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## **Institutional Power and the Rise of Milošević**

*Nebojsa Vladislavljevic*

The consensus among specialists on the politics of socialist Yugoslavia and supporters of Slobodan Milošević is that he rose personally as the leader due to a broad appeal of his political programme. According to one version of the political programme thesis, Milošević overwhelmed his initially more powerful opponents in the leadership of Serbia in 1987 by obtaining majority support in higher ranks of the party for his nationalist programme, namely the reduction of autonomy of Kosovo. The other version of the thesis says that he extended nationalist appeals to the population at large and established control over party and state organs in the largest republic of federal Yugoslavia largely by bringing pressure from society on the political elite. In any case, Milošević emerged from the leadership struggle as a very powerful leader and was thus able to purge his rivals from the regional leadership and embark upon the implementation of a nationalist programme.<sup>1</sup> The supporters of Milošević have largely agreed with the specialists. Borisav Jović, his right-hand man, claimed, “the removal of bureaucratic leadership of Serbia, which had subserviently accepted the division of Serbia in three parts,” to be one of their main achievements.<sup>2</sup>

The argument about the centrality of political programme in Milošević’s ascent deserves a careful scrutiny not only because it has long served as a dominant interpretation of these historical events, but also since it reflects broader debates on political developments in the region and the nature of power structure in socialist party-states in general and Yugoslavia in particular. The political programme thesis draws on, and provides support for, the prevailing views on the conflicts surrounding the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which focus on nationalist strategies of political actors and institutional arrangements and informal elite practices that regulated inter-ethnic and inter-regional relations. The thesis also reflects a dominant view on the nature of power structure in socialist Yugoslavia in the 1980s. According to this view, sudden personality shifts at the top were unlikely to occur without a profound conflict over policy because Yugoslavia featured collective leadership at all levels as a result of the institutional legacy and elite settlement, which had been cemented early in the previous decade.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, without a new programme persuasive to high party officials or population at large, Milošević would not have been able to change power relations in the higher party echelons and purge powerful rivals from leadership.

And yet, few observers saw the events as a major political change at the time. The rise of Milošević came to be seen as a turning point in the history of socialist

Yugoslavia only in subsequent interpretations, during the heat of the wars of Yugoslav succession. The political programme thesis is largely based on the testimonies of Milošević's rivals purged from the leadership,<sup>4</sup> which many took for granted in the light of subsequent conflicts. Milošević and his supporters agreed, claiming their place in initiating the "Serb national revival," which was a highly rewarding electoral strategy in the context of nationalist conflicts surrounding the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Drawing on previously unavailable sources, I have found that the rise of Milošević was an episode in normal power politics in a socialist party-state.

The change of political generations set the stage for leadership struggle, as members of the old guard in the leadership of Serbia gradually left space for younger politicians. In the aftermath of generational change, the core leadership shared views on key issues of policy. Minor disagreements over policy details towards Kosovo were exaggerated in the heat of the power struggle between factions based on personalist networks of Milošević and his rival, Ivan Stambolić. The appeal of Milošević to party officials was based on his personal qualities, while the outcome of the power struggle was largely decided by institutional power, on the model of the earlier ascent of Ivan Stambolić. The strategic position of President of the regional party Presidium, at the time not necessarily an office occupied by the most powerful regional politicians in socialist Yugoslavia, granted Milošević an opportunity to build up political support in high party organs and exploit the party's organisational resources to challenge successfully his former political protector. The whole episode was essentially about who would be the leader, a typical internal party affair that unfolded according to the rules of the game in socialist party-states, without much influence from society. The case study demonstrates the central role of political institutions in determining political outcomes in socialist party-states as well as important differences between the Soviet and Yugoslav models. The rise of Milošević personally as the leader in 1986–1987 should be seen analytically as separate from the formation of new power structure in Serbia and the spread of nationalism, the processes that unfolded in response to the pressures from society in 1988–1989.

This picture emerges from the examination of previously unavailable sources, including the personal accounts of participants in the power struggle, archival material and the local press. I have conducted in-depth interviews with 17 high party and state officials who were directly involved in political struggles surrounding the protracted leadership succession,<sup>5</sup> principally aiming to complement the testimonies that had already been published in Serbo-Croat.<sup>6</sup> As a result, I have been able to draw on the testimonies of representatives of all key groups in the leadership, including various political generations, personalist factions, institutional interests and territorial parts of Serbia's leadership. I have taken into account only the information based on the direct knowledge and experience of participants and have cross-checked sensitive issues or those in which they discredit their opponents. I have also checked the

evidence from the testimonies against unpublished and published minutes of key meetings of the leadership in the course of the open conflict in 1987 and reports in the local press.<sup>7</sup>

### **Political Generations and Generational Change**

Slobodan Milošević (born 1941) belongs to the generation that benefited more from the rapidly changing social, economic and political landscape in socialist Yugoslavia than previous generations.<sup>8</sup> His peers experienced the hardship of war and the immediate post-war period only as children and grew up and attended school partly during the economic boom of the 1950s. Many entered university at the time of the increasingly liberal atmosphere of the early 1960s and then started administrative careers at the time of an increasing focus on meritocratic recruitment at all levels. As a result, they were able to advance rapidly up the social and political hierarchy and join the higher ranks of the party-state in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when members of the older generation had already started considering retirement.

Milošević engaged earnestly in party work at the University of Belgrade and served as a junior secretary of the Law School's Committee and, subsequently, as one of the secretaries of the University Committee. After graduation, Milošević worked in various posts in the Belgrade city administration before entering a business career upon the invitation of Ivan Stambolić, Director General in a medium-sized Belgrade company, whom he had befriended at university. Milošević served as Deputy Director for three years and, when Ivan Stambolić assumed the chairmanship of Belgrade's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, replaced him as Director General. Subsequently, the two mates advanced rapidly up the political hierarchy. After a short stint as Executive Secretary in the Central Committee of Serbia, Ivan Stambolić was selected for President of the Executive Council of Serbia (government) and Milošević came to preside over Beogradska banka, the largest Yugoslav bank, simultaneously chairing the Committee of the central Belgrade municipality Stari Grad, one of the largest local party branches in the country. Since regional governments were involved in little more than economic management, the influence of Ivan Stambolić grew when he was selected for President of the Belgrade Committee in 1982. Simultaneously, Milošević entered the Presidium of the Central Committee of Serbia.

In 1982 the leadership of Serbia was a highly heterogeneous group in terms of age. The members of the older generation were still in control of the political stage, as in other Yugoslav republics and East European party-states. Although few in number, they set the direction of policy and held the top political posts in Serbia and those reserved for its representatives in federal party and state organs. Most had joined the party in the late 1930s and engaged in illegal work under the old regime and were in the process fully shaped by the Comintern tradition of orthodox

communism. The illegal work and war interrupted their university studies and, as they assumed administrative and political posts in the wake of the partisan war, damaged their education. All of the elders had taken part in the war effort from the very beginning and some occupied prominent positions in the partisan fighting force. In the post-war period, they had spent a large part of their careers in federal organs. In 1982 they were in their sixties, apart from Petar Stambolić, who was 70.

