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**Migration Depicted
in Cartoons: A Case
Study of *Jež* Magazine
(1981–1990)**

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Migration Depicted in Cartoons: A Case Study of *Jež* Magazine (1981–1990)

This paper examines the depiction of migrations from Kosovo and Metohija during the 1980s in cartoons published in Yugoslavia's most prominent satirical newspaper – *Jež* (Hedgehog). During that time, readers were consistently exposed to emotionally charged drawings illustrating the departure of emigrants. What was significant in these illustrations was the wearing of the Serbian national hat, *šajkača*. Previously, this hat symbolized social status, representing the rural population and peasants. However, during the crisis, its significance shifted, becoming a symbol of Serbian nationality. In public life, particularly among intellectual circles, this era saw the resurgence of neo-traditionalist narratives glorifying Serbia's past. The visual representation of these narratives can be observed in cartoons, notably from 1986 onward, coinciding with the proliferation of cartoons featuring emigrants. These constructed neo-traditionalist narratives were appropriated and utilized by Slobodan Milošević's populist machinery as a means to maintain power. The cartoons, as a direct product of the burgeoning Serbian nationalist policy at that time, played a role in propaganda and mobilization.

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KEYWORDS:

political cartoons, *Jež*, migrations, Kosovo, peasant, *šajkača* hat

The purpose of this paper is to show how the cartoons elaborated on the issue of migrations of Serbian people from Kosovo and Metohija during the 1980s. In this first section of the paper, we will briefly define the term cartoon and its most important properties. Usage of cartoons as serious research material has not been the focus of academic studies in the Balkans till recent years. This study aims to humbly contribute to that goal, to greater usability of cartoons' potential in elaborating different social phenomena. One is migrations that frequently follow different terrifying situations, like war conflicts or natural disasters. Migration has become a global problem nowadays in many ways. Not just in economic and demographic, but much more in social and human terms of thinking. The emphasis will then be placed on the *Jež* newspaper as the most popular satirical magazine that was published on the territory of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Given that the main parameter through which the cartoon is analyzed is the suit of the Serbian peasant, i.e. its key element, the hat, we will talk about the origin and role of the cap in wartime and peacetime. The history of that hat and its popularization among the people is extremely significant because it was recognized as a national symbol, with an ethnic connotation.

The dominant themes that the cartoons dealt with were closely related to contemporary socio-political events. Therefore, in the next part, given the importance of the issues that the cartoons visualized, it is necessary to clarify in more detail the socio-historical context of events.

In the second section of the paper, the basic facts about migrations in the 1980s will be explained having in mind both pro-Serbian and pro-Albanian historiography as well as more distanced views. Knowing the historical background, it will be easier to comprehend the cartoons that are the subject of this paper. The analysis of selected cartoons is the main part of the paper, and it follows the historical part. Finally, we will conclude that through the main character of the cartoons, the peasant, more precisely his graphic representation and the symbolism attributed to his costume, a message was broadcasted with the purpose of political manipulation in a crisis political moment.

Political cartoons and migrations

What can we say about cartoons? They're here to bring joy, highlighting the strangeness and humor in the things, events, and people around us. They might depict someone by purposefully magnifying, stressing, or highlighting their flaws or traits. However, cartoons can also serve as a means of conveying sophisticated communication. In these instances, the cartoonist uses signs, symbols, and often references from literature and history, combined with visual comparisons and text, all rooted in a specific cultural context.

By using non-verbal symbols, cartoons convey their message more directly and effectively. One of their key attributes as a form of expression is their simple yet efficient narrative. Glancing at a cartoon often reveals its core message almost immediately, allowing cartoons to achieve their aims more effortlessly and effectively. Moreover, the distinctive expression style of cartoons, employing irony, satire, and exaggeration of reality, serves

as a highly communicative tool. As a metaphorical and visually graphical representation, cartoons primarily rely on visual communication.

Newer ethnological-anthropological perspectives view cartoons more as a reflection of the inner, mental world of their creator and his or her perception of the surrounding reality than as its pure description.¹ Simultaneously, cartoons serve as cultural artifacts upholding and defining a culture; they highlight, reassert, stress, and fortify biases, disdain, sorrow, and the community's apprehension of outsiders.² As evidence of their potency and impact on the public, the words of the American politician William Tweed, notorious for corruption in the latter half of the 19th century, resonate: "Let's stop them damn pictures. I don't care so much what the papers write about me, my constituents can't read, but, damn it, they can see pictures."³

The previous lack of interest among local researchers until recently is understandable. Similar disinterest prevailed in Western studies where cartoons were deemed unimportant and largely disregarded until the mid-1980s. They were seldom seen as valuable material warranting academic inquiry, resulting in low scholarly interest. However, since then, there has been a notable surge in recognizing the potential of cartoons. Academic studies globally, covering diverse subjects including cartoons, have expanded significantly. Encouragingly, scholars in our region are increasingly showing interest in this area. While the outcomes are recent, there have been earnest.⁴ Despite this, cartoons have not yet gained substantial traction among scholars. In this context, this paper stands out as a rare example, merging the potential of cartoons as a research source with the theme of migrations.

More than ever before, discussions about ethnic conflicts, migrations, refugees, and the aspirations that accompany such uncertain life changes are happening across the globe. The recent Syrian migrant crisis has garnered substantial attention from scholars who are analyzing it through cartoons. However, an inevitable aspect of migration is the suffering experienced by migrants during their journey and the harsh conditions they face, sometimes leading to death. Yet, the suffering of migrants doesn't cease upon reaching the "Promised Land," as they often encounter a lack of political and social support.⁵ Migrations resulting from ethnic conflicts have

¹ Helge Gerndt, "Gedanken über "innere Bilder" anhand von Cartoons," *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde. Gedenkschriften für Ingolf Bauer* (2007): 225-34. Also, Petar Petrov, "Caricatures as a Source in the Study of Mental Images: A Bulgarian Example," in *Images of the Other in Ethnic Caricatures*, ed. Dagnoslav Demski and Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska (Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology Polish Academy of Sciences, 2010), 90-91.

² Jessica Speedling, "Metaphorical Representations of Character and Issues in Political Cartoon on the 2004 Presidential Debates" (MA thesis, John Hopkins University, 2004).

³ Stephen Hess and Milton Kaplan, *The Ungentlemanly Art: A History of American Political Cartoon* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 2.

