thinking posed by dissident

intellectuals. The first, Ivo Banac, radically re-evaluated political and historical narratives about Croatian national identity. The second, Slavenka Drakulić, completely rejected such narratives and the political claims they supported.

Dissident voices: two intellectuals

According to Katherine Verdery, intellectuals across Eastern Europe were prominent in articulating visions of national identity.¹²⁷ In the nineteenth century, Croatian intellectuals contributed to the national movements by questioning the roots of people's origins and tracing their genealogies.¹²⁸ Intellectuals questioned the languages people spoke, speculated about what languages they ought to speak and articulated the recent political past in such a way as to propose a way forward for the group.

Ivo Banac¹²⁹ was a dissident during the communist era. His two most important works, *The National Question in Yugoslavia* and *With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*, were heavily criticised by the communists. The former explored how the idea of Yugoslavia manifested in the pre-Second World War kingdom was contrary to the visions of both Croatian Illyrianists and exclusivists. This work was condemned by the communists for being nationalist and contrary to Yugoslav 'brotherhood and unity' because it suggested that the Yugoslavs had not solved the national question and highlighted tensions between the Croats and Serbs. The latter book was also criticised for focusing on splits within the Yugoslav League of Communists and suggesting that throughout the party's history there was a large group of Yugoslav communists who were overtly Stalinist. Unlike other dissidents, such as Marko Veselica, Petar Šegedin, Franjo Tuđman and Zlatko Tomičić, Ivo Banac was not integrated into the new mainstream Croatian nationalist discourse in the 1990s. The main reasons for this were his participation in the Croatian Helsinki Human Rights Committee, which produced several reports that were highly critical of the post-communist government, and his membership of the HSL and subsequently the LS.¹³⁰

Although highly critical of the Tuđman government, Banac remained judicious in his analysis. While aptly pointing out that 'Tuđman is decidedly not an *Ustaša*' he noted that 'unfortunately, the amateurishness of the new administrations, their preoccupation with symbols and trivial matters, as well as their populist politics, all notable especially in Croatia, have hampered a more determined transition to democracy'.¹³¹ Banac argued that Franjoism attempted to be all things to all Croats by purporting to be the manifestation of a centuries-long tradition of political thought. The bulk of Banac's work on national identity, however, pointed to the differences within this tradition and questioned whether any coherent themes arose from it. Banac's work insisted that the Franjoist ideology was a particular interpretation of this tradition, not evidence of its unification.

Public responses to Banac's work were extremely critical. Zeljko Sabol wrote that 'it is Banac who despises the Croat people. This is the root of his patronising attitude. Otherwise he wouldn't have been so intolerant of "evil" HDZ members'. Commenting on an interview Banac conducted in *Feral Tribune*, Sabol proclaimed that, 'Banac's interview ... seems like an outburst of a man blinded by hate'.¹³² Elsewhere, Banac was accused of revising Croatian history and indulging in 'activities' of a sexual nature with 'Četnik' women.¹³³ The main reason for the vehemence of these attacks was that Banac's work challenged the historiography of Franjoism and the HDZ's status within it.

It was Ivo Banac who first articulated the historicist nature of Croatian national identity. In tracing literary and historical works that addressed the Croatian national question, Banac showed that such works tended to make legal rather than linguistic or cultural arguments.¹³⁴ He accounted for this tendency by suggesting that the early intellectuals and nobles believed that the idea of historical statehood would carry more favour in the Habsburg and Magyar courts.¹³⁵ This predilection meant that the primary vehicles for national integration were the office of the *Ban* and the continuing institution of the *Sabor*. However, Banac suggested that the diminishing jurisdiction of these two institutions in the nineteenth century weakened the Croatian national body and contributed to the diversity of national programmes that were disseminated on the eve of the First World War (see Chapter 3).¹³⁶ Furthermore, he argued that because the nineteenth-century national imaginings were a direct response to aggressive Magyar nationalism, the basis of 'their national idea therefore could not be, strictly speaking, Croatian'.¹³⁷ Such ethnic exclusivism 'could be misunderstood as an expression of narrow Croatian regionalism – of the Kajkavian dialect area around Zagreb, which was generally regarded as Croatia proper at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century'.¹³⁸