Petar Stambolić (born 1912), an uncle of Ivan Stambolić, held high regional and federal offices throughout the post-war period and in the 1970s and early 1980s served as Serbia's representative on the Presidium of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia and the collective state Presidency of Yugoslavia.<sup>9</sup> Draža Marković (born 1920) entered high political circles in the late 1960s and subsequently presided over the collective state Presidency of Serbia. Following a four-year mandate as President of the Federal Assembly, Marković served as member of the federal party Presidium, including a year as its President in 1983–1984. The two politicians helped construct Tito's coalition of regional leaders that ruled socialist Yugoslavia after the purges of 1971–1972 by removing from power the "liberals," a group of well-educated politicians from Serbia who had initiated moderate political and economic reforms.<sup>10</sup> Dobrivoje Vidić (born 1918), who had made a successful career in diplomacy, was coopted into the regional leadership in the wake of the 1972 purge and presided over the state Presidency of Serbia after Marković. The last member of the older generation, Nikola Ljubičić (born 1916), Tito's longest-serving defence minister, replaced Vidić as President of the regional state Presidency in 1982, as Petar Stambolić and Marković aimed to draw on his good standing in the eyes of regional leaders to facilitate bargaining over various issues at federal level.

Another two influential Serbia's politicians, Tihomir Vlaškalić and Dušan Čkrebić, were of a different generation. Nearly a decade younger on average than members of the older generation, they joined the party after the war and never acquired as strong a commitment to ideology as their predecessors. Their university education was not interrupted by the war and they benefited in their early careers from rapid industrialisation and economic development. Top political posts were less open to this generation because the members of older generation were in the 1960s still in their fifties and eager to remain in political life.<sup>11</sup> In a way they were transitional figures, linking the older and younger generations. Tihomir Vlaškalić (1923) presided over the Central Committee of Serbia as a compromise candidate from 1972. Aiming to preserve his personal power against increasingly assertive regional leaders, Tito had created a rift in the previously cohesive leadership of Serbia. While backing Petar Stambolić and Marković in the purge of the liberals, he prevented either politician from assuming the newly vacated highest regional party office so that they eventually appointed Vlaškalić.<sup>12</sup> In 1982 Dušan Čkrebić (born 1927), who had occupied high-ranking posts in Serbia since the late 1960s, replaced Vlaškalić as President of the regional Central Committee without becoming the most influential politician in Serbia.

Nearing retirement and aiming to reassure the younger generation that their values would be reflected in policy, Petar Stambolić and Marković decided to gradually introduce younger politicians into the highest party and state offices in the early 1980s.<sup>13</sup> The most influential politician in this group was Ivan Stambolić (born 1936), the nephew of Petar Stambolić. He was an atypical member of his political generation. While most of his peers entered university education directly after high school, he entered the work force as a metal worker and only in his mid twenties enrolled in part-time study at university. Ivan was a successful administrator and gifted politician, but it was widely recognised that his fast-track political career benefited from the reputation of his uncle. Following Ivan Stambolić, a number of politicians from his generation, born between the mid 1930s and early 1940s, entered the establishment just below the top level and served in junior executive and other influential posts in the Central Committee of Serbia. In 1982 members of this generation already had a strong base in the higher echelons of the party-state and their political influence grew. The balance of power gradually shifted towards the younger generation in the course of 1984 and 1985. At that time, Petar Stambolić had already retired and Marković, Vidić and Ljubičić represented Serbia in federal organs. Ivan Stambolić, now President of the Central Committee of Serbia,<sup>14</sup> and Slobodan Milošević, his replacement at the helm of the Belgrade Committee, still consulted the elders but fully dominated regional organs and gradually introduced their associates to influential positions. They were now increasingly able to develop policies of their own, within the constraints of the Yugoslav political system.<sup>15</sup>

A heterogeneous composition of the leadership in terms of age groups produced disagreements in some policy areas, but not in others. All high party and state officials supported the main aspects of the Yugoslav state and regime, as expressed in the post-1972 elite settlement and Constitution of 1974. From the mid 1970s, their main concern was the fragmented political structure of Serbia, which they considered to be the consequence of inadequate implementation of the constitution.<sup>16</sup> The constitutional and party reforms of the late 1960s and early 1970s granted the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo nearly full legislative, executive and judicial autonomy. Nonetheless, their leaders persistently obstructed even minimal policy coordination on the whole territory of the republic and repeatedly voted against proposals of Serbia's representatives in federal party and state organs. The demonstration of veto power, even over policy issues that had nothing to do with the autonomy of the provinces, negatively affected Serbia's standing in the federation and embittered relations with the central leadership of Serbia.

Soon after the constitutional reform, the leadership of Serbia launched an initiative, fully expressed in the 1977 report, which insisted that policy coordination in some areas was mandatory according to the federal and Serbian constitutions. The move faced strong opposition from leaders of the autonomous provinces and, since the latter appeared to have quiet support from Tito, the initiative died down.<sup>17</sup> In the wake of the demonstrations of Kosovo Albanians in 1981, Marković and Petar

Stambolić put the issue back on the agenda in federal and Serbia's party organs. The demonstrations, triggered by student protest but overwhelmed by nationalist demands, such as that for the upgrading of Kosovo to the status of a republic, increased awareness in federal organs about the depth and scale of nationalist tensions in Kosovo. Marković and Petar Stambolić now insisted that the eruption of nationalist protest directly resulted from unconstitutional extension of the autonomy of the provinces, but had little success in persuading other regional leaders to support their initiative. In the first regional party platform designed mainly by the younger generation politicians in November 1984, this position was reaffirmed and extended to include economic issues and demands that Kosovo's officials put an end to inter-ethnic inequalities and other causes of the emigration of Serbs.<sup>18</sup>

In other areas policy differences gradually came to the surface as a reflection of different outlooks of various generations. Unlike the elders, who still fought the battles of the past by privileging the issues of ideology over economic development and political liberalisation, members of the younger generation were more pragmatic. Facing inconclusive debates within federal organs on reforms, they advocated moderate changes in the system of self-management to favour market mechanisms, and a larger role for federal organs in economic management to alleviate problems arising from Yugoslavia's fragmented market and decision-making mechanism.<sup>19</sup> The ascent of this generation was associated with increasingly relaxed intra-party debates and relaxation of pressure on the press and dissident intellectuals. Remarkably open debates on key political and policy issues in the Belgrade Committee were extensively relayed by media, which provided hope that reforms would follow. They also demanded changes to the way key officials were selected, favouring competition among two or more candidates for each post. While there was no commitment to political reforms beyond the boundaries of the "Yugoslav road to socialism," the advances, considerable in comparison with most other Yugoslav republics, caused growing concern among some of their leaders.<sup>20</sup>