⁴ Aleksandra Krstić, Giorgia Aiello, and Nebojša Vladislavljević, "Visual Metaphor and Authoritarianism in Serbian Political Cartoons," *Media, War & Conflict* 13, no. 1 (2020): 27-49; Tatjana Mikulić, "Ideological aspects of the visual symbols of the peasantry on the example of the caricature in the newspaper *Jež* (1935-1990)" (PhD diss., Filozofski fakultet u Beogradu, 2016).

⁵ Julie Alev Dilmaç and Ozker Kocadal, "Syrian Refugees in Turkish Cartoons: A Social

also attracted significant scholarly interest worldwide. Currently, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been extensively examined. Notably, analyzing cartoons published in Western media countries regarding their creation and reception sheds light on these issues.⁶ Viewing cartoons as a crucial element in the Middle Eastern crisis, Joel Kotek cautioned against the use of cartoons in Arab and Western media to propagate anti-Jewish sentiments.⁷ The extensive histories of Anglo-Irish relations have been thoroughly explored through cartoons in publications such as *Punch*, the *Irish World*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Le Charivari*, and the *Irish News* by various cartoonists.⁸ The tensions between India and Pakistan have been depicted through prevalent cartoon themes, revealing the positions of major newspapers in both countries.⁹ A study from 2015 investigates how cartoons can convey different meanings and implications based on the political affiliations of the media groups that publish them. It also delves into the dual nature of political cartoons, often tarnishing the image of one party while preserving the other's reputation.

Political cartoons are powerful tools for sharing opinions and feelings, especially about specific topics aimed at certain people. Cartoons about Kosovo's migrations rely on history and politics, meant for those who understand the historical context well.¹⁰ This conflict could be seen as long-lasting, spanning years where generations grew up constantly exposed to media reports about it. When people "read" cartoons, they start connecting with them differently, identifying themselves with the depictions. As a result, they become very familiar with the main characters and messages shown in the cartoons. For most of *Jež's* readers across Yugoslavia, especially in Serbia where the connection to enduring conflicts is deeply rooted in social, cultural, and political understanding, the message was interpreted similarly. Further analysis will reveal that cartoons depicting the political crisis caused by emigration from Kosovo rely on familiar associations. A national hat symbolizing ordinary people, symbols like suitcases for departure, and the way cartoons are presented in the paper (colorful, large size, on the front cover) strongly point to similar interpretations of the cartoons.

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Semiotic Analysis," *Studii de Lingvistica* 8 (2018): 211-29; Özlem Özdemir and Emrah Özdemir, "Whose Problem Is It Anyway? The Depiction of Syrian Refugee Influx in Political Cartoons," *Syria Studies* 9, no. 1 (April 2017): 33-24.

⁶ Jerome Bourdon and Sandrine Boudana, "Controversial Cartoons in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Cries of Outrage and Dialogue of the Deaf," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* (2016): 1-21.

⁷ Joel Kotek, *Cartoons and Extremism: Jews in the Arab and Western Media* (Edgware, UK: Valentine Mitchell, 2009).

⁸ Roy Douglas, Liam Harte, and Jim O'Hara, *Drawing Conclusions: A Cartoon History of Anglo-Irish Relations 1798-1998* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press Ltd, 1998).

⁹ Fraz Bakhtiar, M. Ismail, and Fawad Mohammad Baig, "Pak-India Relations: A Comparative Analysis of Political Cartoons," *Media, War & Conflict* (2023): 1-20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506352231184156>.

¹⁰ The example of Greek Cypriot conflict is a good parallel of a protracted conflict in which also are present these elements. "Political cartoons as visual securitization in ethnic conflict environments." European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference. Glasgow. September 3-6, 2014. https://www.academia.edu/16401999/Visual_securitization_Political_cartoons_in_protracted_conflicts

Ošišani Jež Magazine (Sheared Hedgehog)

The analysis of cartoons in this paper will be completely based on *Jež* magazine (*Hedgehog*). It was the most popular satirical magazine in 20th Century Yugoslavia. The original title of the magazine was *Ošišani Jež* (*Sheared Hedgehog*) when it launched in 1935. After the Second World War, the epithet *ošišani* was removed from the name of the paper for political reasons and as *Jež* it was published until 1990. In the last decade of the century, its old name was restored, but since it was published under changed circumstances – on a smaller scale, with different dynamics, and without including many of the authors from other Yugoslav republics. Nevertheless, in the annals of humor, *Jež* remains on record as the paper with the longest uninterrupted tradition of publishing.¹¹

As previous analysis¹² shows the main hero of the cartoons is a man of the people, a Serbian peasant. At the time when he established himself as a character in *Hedgehog's* cartoons the peasant population made up the majority of the country's population, and it was therefore possible for him to be widely accepted among the reader audience.¹³ The recognition of the peasant as an archetype with recognizable ethnic qualities (characteristics) arose from the specific position in which the peasantry found itself and the role it took on. It was glorified as a driving force, which carried uprisings on its shoulders and then gave birth to a royal dynasty, created "from the people".¹⁴ In all the wars fought in the 20th century, this social stratum suffered the greatest sacrifices in property and human lives, the greatest burden and impact of small everyday sacrifices. In cartoons, we will occasionally recognize him as such. His typical features are the essence of this character. Contrasting the impersonal nature of the establishment and the system, there's a character inherently patient and passive, yet brimming with life. They're wise and ready to fight when needed.

He was recognized as "one of our own," with whose problems everyone could identify, so as a simple, ordinary man with all the troubles that he encountered in real life, he became a favorite character.

¹¹ For more about the development of cartoons in Serbia that dates to the early 19th Century as well as about detailed history of *Jež* see Tatjana Mikulić, "O karikaturni ili kako se crtajući malo, kaže mnogo," *Antropologija* 15, nr. 3 (2015): 121-37.

¹² Detailed analysis of more than 1100 cartoons published for more than 50 years in *Jež* shows that the main character was the peasant. See Tatjana Mikulić "Seljak u karikaturni *Ježa* (1935-1990)," exhibition catalogue, Etnografski muzej u Beogradu 2021. Also see Tatjana Mikulić, "Ideological aspects of the visual symbols of the peasantry."

¹³ According to the 1931 census, 81.20% of population worked in agriculture. Mihajlo Isić, *Seljanka u Srbiji u prvoj polovini 20. veka* (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2008), 7.