Banac made several important points about the early articulation of the claim to historical statehood. The most prominent and oft cited of these conclusions was that the relationship between the Croatian nation and Catholicism was not as clear-cut as some made out. Unlike the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church is an institution with a universalist yearning in that it hopes to make all people Catholic. It cannot therefore be a national institution because it does not promote national exclusivity. The borders of Catholicism and Croatianism are different. Thus, Banac argued, Catholicism could not play a significant role in either defining Croatian national identity or as a vehicle for its preservation.¹³⁹ He continued, 'the ideologists of Croat nationhood, almost to the last practicing Catholics, resisted the equation of Catholicism and Croatdom'.¹⁴⁰

Banac argued that the idea of the Croatian political nation led to considerable confusion. For example, in the previous chapter we noted that Ante Starčević argued that everybody who resided within the boundaries he drew for Croatia were Croats. Banac argues that this did not mean that Starčević denied the multinational character of the lands and espoused the kind of 'final solution' propagated by the *Ustaša*. Rather, 'his Croats were a historical – indeed moral –

community, not a community of blood. The borders of Croatia were set by primary acquisition not by migrations of a linguistic community'.¹⁴¹ A Croat was neither somebody who was Catholic nor somebody who spoke a particular dialect. Instead, a Croat was simply anyone who lived on the territory of the Croatian state.

Croatian national ideologists opted for the historical statehood narrative rather than a religious or ethnic discourse because such narratives were used against Catholic Austrians, Venetians and Magyars and not against the Orthodox Serbs or Muslims. This led to a strong emphasis on reciprocity among Slavs, often at the expense of Croatian exclusivity. The parcelling out of Croatian lands among different empires also produced the various regional identities so loathed by Tuđman.¹⁴² One manifestation of this was the different sentiments displayed by nationalists towards Dubrovnik. Banac argued that during the early period of Croatian nationalism the veneration of the old republic of Dubrovnik and in particular the literary works of Ivan Gundulić provided one of the key focal points for the movement.¹⁴³ Conversely, however, Dubrovnik became an irritation to some early nationalists precisely because of its separateness. Banac pointed out that Starčević was most perplexed as to why so many Croats venerated the idea of Dubrovnik, when its separateness cast doubt on the city-republic's relationship with the rest of Croatia.¹⁴⁴

Banac did not try to uncover a unified historical narrative of Croatian statehood, like those articulated by Stephen Gazi, Stanko Guldescu and Franjo Tuđman. Instead, he chose to focus on particular writers who articulated visions of Croatia and attempted to situate them within the various traditions of Croatian national thinking.¹⁴⁵ In one such work he concentrated upon the writings of Pavao Vitezović, author of the famous article *Croatia Rediviva*, the earliest work of the Illyrian tradition. Vitezović was the first writer of the post-Roman era to envisage the idea of Illyria, a territory that for him spanned the entire Balkan peninsula except for southern Greece.¹⁴⁶ According to Banac, during the period when Vitezović was writing (the seventeenth century), the words 'Croat' and 'Illyrian' were common synonyms.¹⁴⁷ It was through Vitezović that the idea of the reunification of the Croatian lands was first postulated. Through the separation of the terms 'Croat' and 'Illyrian' the groundwork was laid for the two key traditions in Croatian national thinking – the exclusivism of Starčević and Kvaternik, and the Illyrianism of Gaj and Strossmayer.¹⁴⁸ If we see Vitezović as the earliest proponent of the Illyrian pan-Slavism that developed in the nineteenth century, Banac's study of Milan Šufflay represents an attempt to articulate the vision of a key member of the exclusivist tradition. Šufflay, who wrote most of his work during the period of the first Yugoslavia, articulated a mnemonic theory of nationhood, by which 'the past (no matter how distant) is at one with the present'.¹⁴⁹ For Šufflay, to be a Yugoslavist was to be an enemy of Croatia because the Yugoslav idea distorted the relationship between past and present, threatening nationhood from within.¹⁵⁰ Šufflay's vision was based upon the right to statehood that emanated from the territorial existence of the Croatian medieval state.