### **Institutional Power and the Ascent of Ivan Stambolić**

By March 1986 Ivan Stambolić had established full control over the main levers of power in Serbia. While the change of political generations had set the stage for the power shift, Ivan Stambolić owed his ascendancy largely to his strategic position in the highest regional party office and the "circular flow of power," the mechanism of cadre selection characteristic of socialist party-states. In these regimes ultimate power resided in high party organs. The power of the established leader was not only extensive in range but also self-sustaining, since party rules of cadre selection enabled the leader to build the political machine that would dominate the Central Committee and Politburo ("Presidium" in official Yugoslav parlance). According to the rules, the General Secretary played a decisive role in appointments of regional

party secretaries, who in turn selected delegates for the party Congress and controlled the selection of candidates for the Central Committee. As regional secretaries directly depended on the General Secretary, they had a strong incentive to favour the selection of Central Committee members who would become the latter's strong supporters and thus build the political machine that would prevent potential contenders from Politburo from challenging the General Secretary.<sup>21</sup>

This is not to say that the leader exerted total control over members of Politburo (Presidium) and the Central Committee and that the "circular flow of power" prevented broad debate and conflicts over policy, or even an ebbing of support for the General Secretary. Rather, it meant only that the established leader was protected against potential attacks by his rivals, except in the case of a major policy change that adversely affected large segments of the elite or society. In normal circumstances, the leader could always turn to his political machine in the Central Committee for support, even against the majority in Politburo, so that open power struggle erupted only during periods of leadership succession. In these periods the former leader's deputy in charge of personnel selection stood the best chances of being selected for the leader because of being in a position to exploit his predecessor's political machine.<sup>22</sup>

The "circular flow of power" operated in a modified way in socialist Yugoslavia from mid 1960s due to its increasingly complex power structure. Earlier the central party organs had exerted ultimate control despite the existence of federal institutional framework, in which the central state and party organs coexisted with the parallel bodies in Yugoslavia's six republics. Tito had fully controlled the cadre selection process through Aleksandar Rankovic, the party's powerful organisational secretary. Nevertheless, in the campaign for a limited role of the party following the break with Stalin, state organs generally acquired more autonomy than in other socialist party-states. The offices of the party's General Secretary (later called President of the Presidium) and President of the Republic were formally separated. As Tito occupied both offices until his death in 1980, the separation of the highest party and state offices had more implications for the power structure at the regional level and grew in importance at the federal level in the 1980s.

Following the removal of Rankovic in 1966, the simultaneous process of radical federalisation of the party and state and political liberalisation transformed the nature of the cadre selection process and decision making at the federal level. The central party organs lost the privilege of appointing regional leaders, who were now granted opportunity to build their own political machines through the district party secretaries. The parallel processes of radical federalisation and liberalisation, however, threatened political stability by amplifying inter-regional conflict and obstructing decision making. In response, Tito purged leading sponsors of confederalisation and liberalisation in 1971 and 1972. Since political instability was blamed on the failure of political leadership, a highly decentralised constitutional structure was retained while power returned to central party organs. With respect to the cadre selection

process, Tito regained the right to remove regional leaders from office, but not to appoint his candidates. As a result, the power of regional leaders now depended partly on their independent power base and partly on the endorsement of Yugoslavia's ultimate arbiter.<sup>23</sup>

These institutional and power shifts, in addition to Tito's inclination to quietly support rival politicians within regional leaderships, set the foundation for "collective leadership," or power sharing among powerful politicians, at both federal and regional levels. Assertive politicians were further disadvantaged by the collective leadership campaign in the last years of Tito's rule, which aimed at preventing the rise of a powerful leader after Tito. The campaign introduced rules against simultaneous control of party and state positions, and frequent rotation of cadre at all levels. As a result, in contrast to the practice in other socialist party-states, the most powerful regional politicians were not necessarily to be found at the helm of the Central Committees in republics and some influential political players often remained outside their Presidia. For example, Draža Marković retained a key role in the leadership of Serbia for more than a decade despite shifting between the posts of President of the regional Assembly, President of Serbia's state Presidency, President of the Federal Assembly and member of the federal party Presidium. Since the power of the leader was not directly linked to the highest party office and was to be shared with others, many observers mistakenly concluded that collective leadership had fully replaced the mechanism of the "circular flow of power" not only at the federal level, but also within republics.

In fact, the foundations of the practice of collective leadership at the regional level had already been undermined in the early 1980s. It has been acknowledged that the death of Tito in 1980 and the subsequent erosion of party unity at the federal level triggered conflict among regional elites.<sup>24</sup> However, the impact of these developments on regional politics was no less important. The threat of veto of the central party organs to the selection of regional leaders faded away and the latter now fully depended on their independent power bases. In addition, the change of political generations in the first half of the 1980s disturbed political alliances that had been cemented in the wake of the purges in 1971–1972, and opened space for leadership struggle within republics.

In the wake of these developments, established regional leaders suddenly became vulnerable to attacks from potential rivals because, unlike leaders in other socialist party-states, they often did not occupy the highest regional party office. The power struggles in Serbia between Ivan Stambolić and Draža Marković in 1985–1986 and between Slobodan Milošević and Ivan Stambolić in 1987 demonstrated that ultimate power returned to the highest regional party office. Due to the rules about frequent rotation of cadre, the President of the regional party Presidium who aimed at becoming an established regional leader did not have much time to build the political machine in the Central Committee through the normal process of cadre selection. The challenger had not only to rely on the networks of other politicians, but also to

actively employ the power of his office to change power relations in high party organs.

Nearing the end of his second and therefore last one-year mandate at the helm of the regional party Presidium, Ivan Stambolić prepared to assume the post of President of Serbia's state Presidency. This post was considered to be a major step towards membership in the state Presidency of Yugoslavia, which gained influence at the time of the erosion of party unity at the federal level. His nomination was not contested, but conflict erupted over the selection of his successor at the helm of the regional party Presidium and that of two representatives in the federal party Presidium. The stakes were high, since Ivan Stambolić intended to place his associates in key positions and quietly remove Marković from power. Ivan fully exploited the extensive political networks of his uncle. Although retired since 1984, Petar Stambolić retained political influence and played an important role in turning the older politicians against Marković, his former ally. The first cracks among the elders had emerged in 1983–1984 when Marković and Čkrebić had quietly opposed the nomination of Ivan Stambolić for President of the regional party Presidium, but relented under the pressure of Petar.<sup>25</sup> Also, Petar Stambolić, Čkrebić and Vidić supported the selection of Ljubičić for membership in the federal state Presidency over Marković.<sup>26</sup> In 1986 Ljubičić returned the favour and supported the nephew of Petar in conflict with Marković.

During the years spent at the helm of the Belgrade and Central Committees, Ivan had developed extensive political networks of his own. Many members of the Presidium and the Central Committee owed him their career advancement, which granted him solid support in the key institutional arenas in which the leadership struggle would subsequently unfold.<sup>27</sup> Ivan also exploited his strategic position as President of the regional party Presidium to build alliances against Marković. He obtained the support of Čkrebić, who never thought much of him, by nominating him for membership in the federal party Presidium. Members of the regional Presidium from the younger generation were glad to see at least some of the elders out of office and realised that this would improve their career prospects. "We are now setting up the Serbian leadership for the next twenty years," Ivan Stambolić stressed repeatedly in private meetings with prominent party-state officials from the younger generation.<sup>28</sup>

Using the power of his office, Ivan Stambolić ignored the informal practice of broad consultation in the leadership about nominations for key posts and, more importantly, directly contradicted the shared view of the younger generation that competition among several candidates for the post should be introduced. Instead, he formally invited local party organisations to propose a nominee for each of the key posts, supposedly to render the consultation process more open and democratic. Ivan Stambolić simultaneously made sure, through the district party secretaries he directly supervised, that his nominees appeared on top of all local candidate lists.<sup>29</sup> He also employed his influence over the capital's powerful media to promote his nominees.