¹⁴ The crucial fact for the mass acceptance of the Šumadija costume is reflected in the popular understanding of this area as the insurgent core, the so-called Serbian Piedmont. Jovan Cvijić called Šumadija the country of the "great national mission." Jovan Cvijić, *Iz društvenih nauka* (izb. tekstova Kostić C.) (Belgrade: Vuk Karadžić, 1965), 162. It was the center of the newly created state, with Kragujevac as the Prince's capital. The royal dynasty Karađorđević originated from the general populace.

Šajkača as a war and people's hat

In the cartoons, the peasant is depicted in his everyday clothes. During the 19th century, his costume endured rapid and frequent changes due to altered socio-historical circumstances and numerous cultural influences. It was first influenced by clothing patterns originating in oriental culture, while Western influences prevailed later on, due to the infiltration of the urban way of dressing. Finally, during the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century, a pattern of the costume was established that "survived as a typified costume of the people of Šumadija until the end of the existence of this costume."¹⁵ The basic parts of his clothes consisted of a shorter linen shirt, a yelek vest, and breeches (*čakšire*) made of *čoja* or *šajak*, a factory-made material made of rolled wool. The peasant wore woolen socks and *open* shoes. On his head, he usually wore a fur hat (*šubara*) or a *šajkača* hat.

In this analysis, within the mentioned clothing set that formed the folk costume of Šumadija, we will focus on the *šajkača* hat as an indispensable element of the peasant's graphic representation in the cartoons. All visualizations of the peasants were followed and instantly recognized specifically through the hat. Therefore, we will observe and interpret the hat as the smallest common container of the costume, that is, as its nucleus.



Figure 1. Men from Brezna village, Gornji Milanovac, Takovo. The man in the bottom row carries the *šajkača* hat, the second on the right (Photodocumentation of Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, II. Inv. No. 24583)

The *šajkača* hat dates back to the last decades of the 19th century when it first appeared as part of the Serbian military uniform. Worn during the liberation wars of 1876-78, it subsequently remained in military uniform, as synchronized by the official Regulations for the army uniform from that time, when it was required as part of the everyday uniform of the People's

¹⁵ Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić, *Narodna nošnja Šumadije* (Zagreb: Kulturno-prosvjetni sabor Hrvatske, 1989), 13.

Army.¹⁶ After the Balkan Wars (1912 and 1913), it became adopted in Serbia as a nationwide type of hat, and after the First World War (1914–1918) and unification in all parts inhabited by Serbs.¹⁷ It was worn in rural areas by peasants who brought it as part of their uniforms when they returned from the wars. In that way, it became an important part of the everyday peasant costume, representing a feature of the social stratum.



Figure 2. Soldiers of the 4th Regiment “Stefan Nemanja” (Photo documentation of Military Museum in Belgrade, Photograph R-5200)

The Yugoslav Crisis: Migrations from Kosovo 1980–1990

Following the death of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the country fell into a deep economic and political crisis. Since the end of the 1960s, the country was burdened with numerous foreign loans, and despite the impression of prosperity and a comfortable life that the general public had, the government debt continued to grow.¹⁸ The economic situation was burdened by internal illiquidity, as well as long-term inadequate and excessive investment spending. The 1974 Constitution of Yugoslavia made an enormous difference in Kosovo’s status as the official unit alongside the Yugoslav republics. Kosovo became *de facto* and enjoyed a substantial degree of autonomy in all spectrums of life (social, economic, and political). Many authors agreed the 1974 constitution gave the Kosovo Autonomous Region the powers of a full-fledged Republic in all.¹⁹ Kosovo was equally represented at the federal level with the other republics and enjoyed the right to create its constitutional structure. There was less state control and with

¹⁶ Čedomir Vasić i Mario Bralić, *Službeno odelo u Srbiji u 19. i 20. veku* (Belgrade: Galerija SANU, 2001).

¹⁷ Mitar Vlahović, “O najstarijoj kapi,” in *Zbornik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu 1901–1951*, ed. Mitar Vlahović (Belgrade: Naučna knjiga Izdavačko preduzeće Narodne Republike Srbije, 1953), 144–63.

¹⁸ According to data published by the World Bank, the total foreign debt of Yugoslavia in 1986 amounted to USD 21,363,600,000. Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, vol. 1 (Belgrade: Nolit, 1988), 446.

¹⁹ Carole Rogel, “Kosova: Where It All Began,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 17, no. 1 (2003): 167–82.

the constitution of 1974 the economic sector was co-operatively governed by the workforce.²⁰ Powers over the police, judiciary, and economic policy, including a national bank passed to Priština.²¹ But, at the heart of the crisis of economy and society before 1974 was the education question so a central demand for the Albanians was always for education in higher institutions in the Albanian language. Bellamy confirms that Kosovo's educational system significantly improved since all school children were entitled to receive education in the language of their choosing, be it Albanian, Serbian, or Turkish.²² Moreover, by 1967, Priština University was fully established, with many teachers of a very nationalist orientation²³ which strongly influenced generations of students. In his dissertation, Hetemi argues Kosovo students' desire for freedom from Serbian hegemony which was implemented through student movements and organized demonstrations in 1968, 1981, and 1997.²⁴

It all led to stronger relations with Albania so as Kostovicova claims the awareness and celebration of Albanian culture and identity raised in the years after 1974.²⁵ Moreover, as Hugh Poulton and Miranda Vickers noticed, in the early 1980s, the Kosovo Albanians were not suffering cultural repression. Kosovo was in effect an Albanian polity with the Albanian language in official use, Albanian television, radio, and press, and an ethnic Albanian government leadership. Even the courts that were used to persecute those calling for a republic of Kosovo had ethnic Albanian judges.²⁶ Albanians had significantly improved their position, but many demanded even greater political rights.

However, the post-Tito leadership lacked both opportunities and the ability to deal with economic problems that spilled over into the sphere of domestic politics. At the beginning of 1981, demonstrations broke out in Kosovo, and the slogan "Republic of Kosovo" dominated. These riots were a continuation of the 1968 demonstrations and the realization of separatist demands for the expansion of the province's autonomous competencies.²⁷ Interethnic problems in Kosovo have caused mass emigration of the non-Albanian population, which, as it turns out, was ongoing for more than a decade but has not been talked about in public. Even when it was articulated,

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²⁰ Shqipërim Reka, "Tourism governance in post-war transition: the case of Kosova" (PhD diss., Sheffield Hallam University, 2017), 151.

²¹ Dejan Guzina, "Kosovo or Kosova - Could it be Both? The Case of Interlocking Serbian and Albanian Nationalisms," in *Understanding the War in Kosovo*, ed. Florian Bieber and Zidas Daskalovski (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 33.