A recurring theme in Banac's work was the idea that notions of Croatian nationhood derived from different traditions of thought that cannot be divorced from their historical context. This dissident account of national historiography had two key aspects that informed his political activism in the LS and challenged Franjoism. First, through his extensive historical work on the Croatian claim to historic statehood, it is possible to see how many opposition parties were able to argue that their programmes drew legitimacy from the state-rights tradition and a narrowly conceived conception of the historic statehood narrative. Banac argued that there were two aspects of Franjoism that appeared to contradict the historical statehood narrative as a basis for national identity, or at least as a basis of Tuđman's conception of what Croatian national identity meant. These were the HDZ's position on the role of the Catholic Church in the formation of Croatian national identity, and the citizenship question, both discussed earlier. The second key aspect of Banac's challenge to Franjoism was his rejection of the idea that there was a single tradition of thinking about the Croatian nation that could be inherited by Tuđman or any other political leader. Throughout his work, Banac located different writers in different traditions and constantly reminded us that these thinkers articulated different accounts of Croatian national identity. Banac's approach focused upon difference and dispute. Because of this he remained a dissident, described – as we saw earlier – as an enemy of Croatia.

Most of Slavenka Drakulić's¹⁵¹ early works were fiction novels and short stories. However, the collapse of communist Yugoslavia and the advent of war in Croatia prompted her to question the impact of these events on the lives of Croats, focusing especially on women's experiences.¹⁵² Drakulić's first major work of non-fiction was *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*. In the 1992 edition the author lamented the title of her work, observing that with the ascendancy of Tuđman, Milošević and war, 'we have not yet survived communism, and there is nothing to laugh about'.¹⁵³ Viewed from Drakulić's perspective, the failure of communism in Yugoslavia could be attributed to its failure to provide for the basic needs of women, such as sanitary towels and make-up. This systemic failure made a mockery of the equation of socialism with emancipation and therefore alienated most women.¹⁵⁴ However, there were no mass movements or protests demanding democracy. Instead, 'the 1989/90 revolution in Zagreb was a cautious, sour old lady who, awakened from half a century of sleep, found herself in a land she didn't know, among people who didn't know her. Democracy in Eastern Europe has a hundred faces, this one was sad and silent'.¹⁵⁵

Drakulić was scathing and sarcastic in her treatment of Tuđman and the impact of his government, revealing once again the hollowness of the ruling party's claim to be all things to all Croats. According to Drakulić, Tuđman was neither politician nor diplomat, because 'he is too convinced of his historical mission to bother with such things'.¹⁵⁶ Such a view helps to explain the impunity with which he was able to commit diplomatic *faux pas* such as his famous scribbling on a napkin. Quite simply, the President believed he did not need to

engage in diplomatic and political niceties because of his historical role.¹⁵⁷

Drakulić's understanding of the formation of Croatian national identity in the 1990s comprised four major components. These were: the politics of forgetting as a national prerequisite, the reduction of identity to the primacy of the nation, the complex relationship between patriotism and nationalism, and the role of civil society.

For Drakulić, the politics of remembrance and forgetting were interrelated. She chose to invert these processes, which underpinned the new nationalism in Croatia, by forgetting her Croatianness while remembering that which she should not – her prior Yugoslav identity. According to Drakulić, being Croatian bore no special meaning for many of the post-1945 generation.¹⁵⁸ Commenting on items from the news of war, she described cases in which nationality was transcended by other forms of identities or emotions. One such case was that of Admira (a Muslim) and Boško (a Serb) who were shot by snipers while trying to flee Sarajevo. For them, too, 'nationality did not matter much: it could not decide their destiny, or prevent them from falling in love'.¹⁵⁹ She argued that the nation claimed centre stage through processes of forgetting that seemed far removed from the remembering, resurrecting and reestablishing of the nation called for by Franjoism. Writing prior to the first Croatian elections in 1990, Drakulić warned that the possibility of forgetting should be guarded against – particularly the possibility of forgetting the horrors of the past, such as the *Ustaša*.¹⁶⁰ It was with little satisfaction therefore, that she noted that less than five years later the danger she had warned against – the danger of forgetting – had come to fruition. The effect of this large-scale amnesia was that:

I feel ambiguous. I feel robbed of my past, my childhood, my education, my memories and sentiments, as if my whole life has been wrong, one big mistake, a lie and nothing else ... The Croatian 'new democracy' hasn't brought us anything yet but promises to believe in. The cost is high: renunciation of the whole past and sacrifice of the present.¹⁶¹

The process of forgetting that created a space for the new Croatian remembering, involved negating all that had happened in the previous 50 years. It involved the removal of communist stars from the graves of anti-fascist fighters as part of a process in which even the President's exalted communist past was forgotten.¹⁶² According to Drakulić, instead of being the continuation of a centuries-long dream, the creation of a Croatian national state was based on an entirely new narrative of identity.¹⁶³ This identity did not begin with the medieval kingdom of Tomislav and Zvonimir but with the rise of Franjo Tuđman in 1990.