These moves in turn signalled to members of the Central Committee a major power shift in the leadership so that they were careful to stay out of Ivan Stambolić's way.

The struggle for leadership unfolded over the selection of the new President of the regional party Presidium, that is, a regional party leader, at the session of the narrow circle of high party and state officials from Serbia on 25 and 26 January 1986. Ivan Stambolić had already nominated Milošević, at the time hardly a popular candidate for the post. Milošević had previously come into conflict with both the supporters of Marković and several politicians from the younger generation and now faced opposition from the majority of the officials present at the session. Nonetheless, Ivan Stambolić obtained a formal approval for his nominee without difficulty, since only members of the party Presidium were eligible to vote on this matter.<sup>30</sup> Had Ivan Stambolić accepted the demand of Milošević's opponents that the Central Committee be presented with two competing candidates, Milošević might have easily lost the vote. The last attempt of Marković to prevent Ivan Stambolić from taking full control over the leadership, which occurred at the session of the Central Committee on 26 February, ended with his total defeat and he subsequently retired. The outcome was mainly due to Ivan Stambolić's supervisory powers over district party secretaries, who were instructed to secure the votes of the Central Committee members from their districts for the only candidate, Milošević.<sup>31</sup>

### **Discord in the Younger Generation**

In the wake of the power struggle Ivan Stambolić became an undisputed leader. It was widely expected that he would remain in this position for the foreseeable future, since he was only 50 years old and faced no opposition in the regional leadership. At that time, in sociological and political terms, members of the leadership fell broadly into two major groups. The remaining members from the older generations, who still wielded influence in party and state organs, took a back seat in the formulation of policy and were not considered to be potential contenders for power. The last two members of Tito's old guard, Ljubičić and Vidić, were expected to retire once their mandates expired, in the federal state Presidency and the Central Committee of Yugoslavia, respectively. Čkrebić, a member of the federal party Presidium, who was 59, lacked an independent power base to seriously contest the power of Ivan Stambolić.

Among the most influential members of the younger generation there were differences in terms of political status and reputation. Radiša Gačić and Špiro Galović had risen to high party posts with little help from Ivan Stambolić and supported him over the years because they considered him to be a natural leader of their political generation. Gačić, a moderate politician, had risen to high party ranks through local politics and served as a member and Secretary (not President) of the regional party Presidium between 1982 and 1986, before assuming the same posts in the federal party Presidium. Galović had been a member of the regional Presidium

between 1978 and 1986 and Secretary of the Presidium between 1978 and 1982. In charge of the sector of ideology, he was partly responsible for the partial liberalisation, but after growing disputes within the younger generation in 1984–1985 his influence declined.

In contrast to the relatively independent reputation of Gačić and Galović, the holders of key party offices were known as intimate friends and loyal associates of Ivan Stambolić. Despite their good education, career achievements and personalities which recommended them for high office, Milošević, the new President of the Presidium, and Dragiša Pavlović, his successor at the helm of the Belgrade Committee, essentially owed their fast-track political careers to Ivan Stambolić.<sup>32</sup> Pavlović served as Secretary of Belgrade's Chamber of Commerce and Industry when Ivan Stambolić presided over the organisation and became his chief of staff in the Executive Council. In 1982 Pavlović moved to the post of Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and four years later succeeded Milošević in the Belgrade Committee. He stood out among the leadership in terms of education, holding two university degrees and a doctorate in social science, and was considered to be tolerant and of moderate views, but lacked political experience for such a high office. "A sheep before the wolves," a member of the older generation explained.<sup>33</sup>

The composition of the leadership in mid 1986 therefore reflected not only the dominance of Ivan Stambolić, but also his intention to establish full personal control over the main levers of power. He had violated unspoken rules in the narrow leadership circle guarding against the selection of intimate friends for key party offices, even against the background of the majority opposition to the selection of Milošević and the lack of experience of Pavlović in high politics. As Draža Marković put it in an interview with author, "Ivan Stambolić created a clan in the leadership." Moreover, he fully disregarded the commitment of many members of the younger generation to reforms in the cadre selection process.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Milošević and Pavlović were not eager to work with each other, since Milošević quietly and without success tried to prevent Pavlović from being appointed as his successor in the Belgrade Committee.<sup>35</sup> It is likely that Ivan Stambolić aimed at exploiting their rivalry to prevent either from becoming a threat to his personal power. Unsurprisingly, his rule came to be seen among members of the younger generation as increasingly personalistic.

High party and state officials from the younger generation shared not only the values and outlook of their generation, but also views on specific issues of policy, regardless of the position within leadership. Early on they built a policy consensus and put considerable effort into building alliances for political and economic reforms at the federal level. And yet, there was little progress. Most reforms required changes to the system of self-management and the federal Constitution and some affected the existing relations between federal and regional organs. Although the country faced mounting economic crisis, reform proposals were ignored, since some regional leaders believed that even minor changes might undermine the system of self-

management and shift the balance of power from regional to federal organs. Likewise, Ivan Stambolić's minimalist proposals for policy coordination between central government in Serbia and the governments of Vojvodina and Kosovo fell flatly in the face of obstruction from the provincial leaders. There was no support from other regional leaders, except for their endorsement of slightly closer links between the central and provincial party organs in Serbia, which made little difference in practice. The deadlock at the federal level caused dissatisfaction among the leadership of Serbia, but also determination to extend pragmatic efforts in this direction.<sup>36</sup>

The first disagreements among the members of the younger generation appeared in late 1984 and resurfaced occasionally in the following three years. By no means considered serious before the September 1987 showdown, the disputes resulted partly from the officials' clashes over political influence in the wake of generational change and partly from constraints arising from their different institutional bases and reputations. This strategic positioning, however, revealed that they were not fully committed to political reforms. The cautious political liberalisation they had initiated increasingly depended upon power relations within the leadership and relations with other regional leaders. When Milošević succeeded Ivan Stambolić at the helm of the Belgrade Committee, he regarded the lingering influence of Galović in the capital's political affairs as a major constraint on his power. Milošević gradually sidelined his rival and partly reversed Galović's relaxed approach to relations with civil society, thanks to support from an increasingly influential group from the University Committee and some of the elders as well as the indifference of Ivan Stambolić.<sup>37</sup>