²² Alexander J. Bellamy, "Human Wrongs in Kosova: 1974-99," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 3-4 (2000): 107.

²³ James Pettifer, "Kosovo Economy & Society after 1945 - Some Observations," *Conflict Studies Research Centre, Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst* (Jan 2002): 7.

²⁴ On the prevailing role of students and their movements on state creation and their central role in "preserving" and passing from one generation to the next the vision of the "Republic" status for Kosovo see Hetemi's in depth analysis of that subject. Adthe Hetemi, "Student Movements: 1968, 1981 and 1997. The impact of students in mobilizing society to chant for the Republic of Kosovo" (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2019).

²⁵ Denisa Kostovicova, *Kosova: The politics of identity and space* (London: Routledge, 2005), 51.

²⁶ Hugh Poulton and Miranda Vickers, "Kosovo Albanians: Ethnic Confrontation with the Slav State," in *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, ed. Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 152.

²⁷ Kosovo was one of the two autonomous provinces within the Republic of Serbia. The other province was Vojvodina.

the single mentioned cause was the demographic factor, that is, the explosion of the birth rate of the Albanian population. Statistics show that since 1965 the natural increase of the Albanian population has not dropped below 79%, and in 1989 it amounted to as much as 90.1%. During that time, the natural increase of the population of the Serb ethnic group was 5–8%, and in 1989 it dropped to an incredibly low 3.7%.²⁸ As Madison claims, for decades Serbs had been leaving Kosovo, dropping from 23.6 percent of the population in 1961 to just over 13 percent in 1981.²⁹ At the same time, the immigration of Albanians from Albania to Kosovo increased greatly. They have already been immigrating to ethnically mixed places for decades, thus increasing ethnic homogeneity over time, and “most of the Province became predominantly Albanian.”³⁰

On the other hand, Kosovo’s authors claim that population politics has another background. Reka goes back to the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans in 1912–1913 and claims that Serbia then reinvaded Kosovo³¹ and began their operation of mass murder and ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians, to ‘correct’ statistical figures of the population, that were not in their favor.³²

However, various forms of discrimination against the non-Albanian population have been noted, which are considered to be an even much more important factor in initiating migration.³³ The system of discrimination included numerous forms of institutional discrimination reflected in employment policy, through various obstructions in the workplace, firing from jobs, uneven work schedules and working conditions, all the way to discrimination at the level of everyday life, which included intimidation, threats and violence against children and adults, and causing material damage. On several occasions, there were even physical attacks on the clergy destruction of church property, and desecration of cemeteries. In this regard, it is interesting that subsequent research has shown that in line with the “policy of silence” in the public media discourse on this topic, even the media of the Serbian Orthodox Church avoided direct spotlighting of the problem and only sporadically reported on certain hostile events.³⁴ Only in 1982 did they start to inform the public more openly about the situation in the Province, and only then “numerous cases of terror were pointed out, as well as official requests for help from the Serbian Orthodox Church during the period from 1968 to 1982, due to obvious continuity of terror and lack of

²⁸ Demografske promene Kosova u periodu 1948–2006. 2008. Serija 4: Statistika stanovništva. Zavod za statistiku Kosova (ZSK), Priština, table 6, 14.

²⁹ Ian Madison, “Parallel States, Public Services, and the Competition for Legitimacy in Kosovo” (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2019), 88.

³⁰ Branislav Krstić, *Kosovo između istorijskog i etničkog prava* (Belgrade: Kuća Vid, 1994), 161.

³¹ Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Kosova* (2nd ed.), Historical Dictionaries of Europe, Vol. 79 (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press Inc, 2011).

³² Reka, “Tourism governance,” 18.

³³ About that subject see Marina Blagojević, “Povratak istini: Migracije Srba i Crnogoraca sa Kosova i Metohije,” in *Kosovo i Metohija, prošlost, sadašnjost i budućnost*, ed. Kosta Mihailović (Belgrade: 2007, Sanu, knjiga CXV, Odeljenje društvenih nauka, knjiga 28: 2008), 143–162.

³⁴ Detailed analysis gave Petar Ristanović, “Listovi Srpske pravoslavne crkve i Kosovsko pitanje 1980–1982,” *Baština* 35 (2013): 205–28.

adequate response from government organs.”³⁵ From the aforementioned quote existence of long-term harassment imposed over the Serb community is evident, as well as attempts of the church to bring them to public and the lack of reaction of the state authorities. At this point, it should be mentioned that a certain disproportion in the level of pressure and harassment was evident. It was in strong connection with the structure of the population in settlements. In praxis, it meant that the pressure was the most dominant in Serbian settlements in which their population dropped below 20–30%.³⁶

These issues gained the attention of Serbian state leadership in February 1982, during the IX Congress of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia. It marked the first time that problems regarding the “forced eviction” of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo were openly addressed in Party sessions and public discussions, despite emigration being a long-standing issue. Bogosavljević’s data revealed that between 1961 and 1981, around 85,000 people had left the province. Additionally, by the late 1980s, an additional 25,000–30,000 individuals had emigrated from Kosovo. In essence, almost a third of Kosovo Serbs had relocated from the autonomous province since 1961.³⁷

Although Kosovo remained the poorest region in Yugoslavia in the late 1980s, some positive results for Kosovo Albanians were visible, especially in the educational sphere. As a result of better educational conditions the Albanians had gone from being under-represented to over-represented in a short period (1974–1981) and had major positions in provincial autonomy.³⁸ As Madison claims the percentage of Albanian employees in the public sector increased from 58 percent in 1974 to 92 percent in 1980³⁹ while, at the same time, Serbs underwent from 31 percent to 5 percent.⁴⁰ Eventually, the Serbian regime carried out the mass dismissal of approximately 150,000 of the Kosovo Albanian workforce (90%) on the grounds of ethnicity, from Kosovo’s economy sectors, healthcare, education, sports, media and culture.⁴¹

In 1986, the intellectual elite within the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts also announced its Memorandum in which it pointed out the threat to vital national and state interests. Elites and politicians used nationalism, to instrumentalize it for achieving their own goals. It was essential to

³⁵ Ristanović, “Listovi,” 222.

³⁶ Nebojša Vladislavljević, “Nationalism, Social Movement Theory and the Grass Roots Movement of Kosovo Serbs, 1985–1988,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, no. 5 (2010): 778.