The forgetting of prior identity, accentuated by the war, led to a form of reductionism whereby all forms of identity were compressed into a single dominant identity, the nation. Drakulić's position on this matter was made clear by her observation that:

Along with millions of other Croats, I was pinned to the wall of nationhood – not only by outside pressure from Serbia and the federal army but by inside national homogenisation in Croatia. That is what the war is doing to us, reducing us to one dimension: the Nation. The trouble with this nationhood, however, is that before I was defined by my education, my job, my ideas, my character and, yes, my nationality too. I am nobody because I am not a person any more, I am one of 4.5 Million Croats.¹⁶⁴

Drakulić argued that Tuđman's Franjoist rhetoric was a form of reductionism that negated the identities of Croatian individuals, be it their gender, religion, class, education or profession. All this, she argued, was reduced to the central question of national identity. This reductionism was produced by two interrelated factors. On the one hand, it was produced by the ideology of the ruling party, which replaced the all-encompassing ideology of 'brotherhood-and-unity' with a new similarly all-encompassing ideology of the Croatian nation. According to this new ideology, in the new state of Croatia 'no one is allowed not to be a Croat'.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Drakulić realised that this new ideology was given greater resonance by the war. It was the war, she claimed, that brought national ideology into the realm of the everyday. Reciting a conversation with her dentist, she recalled him stating that, 'the Serbs have turned me into a fierce Croat nationalist, a thing I was sure would never happen to me'.¹⁶⁶ Had the war not happened, we may speculate, Tuđman's national ideology might not have had the resonance that it came to assume in the day-to-day activities of Croats.

What most interested Drakulić was the impact of this reductionism on the experiences of women and the broader questions of gender and nationalism.¹⁶⁷ In its most extreme form, nationalist reductionism produced the horrific crimes committed systematically by Serbs against Muslims and Croats in Bosnia and Hercegovina.¹⁶⁸ The effects of identity reductionism on the lives of women in Croatia were generally subtler than this. Drakulić argued that '[in Croatia] women's lives, by no means spectacular, banal in fact, say as much about politics as no end of theoretical political analysis'.¹⁶⁹ Under the dictates of communist ideology, women were considered to be both mothers and workers who were not much different from men.¹⁷⁰ Under the new regime, however, women's identities were constrained in both overt and subtle ways. Franjoist clericalism led to the promotion of anti-abortion legislation and an interest in the role of women in reversing demographic decline.

Throughout her work, Drakulić observed practices in the day-to-day experiences of women that were affected by the new national ideology. One example was a campaign to persuade Croatian housewives to purchase goods that were made in Croatia. Women could instantly become patriots by doing this. On the other hand, if they purchased foreign goods they became a burden on the national economy and disappointed the war veterans whom they condemned to unemployment. By only buying Croatian goods though, women risked their domestic budgets because Croatian goods were considerably more expensive than imported goods.¹⁷¹

The third component of Slavenka Drakulić's engagement with national identity in 1990s Croatia was her claim that there was a tendency to confuse nationalism and patriotism. She argued that nationalism should be seen as an idea based upon the collectivisation of mass society in a way similar to communism. Patriotism on the other hand should be seen in terms of loyalty to a state based upon notions of citizenship and democracy.¹⁷² These two ideas 'were mixed up' by the war so that ideas of citizenship came to be imbued not with democratic notions of patriotism but with the ideas of mass society inculcated by nationalism.¹⁷³ This mixing up accounted for the lack of distinction between government and people that was encapsulated by Franjoism. Thus patriotism was appropriated by the ruling party for its nationalist purposes, jettisoning ideas of democracy and citizenship and replacing them with ideas about loyalty to the party that were reminiscent of communism.¹⁷⁴ The role of the dissident intellectual was to identify this confusion and articulate a vision of Croatian patriotism that invoked ideas of citizenship and democracy, since 'we [dissident Croatian intellectuals] believe that if you don't support the government, it doesn't mean that you don't support the Croatian people'.¹⁷⁵