In September 1986 excerpts from a working paper of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts suddenly appeared in a Belgrade daily. The main contention was that socialist Yugoslavia had been deliberately set up in a way that left Serbia economically and politically disadvantaged and that Serbs faced full-scale discrimination in Kosovo and diminution of rights in Croatia.<sup>38</sup> As party organs across Yugoslavia denounced the memorandum as highly damaging to the cause of the Yugoslav state and regime, the leadership of Serbia orchestrated a wide-ranging campaign against the Academy. Ivan Stambolić and Pavlović, who led the campaign, implied in their memoirs that Milošević, by denouncing the memorandum at closed party sessions but not in public speeches, deliberately set the stage for subsequent cooperation with nationalist intellectuals.<sup>39</sup> This is highly unlikely, since this cooperation partly materialised in a very different political context in the second half of 1988, following the eruption of conflict among regional leaders and between political elites and various groups from society. High party-state officials whom I interviewed for this article have not confirmed this allegation. The behaviour of Ivan Stambolić, Pavlović and Milošević depended principally upon their institutional bases and reputations, which led them to play to different audiences. Ivan Stambolić had always refrained from any move that might alienate other regional leaders, since reforms initiated under his leadership required their endorsement. By leading the

campaign against the Academy, he demonstrated that he was a responsible partner who took their interests seriously. Milošević, who held a back seat in discussions over the constitutional reform, was much less constrained by these considerations. In contrast to Ivan Stambolić, who had at times been criticised for not being hard enough on nationalists, he had early earned the sympathies of other regional leaders for preserving the Titoist legacy.<sup>40</sup>

By 1987 the aspirations of Milošević's loyal supporters, gathered around the University Committee, had risen sharply. They now targeted Pavlović through the proxy of a student magazine, which had recently mocked both the group and leftovers of Tito's personality cult. Since an associate of Pavlović and Ivan Stambolić publicly opposed the attempts to limit press freedom, the members of the group demanded that party organs sanction officials who tolerated anti-Titoist "excesses." The first public display of disagreements in the leadership was partly a consequence of sudden disputes over another matter. After meeting representatives of Kosovo Serbs in Kosovo Polje in April 1987, Milošević suddenly showed interest in the policy towards Kosovo and pulled all strings to call the session of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia to discuss the policy.<sup>41</sup> The Kosovo crisis had repeatedly returned to the agenda of federal organs since the 1981 demonstrations of Kosovo Albanians, framed as "counter-revolution." Milošević now demanded that the Central Committee set specific targets for the performance of party and state organs at all levels in this area. As his intervention related only to the implementation of previously jointly approved policies and was seen as firmly remaining on the Titoist course, Milošević gained support from other regional leaders without difficulty. Ivan Stambolić and Pavlović disagreed with the move, but did not publicly oppose Milošević. They believed that any hasty action might in the long run alienate other regional leaders from supporting their efforts to forge closer links with Kosovo and might simultaneously radicalise Kosovo Serbs.<sup>42</sup> More importantly, Ivan Stambolić was baffled by his former protégé's refusal to listen to his advice.<sup>43</sup>

The first success at the federal political stage boosted Milošević's self-confidence and he subsequently took political initiatives regularly without consulting Ivan Stambolić. The showdown between the two now increasingly consolidated factions in the leadership took place in late summer. In early September a Kosovo Albanian recruit murdered four recruits of other nationalities in the military barracks in Paracin, a small town in central Serbia. Subsequently, parts of the Belgrade press, considered to be close to Milošević, launched a campaign against Kosovo's officials for their alleged failure to stave off the nationalist hysteria that produced such excesses. In a surprising move Pavlović summoned media directors from the capital and warned that such reporting would only inflame the crisis. More importantly, he stressed that there were no easy solutions for the Kosovo crisis, by which he alluded to earlier public statements of Milošević that swift action was required, as in other areas of policy.<sup>44</sup>

In turn Milošević invoked the "anti-faction" rule against Pavlović and demanded

his removal from the Presidium of the Central Committee, which would make his position at the helm of the powerful Belgrade Committee untenable. Milošević and his supporters claimed that Pavlović obstructed the implementation of the party's policy by challenging the decisions of higher party organs.<sup>45</sup> Pavlović fought back and secured support from the Belgrade Committee, not least because he had prior to the session shown to prominent members of the Committee a letter of support from Ivan Stambolić. At the session of all high party and state officials from Serbia on 18–19 September, Pavlović narrowly lost the battle despite the repeated attempts of Ivan Stambolić to appease Milošević.<sup>46</sup> Although Ivan Stambolić was not the main target, his reputation suffered a big blow as it became apparent that the power balance had tipped towards his former protégé. At the televised session of the Central Committee on 24–25 September, the battle won with a small margin turned into a far-reaching victory for Milošević's faction. As a result, Ivan Stambolić effectively lost control over the main levers of power. Stripped of influence and facing a growing smear campaign in the press, Ivan Stambolić resigned in December, leaving Milošević alone at the pinnacle of power.

### **Why Milošević Won**

The impasse at the federal level, which blocked attempts at political and economic reforms, caused dissatisfaction in the leadership of Serbia. Most high party and state officials from the younger generation fully supported the reformist course initiated under the leadership of Ivan Stambolić and by no means blamed him for slow progress. However, at a time when sound leadership seemed essential, many in the establishment found aspects of his leadership style increasingly incongruent with the values of their generation. They were disappointed when, after much talk about opportunities opened by generational change, Ivan Stambolić aimed principally at strengthening personal power by promoting intimate friends to high office. Many believed that there was still too much continuity with the elders' way of doing politics, which looked archaic and distasteful. Rumours about large drinking parties and accompanying entertainment at public expense, in the infamous manner of some members of the older generation, only made things worse.

Simultaneously, the appeal of Milošević grew despite the fact that he was the main beneficiary of Ivan Stambolić's attempts to strengthen personal power. His appeal to members of the younger generation, mostly the well-educated and experienced administrators who dominated high party and state organs in the second half of the 1980s, was based on his personal qualities. Educational background, career achievements and personality recommended Milošević for high office. His reputation as a modern, successful manager and economic moderniser, with a background in banking and foreign debt restructuring, provided a special appeal at a time of mounting economic crisis and reflected key policy aspirations of his generation. Milošević was

expected to infuse efficiency and flexibility into a rigid and lethargic party apparatus and bring it in line with changes that had already occurred in society. His outspoken manner, insistence on meritocratic recruitment, and frequent encouragement of low- and middle-ranking officials to demand accountability from high officials sharply contrasted with the clientelistic deals of the older generations. Not least, Milošević was known as a rather modest personality, who steered clear of the out-of-work pursuits increasingly associated with his former protector.<sup>47</sup> In the wake of generational change, he reflected the values and concerns of the younger generation better than his opponents.

However, the personality of Milošević provides only a small part of the explanation. Like Ivan Stambolić beforehand, Milošević emerged personally as the leader largely on the strength of his strategic position as President of the regional party Presidium, which granted him power to build up political support in the Central Committee and to change power relations in high party organs. In 1986 Milošević found himself in a position similar to that of Vlaškalić and Čkrebić before 1984, as he occupied the highest regional party office without running the show. Unlike those two, Milošević had an ambition to play a major role in the leadership and aimed at gaining political support that would make this possible. Soon after the selection of Milošević as the new President of the regional Presidium but before the party Congress that verified the selection, Ivan Stambolić and Milošević jointly selected new members of the Presidium and holders of executive posts in the Central Committee. High party officials were astonished to see the two friends bitterly argue over nominations soon after Ivan Stambolić secured the highest party office for Milošević against the majority opposition among the leadership.<sup>48</sup> Stambolić turned down some of Milošević's nominations, but the episode shows that the latter was early focused on extending his personal network in high party organs and ready to test the commitment of his political protector.