³⁷ Srdjan Bogosavljević, “A Statistical Picture of Serbian–Albanian Relations,” in *Conflict or Dialogue: Serbian–Albanian Relations and Integration of the Balkans*, ed. Dušan Janjić and Shkelzen Maliqi (Subotica: Open University & European Civil Centre for Conflict Resolution, 1994), 781–96; One parallel should be mentioned. Albanian demographer Islami claims that, “for the period 1966–1981 about 52,000 people left Kosovo through direct migrations, while about 20,000 Serbs left after 1981.” Islami, “Demografska stvarnost,” 37.

³⁸ James Pettifer, “Kosovo Economy & Society after 1945 – Some Observations,” *Conflict Studies Research Centre, Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst*, (Jan 2002): 6.

³⁹ Ian Madison, “Parallel States, Public Services, and the Competition for Legitimacy in Kosovo” (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2019), 87.

⁴⁰ Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962–1991* (2nd ed.) (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992), 192–93.

⁴¹ Besnik Pula, “The emergence of the Kosovo “parallel state,” 1988–1992,” *Nationalities Papers* Vol. 32 (4) (December 2004): 805.

gain huge public support. However, the memorandum contributed to the opening of the "Pandora's box" of the Serbian national question, as it was based on the idea of achieving a state of Greater Serbia. Instead of being the creators of a peaceful policy of compromise, the academics, inciting nationalism with the thesis that every Serbian community should join the motherland, wholeheartedly justified and supported the policy of the then Serbian government. The victory of the nationalist movement in Serbia in the following year marked a turning point in the state propaganda and legitimation of the regime in Serbia.⁴² It was very clearly emphasized that the enemy no longer bears the label "class"; it has now become "ethnic." These were, first of all, Albanian separatists, and then all those from the ranks of Slovenian and Croatian politicians. Nationalist euphoria started to spread at mass rallies, and even at workers' street protests.⁴³

Jež cartoons from 1980 until 1990

Regrettably, there are few specific instances available to understand how cartoons were treated during this tumultuous period. However, there's an enlightening example that demonstrates the role and function of cartoons. This is a comment from a particular Commission regarding the content of the newspaper *Politika*. They analyzed the contents published in the section called Echoes and Reactions and noted an interesting "innovation." While listing the column's content, they highlighted illustrations alongside letters, opinions, petitions, facsimiles of letters and documents, photo explanations, and advertisements. Particularly noteworthy was the treatment of illustrations, referred to as "illustration" instead of the typical term "caricature," though their form remains caricatural. This choice of wording establishes a unique relationship between the artistic depiction and the text: the visual component "illustrates" the authors' viewpoints, assuming a status akin to that of a document. Instead of providing a relative and somewhat relieving effect on the text, the illustration reinforces a sense of clear, unambiguous understanding of the issue.⁴⁴ Thus we notice a different use of cartoons. As a form it was renamed and with the new name it lost its essential characteristics - criticism and mockery of what was shown. It became a mere display.

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⁴² At the 8th Session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia, which took place in September 1987, the conflict in the republic leadership of Serbia culminated. That session marked the political rise of Slobodan Milošević and the nationalist section he was leading. Their dissidents were then removed from office or resigned. See e.g. Đorđe Stojišić, *Osma sednica: kako je Slobodan Milošević pobedio a Srbija istorijski izgubila* (Belgrade: Dan Graf, 2014).

⁴³ Marko Grdešić elaborates the role of workers as mass actors who interacted with the elite. Intellectuals and politicians were the elite whose role was to constantly incite, amplify, mold and manipulate mass action. Moreover, the populism was strengthened with the concept of producerism comprehended as the opposition between workers and the parasitic elites, so called armchair political functionaries. For the subject of producerism of political cartoons in the late 80s in Yugoslavia see Marko Grdešić, "Images of Populism and Producerism: Political Cartoons from Serbia's 'Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution,'" *Europe-Asia Studies* 69, no. 3 (2017): 483-507.

⁴⁴ Popović, Srđa, Dejan Janča, and Tanja Petovar. *Kosovski čvor: drešiti ili seći? Izveštaj nezavisne komisije* (Belgrade: Chronos, 1990), 114.

What we can say for sure is that cartoons often depict specific themes or subjects. The issues that primarily preoccupied cartoonists, were dominantly hard economic and various types of political crises, as well as worker strikes. The themes were also related to political events in Kosovo. The first cartoon problematizing the emigration from Kosovo was published in early 1984, and since then it has become a regular topic. Initially, indeterminate cartoons without emotional hues became more direct and much sharper in 1986. From then on, the pages of *Jež* were flooded with strong, emotionally charged drawings showing the departure of emigrants with suitcases and bundles. The expelled people leave in a hurry because they have to leave their homes and hearths. They leave individually or in groups (walking in lines). The bundles and suitcases they carry symbolize a permanent departure. Those who remained were threatened, beaten, poisoned, and then expelled as well. The space allotted to these cartoons in the magazine was significant. They occasionally occupied the front or back cover page of *Jež* and were then printed in color. Printing in such a format additionally underlined the relevance of this issue. It is also noticeable that most Kosovo-related cartoons had no accompanying text, and sometimes lacked titles. The drawing proved to be quite sufficient to convey the message.

Emigration from Kosovo proved to be a complex problem in cartoons just as in real life. It was presented through two dominant subtopics. The first is the forcible emigration of the people from Kosovo and Metohija, which shows the difficult situation of the people who leave with their basic property or the difficult living conditions of those who remain. Another topic parodies the tendency of individuals to be bribed with Albanian money and the self-initiated sale of property.

The first cartoon about emigration was published on February 10, 1984 (Fig. 3). The front-page shows "the Great Transport" in which long lines of Serbs and Montenegrins leave Kosovo. They ride in trucks, lead animals, and carry suitcases. In the background, you can see signposts pointing toward Serbia and Montenegro (the directions they are moving) and toward Kosovo (where they came from). At the crossroads, the traffic is regulated by an Albanian. We can recognize them easily by their hats, Serbians and Montenegrins wear the *šajkača* hat while Albanians wear *the keče* hat. The Albanians direct all of them very clearly towards Serbia for permanent. The title of this cartoon was in connection with the famous Veljko Bulajić's partisan movie "The Great Transport" from 1983.