The final strand of Drakulić's critique of national discourse raised questions about the development of civil society. She argued that one of the principal causes of the war and the reason why Croatia's political imagination was so easily colonised by the Franjoists, 'is that this society never had a proper chance to become a society not of oppressed peoples, but of citizens, of self-aware individuals with developed democratic institutions within which to work out differences'.¹⁷⁶ The rapidity of the shift from communism to independence to war meant that there was no time for a civil society based on patriotic ideas to develop. The idea of active citizenship therefore remained just that, an idea. Still, Drakulić argued, citizens believed (and were made to believe) that social change came from the top down, which meant that social movements in Croatia remained hesitant about mobilising people on issues such as human rights, the democratic deficit, or economic deprivation.¹⁷⁷ The crux of the problem was that citizens – herself included – still looked to others to provide the engine for change rather than acting themselves. Extending this vision, she concluded that every Croatian citizen bore responsibility for the actions of the government because given the democratic nature of the new Croatia, in theory at least, every citizen had the opportunity (denied under communism) to take that responsibility.¹⁷⁸ Of course, the possibility for civic action was made more difficult by the politics of forgetting, the negation of non-national identities, and the confusion of patriotism and nationalism, all of which were actively encouraged by a government and state that permeated daily life no less than the communist state before it.

Drakulić focused on the realm of the personal. For her, Franjoist rhetoric was so powerful because it could reorient an individual's past and frame its destiny as part of a national body. She emphasised the intersection of the nation and the individual, highlighting a struggle between collective and individual identities. With the first three themes raised by Drakulić it appears that collectivism

was unassailable, but by discussing the role of the individual in civil society she suggested a strategy for overcoming pernicious nationalism by separating out patriotism and nationalism. As with Banac, therefore, Drakulić understood the nation to be inscribed on the everyday and perceived Franjoism as something other than the manifestation of the will of the 'national body'.

A brief overview of two voices of dissent – Banac and Drakulić – therefore reveals disquiet with the Franjoist project. This disquiet was primarily expressed in two ways. First, the dissidents argued that Franjoism represented an untenable interpretation of the historical statehood narrative rather than constituting its zenith as it claimed. Banac provided intellectual credence to many of the claims articulated by opposition parties by exposing how national political programmes were historically framed as a political rather than ethnic or religious discourse. Furthermore, he convincingly challenged the idea that there was a unity of thought or common way of interpreting the historic statehood narrative in Croatian national thinking by precisely detailing different strands of thought that emerged from different social classes, historical epochs or regions. Thus civil Croatia developed within the classical European feudal order; *Vojna Krajina* developed as a peasant and warrior society; Dalmatia enjoyed Mediterranean forms of social organisation; Istria had both feudal and Mediterranean forms; while Hercegovina developed within the Turkish *millet* system.¹⁷⁹ In this light, Franjoism can only be seen as a historically contingent construction rather than the manifestation of an abiding national truth.

The second way that these dissident voices raised disquiet with the Franjoist project was by describing the rupture with the past caused by the new national 'realities'. Drakulić highlighted the ways that forgetfulness was induced at the highest levels, while at the level of the everyday there were many points of resistance – the resistance of remembrance. By drawing our attention to the everyday, Drakulić exposed the ridiculousness of Tuđman's rhetoric and lamented that in the transition from communism to 'democracy' very little had actually changed.

Outside voices: the Croatian diaspora

The final section of this chapter will briefly consider accounts of national identity articulated by elements of the Croatian diaspora, located primarily in Hercegovina, the USA, South America, Australia and Germany.¹⁸⁰ Because their key claims were similar to those of 'Franjoism', they will be considered only briefly. The government attempted to persuade the Croatian diaspora to return to the 'homeland' for two principal reasons. First, it was argued that the economy badly needed the inward investment potential promised by the 'wealthy' diaspora. Second, it was argued that the worrying demographic situation in Croatia necessitated their return to inhabit under-inhabited regions such as the Adriatic islands.¹⁸¹ It should be noted, however, that despite their staunch nationalism, members of the diaspora were generally reluctant to return to Croatia.

Of the various diaspora groups, by far the most prominent were the Hercegovinian Croats. Their role in launching a campaign to carve out a Croatian territory called Herceg-Bosna in Bosnia and Hercegovina has been well documented, as was the Tuđman government's support for the plan.¹⁸² According to Tuđman, Hercegovina was one of the pillars of Croatia and the Hercegovinian Croats were the pride of Croatia.¹⁸³ Hercegovina – the cradle of Croatian extremism and the *Ustaša* movement – was not regarded so fondly in Croatia itself. Hercegovinian Croats were generally identified as extremists and criminals. This perception was made credible by Mate Boban, the one-time head of the HDZ in Bosnia and Hercegovina (HDZ-BiH) who ran a nationalist fiefdom in Herceg-Bosna, which he attempted to make nationally 'pure'.¹⁸⁴ Many Croats from Croatia were embarrassed by atrocities committed by Bosnian Croats and the reluctance of the government to co-operate fully and unconditionally with the ICTY.¹⁸⁵ This disquiet was fuelled by the financial influence of the Hercegovinian Croats on the HDZ. They profited greatly from the privatisation programme and formed a powerful lobby in the heart of the Croatian government. The Hercegovinian lobby was accused of operating in Mafia-like ways because corruption and violence were central components of their status within Croatia.¹⁸⁶