At that time the political machine of Milošević was limited to an influential group in the Belgrade Committee, his former institutional base. That group that was in turn associated with another group in the University Committee, formed around his wife Mira Marković. Doctrinaire Marxists and self-professed Titoists, members of the University Committee group challenged a relaxed approach to ideology. They skilfully, but misleadingly, presented their views as those prevailing at the university, which at a time of growing influence of the younger generation granted them influence beyond their institutional base.<sup>49</sup> While their commitment to ideology and revolution appealed to the elders, their views on cadre renewal were shared by members of their generation. Their radical posturing, rooted in a doctrinaire approach to politics, made the group an unpredictable and unreliable political ally for all.

The narrow power base of Milošević was not initially a problem because he could fully rely upon the cadre selected by Ivan Stambolić, since they came from the same political generation and considered him to be Ivan's right-hand man. Milošević, however, preferred to have a loyal cadre in high party organs and appointed his

associates to vacant posts in the Central Committee, including chairs of various standing groups and junior executive secretaryships.<sup>50</sup> Milošević regularly invited loyal associates to address the Presidium and the Central Committee in spite of their not being members of these bodies. While this was not unusual at a time when high party officials wanted to give the impression of openness and flexibility, Milošević made use of the practice to promote his loyal cadre and create the impression of dominance of the high party organs. Roughly a third of the speakers at the sessions of the Central Committee in April and September 1987 came from outside its membership and many were closely associated with Milošević.<sup>51</sup>

Milošević early on became aware of the power of media, and several of his appointees in the Belgrade and Central Committees were influential media directors. High party officials had exercised control over the capital's powerful media through the appointments of media directors and supervision by career party officials from the Belgrade Committee. In contrast, Milošević, by granting the media principals an important role to play in high party organs, simultaneously extended personal influence over the most influential media and shifted their supervision from the Belgrade to the Central Committee, and thus away from Pavlović. The press under his control extensively reported on the activities of his loyal associates, especially in the standing groups of the Central Committee they now controlled. The group in this way set the agenda for the Presidium and the Central Committee and communicated to party and state officials, and most importantly to members of the Central Committee, an impression of its supremacy in party organs. During the press campaign against Pavlović in September, the Belgrade dailies *Politika* and *Politika Ekspres* went so far as to present the support he received from the Belgrade Committee as a full-blown defeat. This was a major innovation in the role of the press in the politics of socialist Yugoslavia. Earlier the winning side in a leadership conflict used to carry out smear campaigns in the press against its opponents only to justify their purge from office. Now the press came to play an important role in deciding the very outcome of the power struggle.

It is likely that the September showdown between the two factions in the leadership was an unintended consequence of the limited struggle about control over parts of the Belgrade press. The main targets of Pavlović's speech on 11 September were the media principals, especially the editor-in-chief of *Politika*, who had already been undermined by recent scandals. According to the unpublished transcript of the session of the narrow leadership circle on 18–19 September, which I have been able to examine, large parts of the discussion related to the role of the press. The opponents of Milošević insisted on the inadequate editorial policy of *Politika*, while his supporters targeted *NIN* and *Student*, which were considered to be supporting Ivan Stambolić and Pavlović. Furthermore, when it became apparent that the power balance had already tipped towards his former protégé, Ivan Stambolić tried to appease Milošević by surrendering control over parts of the press. He offered to officially endorse the shift of the supervising authority over the press from the

Belgrade Committee to the Central Committee, provided that the supervising role should return from the media directors to career party officials.<sup>52</sup>

The power of the office that Milošević occupied was essential in building alliances on his road to power, especially with the remaining elders in the leadership. Though not viable contenders for power, they retained significant influence in party organs. From mid 1986 they grew increasingly restless, feeling threatened by the concentration of power in the hands of Ivan Stambolić. Rumours that Stambolić intended to replace Ljubičić in the federal state Presidency before the end of his mandate hardly helped. Nor did a few newspaper articles about the alleged corruption and nepotism of Ljubičić and other articles aimed at making fun of Čkrebić.<sup>53</sup> In an attempt to safeguard their position against a potential threat and prevent the concentration of power in the leadership, they backed Milošević, a new President of the party Presidium, whose strong institutional base could provide a counterbalance to the personal power of Ivan Stambolić. The elders also liked Milošević. They respected his commitment to the Titoist course and energetic style of leadership as well as his tough stance towards dissident intellectuals.<sup>54</sup> Finally, “Ljubičić and Čkrebić were fed up with Stambolićs,” as Špiro Galović explained in an interview with the author. Ultimately, the elders’ backing of Milošević was rooted in self-interest and their role in the events was parallel to that they played in sidelining Marković in 1985–1986. Support from the elders turned out to be important: a number of members of the Presidium and Central Committee stressed the elders’ opposition to Pavlović as the reason why they voted for his removal from office.<sup>55</sup>

Milošević also exploited the strategic position of a party leader to choose institutional arenas in which the leadership struggle would unfold and to assemble majority support in these organs. He initiated proceedings against Pavlović in the regional Presidium because his rival enjoyed majority support in the Belgrade Committee. Then Milošević instructed district party secretaries under his supervision to degrade his opponent’s reputation. According to the unpublished transcript of the session of the narrow leadership circle on 18–19 September, nearly all of the secretaries demanded the removal of Pavlović from the leadership.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, they subsequently played a major part in making members of the Central Committee from their districts support Milošević’s faction in the Committee. A prominent high party official explained the process: “you call a district committee, present a directive with opinion of the Presidium, they call the members of the Central Committee from their district and ‘get them ready’ for the session of the Central Committee.”<sup>57</sup> In short, institutional power was critical in the ascent of Milošević.

The political programme thesis erroneously assumes that the outcome of the power struggle between Milošević and Ivan Stambolić signalled a major change in the power structure. The rise of Milošević as the leader in 1986–1987 reflected neither a shift to a different type of a non-democratic regime nor the beginning of the process of democratisation. The shift from the collective leadership back to the “circular flow of power” had already occurred at the regional level before the ascent

of Ivan Stambolić in 1985–1986. The misleading impression that the rise of Milošević reflected a major change in power structure partly resulted from the different political styles of Ivan Stambolić and Milošević and their perceptions about the power of their rivals. The extensive power of Stambolić in 1986 was apparent only to members of the leadership and interested observers, partly because of his restrained political style and partly due to his short-lived ascendancy.