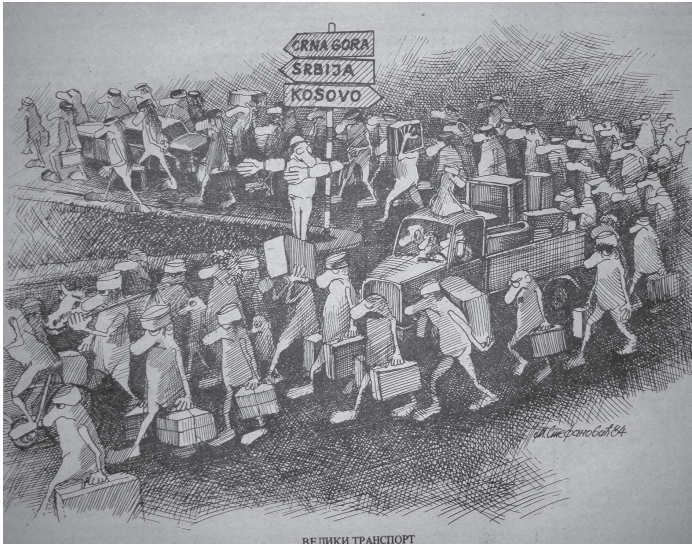


Figure 3. The Great Transport, *Jež*, 10.02.1984.
Author: Miro Stefanović

The trend of prominent emigrant topics on the front page of almost every issue of *Jež* continued during 1986. Simpler graphic solutions were used efficiently to depict the emigrant exodus. Fig. 4 shows the SFR Yugoslavia as a soccer field. Goals were placed in the northern and southern republics, Slovenia and Macedonia. An Albanian takes a free kick from Kosovo, kicking a Serb instead of a ball. He kicks him out of the Kosovo borders into Serbia.

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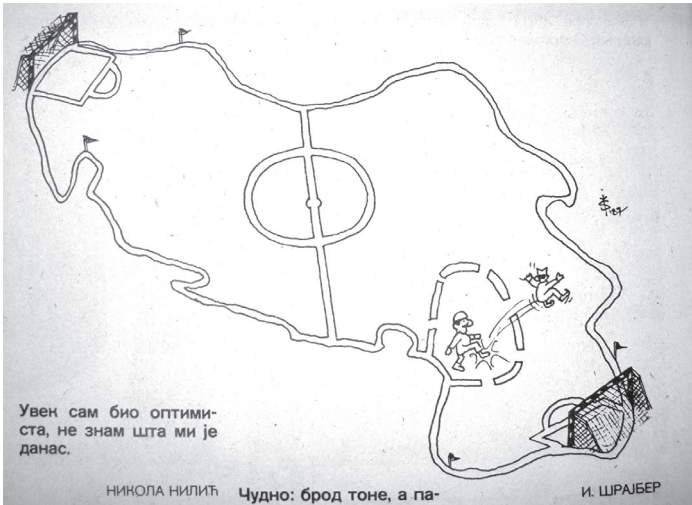


Figure 4. No title, *Jež*, 27.03.1987.
Author: Ivan Šrajber

The aforementioned demographic imbalance in the Province is a topic that was brutally confirmed by official statistics, while the cartoon demonstrated it visually (Fig. 5): as a long line of people with *šajkača* hats

and hobo bundles leaving Kosovo, storks fly overhead, carrying bundles with babies in the opposite direction.

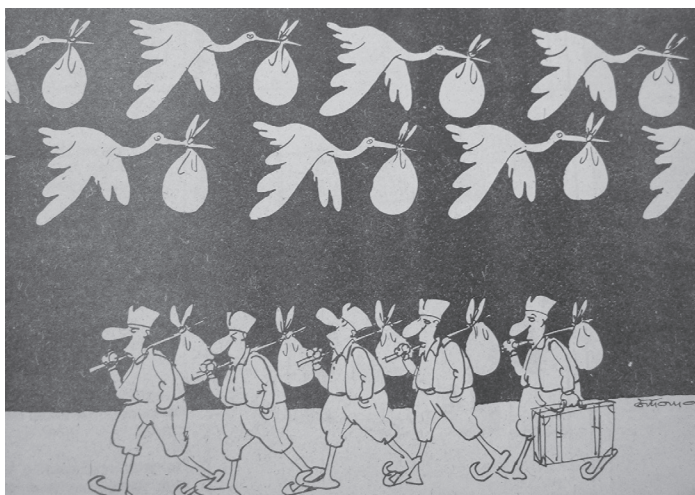


Figure 5. No title, *Jež*, 15.05.1987.
Author: Tošo Borković

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The graphic simplicity of the form of a recognizable traffic sign that warns of animals on the road, in this version, warns of emigrants on the road (Fig. 6). Like the previous three cartoons this one conveys the same message. They all are depicting the real situation and people's exodus from Kosovo. They were used to constantly remind the readers of the existing problem through simple yet effective graphic solutions.

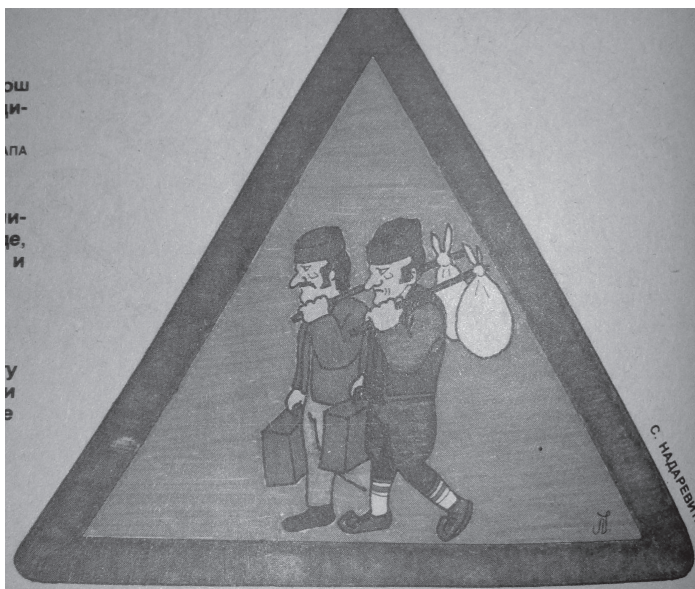


Figure 6. No title, *Jež*, 19.12.1986.
Author: Senad Nadarević

From October of the same year, we have a depiction of a tiny Serb who struggles to push a boulder uphill (Fig. 7). The word “Kosovo” is written on the boulder. At the other end, the boulder is pushed back by an oversized Albanian with IRESENTA engraved on his belt. Both of them are depicted in national costumes that are easily recognizable to domestic readers. The multi-layered symbolism of this drawing alludes to the gravity of the Kosovo problem, which, by allusion to Sisyphus pushing the boulder uphill, presents itself as a futile task. The difference in the strength of the two actors is pointed out, contrasting the large size of the Albanian as opposed to the reduced representation of the Serb figure. The obvious disbalance in size of the two characters states the dominant opinion of the hard but persistent struggle of the Serbian people.⁴⁵