The HDZ-BiH was the only Croatian party in Bosnia and Hercegovina to win significant support and its programme was very similar to that of the HDZ in Croatia. Its core policy was the protection of the 'interests' of the Croatian people of Bosnia and Hercegovina, which it defined narrowly as the protection of the language, religion, symbols and physical security of the Croats in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Although by 1995 it had come to subscribe publicly to the principle of Bosnia's territorial integrity, the party continued to call for the strengthening of ties with Croatia and subscribed to the idea of a confederation between the two states.¹⁸⁷ This idea was supported by the HDZ in Croatia.¹⁸⁸

Active extremism among the Croatian diaspora in Germany and Australia was most prominent in the time of Tito's Yugoslavia. In Germany, émigrés with links to the wartime *Ustaša* movement formed the *Hrvatski Narodni Otpor* (HNO – Croat National Resistance), under the leadership of Max Luburić, a former *Ustaša* general. Immediately after the Second World War, this organisation launched armed incursions into Yugoslavia. By the 1970s, *Ustaša*-type organisations had developed into terrorist groups that orchestrated bomb attacks in Yugoslavia and attacks on Yugoslav diplomats throughout the world.¹⁸⁹ The HNO had a distinctly anti-Yugoslav persuasion:

[We] regard Yugoslavism and Yugoslavia as the greatest and only evil that has caused the existing calamity ... We therefore consider every direct or indirect help to Yugoslavia as treason against the Croat nation ... Yugoslavia must be destroyed – be it with the help of the Russians or the Americans, of Communists, non-Communists or anti-Communists – with the help of anyone willing the destruction of Yugoslavia: destroyed by the dialectic of the word, or by dynamite – but at all costs destroyed.¹⁹⁰

Other groups, such as the *Ujedinjeni Hrvati Njemačke* (United Croats of West Germany), Croatian Republican Party, *Hrvatska Pravda* (Croatia Justice), Fighters for a Free Croatia and the World League of Croat Youth articulated narratives similar to those of Franjoism, celebrating the memory of Croatian thinkers and activists such as Radić, Hebrang, and Starčević.¹⁹¹ Despite the large number of such groups, they did not achieve popularity among the Croatian diaspora. The principle reason for this was their perceived closeness to the *Ustaša* movement. These organisations were, to a large extent, orchestrated by participants in the NDH regime who had escaped Croatia in 1945. By contrast, the vast majority of Croatian migrants were economic migrants. The first wave of modern migrants had left Croatia in the nineteenth century, followed by greater numbers during the inter-war period and then again in the 1960s and 1970s. Many who settled in the West came into contact with liberal ideas for the first time and rejected the extremist claims of separatist groups.¹⁹²

The best examples of non-*Ustaša* related émigré groups be seen by briefly considering associations set up by Croats in the USA. There are a large number of Croatian groups in the USA. The largest and most well known organisation is the *Croatian Academy of America*, which publishes its own journal, the *Journal of Croatian Studies*. Its mission statement declares that:

Inspired by the persistent desire of the Croatian nation for its proper dignity before all men, realizing that no people can make a responsible contribution towards a peaceful and democratic world without being freely self-determined i.e. endowed with the right to choose its own sovereign state, recollecting that Croatian liberty has been frustrated for centuries because of tyranny from without and within, conscious that the denial of freedom at home often requires the conservation of the national genius abroad, mindful that the friendly guardianship of the just aspirations of men has always been the keynote of American hospitality, we hereby establish and constitute The Croatian Academy of America.¹⁹³