By contrast, Milošević came to be perceived as an exceptionally powerful leader in part because of his highly conflictual political style and tendency to employ the media under his control to communicate power to his rivals and in part because of the role he played in subsequent political developments, including the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the wars of Yugoslav succession. The main reason that Milošević, unlike Ivan Stambolić, purged his rivals from leadership with full public vilification in 1987 was not that he was more powerful in the aftermath of the leadership succession than his predecessor had been in 1986. Rather, Ivan Stambolić had been fully confident in his control over the main levers of power following the conflict with Marković. By contrast, Milošević and his associates felt highly insecure in the wake of the removal of Pavlović. Fearing a counter-attack from Ivan Stambolić and his associates, largely without reason, they initiated a sweeping purge of their opponents from the leadership.<sup>58</sup>

The rise of Milošević as the leader in 1986–1987 should not be conflated with the mobilisation and spread of nationalism that occurred in Serbia in the following two years. While deeply embedded in the specific features of Yugoslavia's political context, namely a highly decentralised political structure and shifting political alignments in the 1980s, the political struggles of 1988–1989 unfolded principally in response to pressures from society. The popular struggles over socioeconomic issues, accountability of party and state officials, political participation and constitutional reform, and the growing social movements of the Kosovo Serbs and Albanians intensified long-standing elite conflicts and triggered a change in state–society relations. The rising levels of mobilisation in a complex multinational society and sharpened elite conflicts in turn highlighted the underlying inter-regional and inter-ethnic cleavages. As a result, conflicts over essentially non-nationalist issues gradually transformed into nationalist conflicts, often against the wishes of the political actors.

The secret of the growing popularity of Milošević in the late summer and early autumn of 1988 did not lie in the nationalist programme. Milošević started building up popular support on the wave of discontent with irresponsible, even incompetent, political elites and the seemingly ineffective institutions of the regime and state. He fully backed the claims of various protest groups and embraced protest politics at a time when other leading Yugoslav politicians rejected either their demands or forms of action. Once nationalist conflicts became the dominant political conflicts on the Yugoslav political stage, Milošević turned into a promoter of nationalist solutions, like many other Yugoslavia's high party and state officials who aimed at surviving

the collapse of the old power structure. In addition to the shift in the substantive content of the regime's policies, the turmoil of 1988–1989 produced a different, more populist variety of non-democratic regime in Serbia, which survived the introduction of electoral politics in 1990.

### Conclusion

The rise of Milošević as the leader had little to do with a nationalist programme, contrary to the assertion of specialists on Yugoslavia and supporters of Milošević. The continuing institutional struggles over relations between Serbia and its autonomous provinces and the protests of the Kosovo Serbs remained on the agenda of leadership, but were hardly seen as more important than other issues. Milošević and Ivan Stambolić came into conflict partly in relation to policy towards Kosovo, but the policy was little more than a trigger for a looming power struggle between factions based on the leaders' personal networks. Minor disagreements over policy implementation in the months preceding the showdown were exaggerated in the heat of the power struggle, and even more so in subsequent interpretations. The appeal of Milošević was based on his personal merits and the fact that, in the aftermath of generational change, he reflected the values and concerns of his generation better than his rivals. Nevertheless, the outcome of the power struggle was largely decided by institutional power, as Milošević exploited the power of his office to build up support in high party organs and to outmanoeuvre his rivals.

Collective leadership, the underlying assumption of the political programme thesis, had already been undermined at the regional level in the early 1980s. The erosion of party unity at the federal centre and generational change disturbed political alliances that had been fortified in the aftermath of the purges of 1971–1972 and opened space for leadership struggles within the republics. The ascent of Ivan Stambolić demonstrated that ultimate power at the regional level returned to the highest regional party office and the subsequent rise of Milošević brought little changes to the power structure. The formal and informal organisation of the centre of political power and its relations with society remained the same and the power of the new leader was no greater than that of his predecessor. That Ivan Stambolić in 1986 and Milošević in 1987 managed to successfully confront initially more powerful rivals was due to the differences in the power structure in Yugoslavia and other socialist party-states.

In the Soviet model, an established leader held the highest party office and was therefore protected against potential challengers, except in the case of major conflict over policy that harmed the interests of large parts of the elite or society. As a result, a full-blown leadership struggle occurred only after the top post had become vacant. In Yugoslavia, from the early 1970s, the most influential regional politicians did not necessarily hold the highest regional party office, owing to the practice of collective leadership. Once Tito's death and generational change shook the political stage, a

regional party leader could employ the power of his office to remove an established leader and restore the primacy of the highest regional party office. Simultaneously, the highly decentralised institutions of the party, state and government kept the practice of collective leadership at the federal centre intact and prevented the emergence of a powerful successor to Tito.

The rise of Milošević as the leader in 1986–1987 should not be conflated with the formation of a new power structure and the diffusion of nationalism in Serbia in 1988–1989, processes that unfolded principally in response to pressures from society. The episode of the ascent of Milošević through the old power structure is essentially a story about Yugoslavia's party-state and its decay in the 1980s. Above all, Yugoslavia was a socialist party-state, albeit a highly decentralised one, and the rise of Milošević unfolded largely under the rules of the game characteristic for these regimes, without relation to society. The specialists' assertions about "Yugoslav exceptionalism," in terms of Yugoslavia's unique polity and power structure, and exclusive focus on nationalist strategies of elites and institutional arrangements regulating inter-ethnic and inter-regional relations fly in the face of hard facts of power in a socialist party-state.

#### NOTES

1. For the most sophisticated exposition of the former view see Lenard J. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 2001), pp. 43–74; for the most detailed and informed attempt to substantiate the latter view see Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin and BBC, 1995), pp. 37–47.
2. Interview in *Duga*, 7 June 1991.
3. See Steven L. Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia: Political Decision Making since 1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). The collective character of leadership did not preclude frequent conflicts among regions over the distribution of material resources at the disposal of federal organs.
4. Dragiša Pavlović, *Olako obecana brzina* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988); Ivan Stambolić, *Put u bespuće: odgovori Ivana Stambolića na pitanja Slobodana Inića* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1995); and Mirko Djekić, *Upotreba Srbije: optužbe i priznanja Draže Markovića* (Belgrade: Besede, 1990).
5. I conducted interviews with Dragoslav Draža Marković and Boško Krnić, members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of Yugoslavia and its Presidents in 1983–1984 and 1987–1988, respectively; Špiro Galović, Vaso Milinčević and Milenko Marković, members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of Serbia; Danilo Marković, a minister in the government of Serbia; Slobodan Jovanović, a high official in the Belgrade Committee and editor of a popular Belgrade daily; nine high officials who wanted to remain anonymous, including prominent members of the federal party Presidium, regional party Presidium, state Presidency of Serbia, government of Serbia, Presidium of the Provincial Committee of Vojvodina and the Belgrade Committee; and a senior aide to Draža Marković and Ivan Stambolić (Belgrade and Novi Sad, July 1999, July and August 2000, July 2001).
6. A number of personal accounts of the politicians who took part in these events have been

published in book form—including: Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina*; Djekić, *Upotreba Srbije*; Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*; and Dušan Čkrebić, *Zapis na pesku: sećanja* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1995)—and numerous interviews appeared in the local press. For speeches of the two leading figures of the period in Serbia see Ivan Stambolić, *Rasprave o SR Srbiji* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988) and Slobodan Milošević, *Godine raspleta* (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1989).