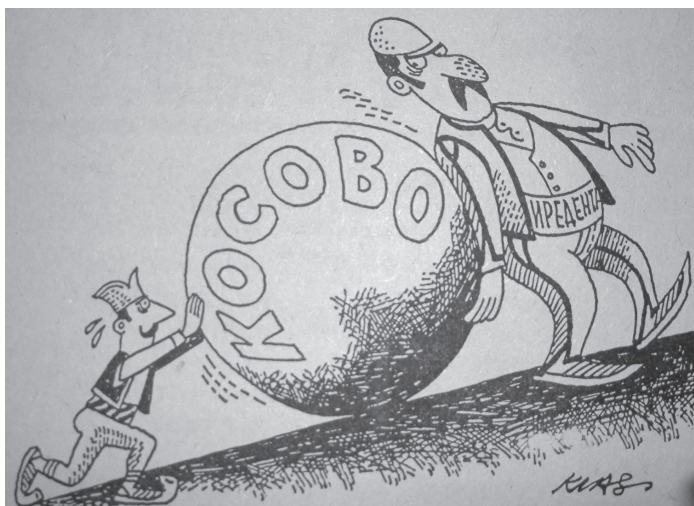


Figure 7. No title, Jež, 24.10.1986.
Author: Aleksandar Klas

This use of mythological elements proved to be effective, so in the cartoon “Prometheus of Kosovo” in Fig. 8, we see an Albanian two-headed eagle pecking at a Serb chained to a rock. The two-eagle is the main symbol on the Albanian national flag. The mythical characters Sisyphus and Prometheus additionally emphasize the difficult position of the Serbian people in Kosovo, who endure the same suffering and torture as the above-mentioned Greek heroes. It could be mentioned that the author of these cartoons is Aleksandar Karakušević known by the alias Klas, renowned world cartoonist in the second half of the 20th century. With his reputation and engagement on this topic, he put a powerful stamp and gave legitimacy to this issue. Both of these powerful depictions were published in 1986-87. They

⁴⁵ Written originally in Cyrillic letter, *Irredenta* stands for a man who supports the idea of territory historically or ethnically related to one political unit but under the political control of another. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/irredenta>. Accessed Nov 7, 2023.

were still maintaining the focus and tension on the subject, especially with the usage of heroic mythical destiny.



Figure 8. Prometheus of Kosovo, *Jež*, 22.05.1987.
Author: Aleksandar Klas

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Finally, the aimlessness of the refugee journey is cruelly indicated by the back cover of *Jež* in late 1988 (Fig. 9). The gloomy depiction of the hopelessness of the displaced people is best embodied by two emigrants, a Serb and a Montenegrin, on a raft with suitcases and the Yugoslav flag, sailing toward an unknown destination. The man stands with his eyes looking somewhere far for salvation but still holding strong to the state flag. The Yugoslav national flag was used as a symbol of unity and guaranteed the idea that the country would survive. In my opinion, this is one of the most stunning depictions with one very clear message where words and additional text are completely needless.



Figure 9. No title, *Jež*, 07.10.1988.
Author: Miro Stefanović

As mentioned, the Kosovo theme had several variations. They were presented in the form of comments on the sale of property, bribery of Serbs with Albanian money, and greed for that money. The emigrant is also portrayed as a good trader, so cartoons with painful depictions of lines of walking displaced emigrants from 1987 are followed by those whose theme is the sale of property. In the scene shown in Fig. 10, we see a peasant greedily collecting money that an Albanian is throwing out of his sack. Running for money in the opposite direction, he is leaving the territory of Kosovo as the signpost says. Here we have another view on the migration problem since there was no repression and force but voluntarily leaving. In a large number of cases the property was sold for an enormous amount of money and people were more than ready to leave their homeland for good just for profit. This cartoon dates to October 1987 and it could be read as a kind of harsh sobering for Serbian people since these issues were not mentioned gladly in public. It also shows that cartoonists were free to express their thoughts and opinions even if they were confronting the official stance.



Figure 10. No title, *Jež*, 30.10.1987.

Author: B. Radenković

In the following picture (Fig. 11), in a parodic depiction of a lucrative trade, we see a Serb announcing that he is selling a house in Kosovo, while next to him an Albanian is selling the whole Province. As in the previous cartoon, we can recognize a similar subject. But this one is dated to December 1989, so we can notice the long continuity in existence of the fact that properties were being sold. The persistence in emphasizing the issue of continuous “willing offer” of Serbian houses is present. That devastating fact was in discordance with the official idea that Serbian politicians used as a mantra that Kosovo is the *Cradle of Serbia*. That mantra is still used nowadays.

Additionally, in this cartoon, we can see two sellers, and the Albanian is also taking the role of the seller, but he is selling the whole of Kosovo. Although not clearly stated, this comment is an allusion to receiving American

support in this crisis. This is also the first time that USA political interests were mentioned in a way. According to this cartoon, Serbians and Albanians are just a part of a much bigger "game". Later on, we will see these important players. Regarding the graphics, we can notice that the self-confident look of the Albanian character stands opposite to the face of the in some way sad, tired, and indifferent look on Serbian one.



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Figure 11. No title, *Jež*, 03.12.1989.
Author: Gradimir Oničin

Finally, the last year of our analysis - 1990 - brings a few comments on the mentioned subject. There are mockings of the American aid to the Kosovo Albanians. In a dialogue, an Albanian tells a Serb how he can buy even an American congressman (Fig. 12) alluding to the help and support from American politicians. Standing in a dominant pose in front of the confused and concerned Serb he clearly expresses that money is not a problem, he has it more than enough. Further on, as Fig. 13 shows, they plan to populate Kosovo with American senators there once they evict the last Serb. In the form of a talk between armed Albanians one of them is explaining the complete plan. In addition, they are looking at the leaving truck. There are no men, only some *šajkača* hats scattered all around them.