The Academy's primary purpose is to educate members and the general public about Croatia. Through this it hoped that the Croatian nation could eventually come to exercise its inherent right to self-determination. The distinction between this organisation and the radical separatist groups mentioned above can be uncovered by briefly examining the contents of the *Journal of Croatian Studies*. It is clear that there is a more expansive understanding of the Croatian nation and its position in Yugoslavia than that put forward by the radical separatists. The journal has published work on Croatian and Yugoslav literature and culture, dissident Croatian writers such as Vlado Gotovac, Croatia and America, language issues, and historical tracts on specific themes. As well as containing the work of well-known Croatian émigré nationalists such as Stephen Gazi and Vladimir Goss, the journal has also contained works on Croatia by non-Croats and those not normally considered to be Croatian nationalists, such as Ivo Banac.¹⁹⁴ The Academy argues that education is the best approach to fulfilling Croatian self-determination and that this would be best served by debates that revealed the strength of the Croatian claim for that right.

Many of the other Croatian American organisations are affiliated to the National Federation of Croatian Americans (NFCA). These include the Alliance of Croats of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Croatian Benevolent Association, the Croatian Catholic Union, the Croatian Council, the Croatian Fraternal Union, the Croatian Fraternal Lodge, the Croatian National Association and the Federation of Croatian Societies. According to its statement of principles, 'the NFCA was founded to promote an independent, democratic, free market Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina'. Distancing the association from the radical separatists mentioned at the beginning of this section, its core principles also include the protection of human rights for all, regardless of nation, ethnicity or religion, the inviolability of the borders of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the promotion of co-operation between the two states. In case there is any question of whether the Federation is some kind of *Ustaša* cell, Principle 8 states that 'atrocities committed during World War II in the name of ethnicity and ideology by all parties in the former Yugoslavia are condemned and repudiated'.¹⁹⁵ Unlike the Academy, the central objective of the NFCA is the promotion of Croatia in the USA and the strengthening of ties between the two societies.¹⁹⁶ On the question of political orientation, the NFCA maintains that it is independent from the government of Croatia and that it is not affiliated to any political party in Croatia. However, its mission statement insists that 'the NFCA will vigorously defend the Republic of Croatia when it is unfairly attacked'.¹⁹⁷

There were therefore a number of traditions of thought about national identity within the Croatian diaspora after 1945. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, organised diaspora groups had links to the *Ustaša* members who had managed to evade Tito's purges. However, in recent years, the influence of Western political thought has become more discernible. Nationalist claims were elaborated with reference to ideas of self-determination and the idea of Croatia as a modern 'Western' democratic state was widely disseminated. However, this dissemination took place within an intellectual context where the central tenets of Franjoism were accepted and re-articulated. Furthermore, it was still possible to trace the roots of extremism to the diaspora, in the form of the former Defence Minister and ultra-nationalist Gojko Šušak for example.

Competing voices of the nation

The nation is a contested terrain of political discourse. The frames provided by the historical statehood narrative informed contemporary national narratives that in turn informed political discourse in the 1990s. Those same narratives and histories were mobilised in different ways to produce incompatible interpretations of the nation. However, as we saw in Chapter 2, the nation can be thought of as existing at different ontological sites. Hence, Slavenka Drakulić, for example, was able to locate the nation in the personal and day-to-day

experiences of people and radically rewrite accounts proffered by political parties or diaspora movements that were located at the more abstract level of state policy.

The HDZ's Frajoist programme combined nationalist rhetoric and practical policy. At its core was the President, Franjo Tuđman. Tuđman was the central figure articulating Franjoism, and, given the high degree of presidential power wielded in the 1990s, he was also its main instigator. Franjoism insisted that national sovereignty and independence could only be achieved through national unity. Because the Franjoist project involved unifying a nation that was historically divided, Tuđman tried to be all things to all Croats. He failed to achieve his goal of national unification for at least two reasons. First, the rehabilitation of the diaspora and Croatia's fascists required policies and rhetoric that alienated many Croats in Croatia. Second, Tuđman had an idea of what 'his Croats' would look like. They would be 'ethnic Croats', who spoke a pure Croatian language and practised Roman Catholicism. As we shall see in the next two chapters, these ideas permeated government policy throughout the 1990s. Such a view of Croatian national identity represented a narrow and particularist interpretation of the historic statehood narrative rather than its embodiment.