7. The most important documents that shed light on the September 1987 showdown are: “Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SK Srbije,” held in Belgrade, 18–19 September 1987 (unauthorised transcript, CK SKS, Predsedništvo, 0300 No: highly confidential, 290/1), Vols 1 and 2; and “Osma sednica CK SK Srbije,” held in Belgrade, 24–25 September 1987, Dokumenti Saveza komunista Srbije (Belgrade: Komunist, 1987). I am grateful to a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of Serbia, whom I have interviewed for this article, for the permission to read his personal copy of the transcript “Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SK Srbije,” a document that is still unavailable to the public.
8. Milošević was born in Požarevac, a small town in central Serbia. His parents, who were originally from Montenegro, settled in the town on the eve of the Second World War. His father, a catechist and teacher of Russian and Serbo-Croat, later separated from his wife and returned to Montenegro, so Slobodan and his elder brother grew up with their mother, a schoolteacher and devoted communist. Their childhood passed without much disturbance and excitement and Slobodan was remembered as a quiet and diligent pupil. See Slavoljub Djukić, *Između slave i anateme: politička biografija Slobodana Miloševića* (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1994), pp. 13–17.
9. For a highly informative and balanced portraits of leading members of the older generation in Serbia see the account of their younger long-term associate in Čkrebić, *Zapis na pesku*, pp. 271–340.
10. For details about the “liberals” and their removal from power see Slavoljub Djukić, *Slom srpskih liberala: tehnologija političkih obračuna Josipa Broza* (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1990). For more information about purges in other Yugoslav republics see Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment, 1948–1974* (London: C. Hurst, 1977).
11. See Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment*, pp. 143–144.
12. Djukić, *Slom srpskih liberala*, pp. 105–262.
13. Draža Marković, interview with the author.
14. The post was subsequently renamed “President of the Presidium of the Central Committee.”
15. Draža Marković, Špiro Galović, Vaso Milinčević and two influential members of the regional party Presidium who wanted to remain anonymous, interviews with the author.
16. Draža Marković, interview with author.
17. Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, pp. 66–67. See the full text of the “Blue Book” in Djekić, *Upotreba Srbije*.
18. “Osamnaesta sednica CK SK Srbije,” held in Belgrade, 23–24 November 1984, Dokumenti Saveza Komunista Srbije (Belgrade: Komunist, 1984).
19. See “Osamnaesta sednica CK SK Srbije.”
20. In April 1984 Stipe Šušvar, a chief party ideologue in Croatia and a member of the younger generation, initiated a sweeping attack on the partial liberalisation by singling out tens of “anti-socialist” and “anti-Titoist” authors who thrived under the new policy. See a full text of the “White Book” in *Intervju*, No. 11, 1989. Others responded quietly by unanimously rejecting the nomination of Ivan Stambolić for President of the Federal Executive Council (government). See Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, pp. 114–115.

21. Jerry F. Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–1991* (Washington, Brookings Institution Press, 1997), pp. 80–86; and Robert V. Daniels, “Soviet Politics since Khrushchev,” in John W. Strong, ed., *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev and Kosygin: The Transition Years* (New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1971), p. 20.
22. Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fansoid, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 260–61; and Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR*, pp. 80–86.
23. For more information about constitutional and party reforms and elite conflicts and alliances of the late 1960s and early 1970s see Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia*; April Carter, *Democratic Reform in Yugoslavia: The Changing Role of the Party* (London: Frances Pinter, 1982); and Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment*.
24. Steven L. Burg, “Elite Conflict in Post-Tito Yugoslavia,” *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 1986.
25. Draža Marković, interview with the author.
26. Čkrebić, *Zapis na pesku*, pp. 278, 302–303.
27. Draža Marković, interview with the author.
28. A prominent member of the regional Presidium who wanted to remain anonymous, interview with the author.
29. An anonymous high party official who was in charge of the cadre selection process in the regional party Presidium, interview with the author.
30. Draža Marković, Boško Krnić, Špiro Galović and two anonymous high party officials, all present at the meeting, interview with the author.
31. Two influential, anonymous members of the regional party Presidium, at the time a supporter and an opponent of Ivan Stambolić, interviews with the author.
32. High party and state officials, regardless of their age and proximity to either Stambolić or Milošević at the time, repeated this time and again in interviews with the author.
33. An anonymous member of the regional Presidium, interview with the author.
34. Two prominent members of the regional Presidium from the younger generation who wanted to remain anonymous, interviews with the author.
35. Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, pp. 141–142.
36. Špiro Galović, Vaso Milinčević, Milenko Marković and another, anonymous member of the regional Presidium, interviews with the author.
37. Draža Marković, Špiro Galović and two influential members of the regional Presidium who wanted to remain anonymous, interviews with the author.
38. See full text of the memorandum in Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krešić, *Memorandum SANU: odgovori na kritike* (Belgrade: SANU, 1995), pp. 99–147.
39. Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina*, p. 51; and Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, p. 131.
40. Interview with Stipe Šuvar, RFE/RL, South Slavic Service, 3 December 1999, <<http://www.danas.org/programi/interview/1999/12/19991203100229.asp>> .
41. For details about the meeting, the grassroots protest of the Kosovo Serbs and their relations with Milošević see Nebojša Vladislavljević, “Nationalism, Social Movement Theory and the Grass Roots Movement of Kosovo Serbs, 1985–1988,” *Europe–Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 5, 2002, pp. 771–90.
42. Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina*, p. 52; and Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, pp. 167–170.
43. Vaso Milinčević, Milenko Marković and another, anonymous member of the regional Presidium, interviews with the author.
44. Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina*, pp. 94–99.
45. “Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SKS”, Vol. 1; and “Osmo sednica CK SKS”, pp. 155–164.

46. Only 11 out of 20 members of the regional Presidium voted to remove Pavlović from membership of the body. "Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SKS", Vol. 2, p. 128/3. Other participants of the meeting, members of federal party organs and high state officials, did not have voting rights.
47. High party officials from the younger generation, including supporters and opponents of Milošević, interviews with the author.
48. An anonymous member of the Presidium who assisted Stambolić and Milošević in the cadre selection process, and Špiro Galović, interviews with the author.
49. Draža Marković, Špiro Galović and three anonymous high party officials, interviews with the author.
50. Špiro Galović, Vaso Milinčević, Milenko Marković and two anonymous high party officials, interviews with the author.
51. Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina*, pp. 48, 59, 188; and Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, p. 162.
52. "Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SKS," Vol. 2.
53. Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, pp. 111–12, 171–172; and Pavlović, *Olako obećana brzina*, pp. 75–76.
54. Stambolić, *Put u bespuće*, pp. 147–148.
55. "Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SKS" and "Osma sednica CK SKS."
56. "Trideseta sednica Predsedništva CK SKS," Vol. 2.
57. An anonymous member of the regional Presidium, interview with the author.
58. High party and state officials from the Milošević's group repeatedly stressed the seriousness of the threat in interviews with the author. Another episode fully reveals the extent to which many from the Milošević's group feared Ivan Stambolić, even many years after he had retired from politics. In August 2000, a month before the presidential election that set in motion the demise of Milošević, there were rumours that Ivan Stambolić might enter the presidential race. This should not have been a reason for concern for either Milošević or a democratic opposition candidate, since Stambolić had never enjoyed popular support in Serbia and could not realistically win but a very small fraction of the vote. Nonetheless, some people from the regime apparently believed that he had become a serious threat again. Stambolić was promptly abducted and murdered. His body was found two and a half years later, during the police investigation following the assassination of Zoran Dindić, the Prime Minister of Serbia.