Different political groups appealed to different aspects of the historical statehood narrative in order to legitimise their own political claims. This was attempted most blatantly by the modern Party of Rights (HSP) and the Croatian Peasants' Party (HSS) who both claimed a direct though tenuous lineage to their predecessors in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These parties claimed that Tuđman did not adequately embody the national ideology put forward by the founding fathers of their traditions, Ante Starčević and Stjepan Radić. Other parties also attempted to locate themselves in Croatian political tradition. For example, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) traced its history back to a small social democratic movement that appeared in Zagreb at the very end of the nineteenth century. Although the liberals admitted that there was no ostensibly liberal tradition in Croatia they argued that this was because of the illiberal rule of imperial overlords. Thus they were able to discern traces of liberalism in the historical statehood tradition by claiming that this tradition was a citizen-based ideology. What was striking was that opposition parties (with the exception of the IDS) did not challenge the historical statehood narrative outlined in the previous chapter. Instead, they challenged the location of Franjoism within that narrative, seeing it as a particular interpretation of that tradition rather than its manifestation.

To look for accounts of national identity that challenged the historical statehood tradition, we need to turn to the works of dissident intellectuals. Ivo Banac's historical research showed that it is not accurate to speak of a single Croatian political tradition. Instead, Banac revealed a plethora of different traditions that were encouraged by the differing conditions and histories of Croatia's regions. Slavenka Drakulić shared similar concerns, and radically challenged Franjoism by discarding claims about a centuries-old dream. She argued that

rather than being about remembering latent forms of intrinsic identity that had been suppressed by the communists, Franjoism was actually about forgetting the recent past. The Croatian national identity articulated by the new regime was entirely modern and entirely fabricated, Banac and Drakulić argued.

Our next task is to consider how these different ideas about national identity were manifested in contemporary social practice. The next chapters therefore address the question of the intersection of Croatian national identity with other social operators. As such, they locate debates about national identity within six different social settings and question whether the different ideas about national identity raised in this chapter had material resonance in social practice.

Notes

- 1 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.
- 2 M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1991), p. 71.
- 3 Address by Dr Franjo Tuđman at the second session of the head committee of the HDZ held at the INA Building, Zagreb, 7 December 1996, p. 4.
- 4 H. Sosić, *Croatian Political Dictionary* (Rijeka: Tiskara Rijeka, 1993).
- 5 *Feral Tribune*, 29 December 1997, p. 6.
- 6 I. Tolj, N. Bičanić, K. Mujčić, *For Croatia* (Zagreb: Croatian Ministry of Defence, 1992).
- 7 F. Tuđman, *Croatia at the Crossroads: In Search of a Democratic Confederacy* (London: Centre for Policy Studies, 1991), p. 1.
- 8 Biographical details taken from M. Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 190–1.
- 9 B. Katich, *So Speak Croatian Dissidents* (Toronto: Ziral, 1983), p. 17.
- 10 A. Knezević, *An Analysis of Serb Propaganda* (Zagreb: Domavina TT, 1996), p. 5.
- 11 D. Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London: Indigo, 1996), pp. 78–9.
- 12 Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, p. 224.
- 13 See I. Kearns, 'Croatian politics: democracy or authoritarianism?', paper presented to the Political Studies Association Conference on Eastern Europe, 1997.
- 14 Many of the themes mentioned below are also discussed by G. Uzelac, 'Franjo Tuđman's nationalist ideology', *East European Quarterly*, 31:3 (1998).
- 15 *Guardian*, 8 July 1995.
- 16 *Feral Tribune*, 17 November 1997.
- 17 Speech by Dr Franjo Tuđman on the seventh anniversary of the first convention of the HDZ, 23 February, 1997, p. 1.
- 18 See N. Zakošek, 'Political parties and the party system in Croatia', in I. Siber (ed.), *The 1990/93 Sabor Elections in Croatia: Analysis, Documents and Data* (Berlin: Edition Sigma, 1997), pp. 38–9.
- 19 F. Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 121.
- 20 Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*, p. 122.
- 21 B. Buden, 'Culture and politics', *ARKzin*, November 1997. *ARKzin* is an independent magazine published in Zagreb by the anti-war movement (*ARK*). I am grateful to Boris Buden for forwarding copies of his work.
- 22 L. J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Oxford: Westview, 2nd edition, 1995), p. 211.

- 23 Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*, p. 174.
- 24 Tuđman, *Croatia at the Crossroads*, p. 14.
- 25 W. Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers* (New York: Times Books, 1996), p. 72.
- 26 Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*, pp. 124–8.
- 27 See I. Kearns, 'Croatian politics: the new authoritarianism', *Political Quarterly*, 67:1 (1996), 29.
- 28 M. Thompson, *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia* (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 269.
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