Figure 12. No title, Jež, 05.10.1990.
Author: Miodrag Sekerezović



Figure 13. No title, Jež, 05.10.1990.
Author: Miodrag Stojanović

Some depictions were so simplified that the *šajkača* became an independent symbol, a legitimate substitute for the person on whose head it is otherwise located. This claim is illustrated by the effective depiction of several *šajkača* hats flying away from Kosovo in flocks like migratory birds. The signpost with the inscription KOSOVO is showing the opposite way. This cartoon in Fig. 14, is the first one in which we see an independent depiction of *šajkača* hat without the person wearing it, is dated to April 1986.



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Figure 14. No title, *Jež*, 04.04.1986.
Author: Slobodan Obradović

Equally eloquent is the depiction of a *šajkača* hat on a stick which, like a white flag indicating surrender, protrudes behind a rock (Fig. 15). Despite that, stones, poles, and knives are still hurled at it as if it were not a sign of surrender.

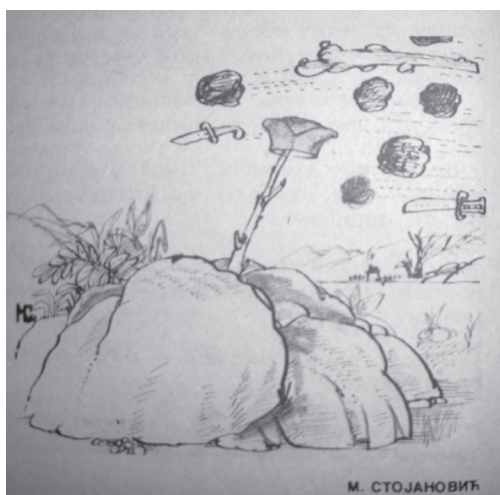


Figure 15. No title, *Jež*, 16.01.1987.
Author: Miodrag Stojanović

Two and a half years later, in June 1990, the hat was used in a completely different context. In Fig. 16, we see a graphic representation of a man in front of a mirror, putting *šajkača* on his head while laying a five-pointed-star *titovka* hat away⁴⁶. The cartoon is a witness to the conflict of different ideologies - the break with the Communist Party and the promotion of the national hat as a new symbol happen at the same time. At that time the hat became more present in national and political protests as an agent of political communication. As a crucial element of the national costume, strongly connected with the heroic past, the *šajkača* hat carried a powerful political-symbolic connotation.⁴⁷



Figure 16. No title, Jež, 15.06.1990.
Author: Slobodan Obradović

The last cartoon included in this analysis announced a form of new migrations and emigration. It shows the then President of Croatia Franjo Tuđman attaching a horseshoe to the Serb's shoe. The shape of the horseshoe is symbolically connected to the shape of the Ustasha symbol U.⁴⁸ Running away from being shod, with a bundle in his hand, the Serb comments that he should better move "or this guy is going to nail his opanci."⁴⁹ In the following years the complex political situation in Yugoslavia became more difficult and finally led to war.

⁴⁶ The Titovka Partisan cap was an omnipresent part of military uniform of the Yugoslav People's Army until it was disbanded.

⁴⁷ Slobodan Naumović, "Srpsko selo i seljak: između nacionalnog i stranačkog simbola," *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU* 54 (2005): 114-27.

⁴⁸ According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Ustasha was Croatian fascist movement that nominally ruled the Independent State of Croatia during World War II. To make their state more purely Croatian, the *ustaše* set about exterminating its Serb, Jewish, and Gypsy inhabitants with a huge brutality.

⁴⁹ Opanci are traditional footwear.



Figure 17. No title, *Jež*, 05.10.1990.
Author: Aleksandar Klas

Conclusion

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The political crisis caused by emigration from Kosovo is presented in the cartoon through a character who, although essentially connected to the village with his visual attributes, does not figure as just a representative of the village and the peasantry. He also became a person who is a representative of the nation, and in the atmosphere of flourishing nationalist ideas also of the whole of Serbia. Thus, the national costume, and especially the *šajkača* hat, became key symbols that express national and no longer social affiliation. The hat that the emigrants wore on their heads, the traditional Serbian hat *šajkača*, played a special role. Until then, it was a symbol of the peasants and the peasantry, but in the cartoon, it became a symbol of the entire nation. We have noticed that the *šajkača* hat has become a sign of identity and a marker of difference from other, neighboring groups.⁵⁰ Emphasizing and underlining the homogeneity of one (ethnic) group with another, it became - ethnic costume. According to modern socio-cultural interpretations of costume, the concept of ethnic clothing is crucial for the interpretation of identity. At first, as a set of costumes at the micro level, within the framework of Šumadija, it communicated the wearer's ethnicity⁵¹ while during the following period, a single element of this costume became enough for its representation - the *šajkača* hat. As a kind of political-ideological marker, at one point the hat became such a powerful symbolic element that it started appearing independently of the peasant's person. Here, first of all, we have

⁵⁰ Manning Nash, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 12.

⁵¹ Linda Welters, "Ethnicity in Greek Dress," in *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time*, ed. Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford, Washington: Berg, 1995), 75.

in mind several cartoons in which the *šajkača* hat is shown independently, “without a head that wears it”, but with a clear association with its wearer. The hat is now becoming a substitute for a person for the first time. It outgrows and spreads farther from the person, its previous bearer, becoming self-sufficient.

Interpreting certain elements of ethnic and rural clothing (such as the French *beret*, Scottish *kilt*, or German *Lederhosen*), Anderson speaks of them as a means that within nations has the function of capturing a sense of nostalgic “imagined” community. Thus, through these elements of clothing, the nation is constantly renewed and re-established, in the sense of strengthening the sense of its members belonging to the community.⁵² In this sense, Perrot quite rightly observed the “accepted and legitimate functions of dress as a powerful element of political domination and social regulation: it encourages individuals to merge with the group, to participate in its rituals and ceremonies, to share its norms and values.”⁵³

All this is an interpretation of a process of re-traditionalization of Serbian society at the end of the 20th century. This process consisted of five phases, of which the first two were the most interesting for this research.⁵⁴ During the first or “silent phase”, which spanned the late 1970s and lasted until 1987, neo-traditionalist narratives about the glorious past were constructed and re-invented to oppose the communist regime. This was followed by a phase of mobilization and homogenization from 1987-1990 when these constructed neo-traditionalist narratives became an instrument of the ruling state-party apparatus for remaining in/taking over power.

Confirmation of this is within the content of the presented cartoons. As a medium of expression, the cartoon itself was first instrumentalized as a convenient tool in the hands of nationalist political groups for the realization of their interests. With its easy readability and mass presence, the cartoons contributed to the unification of beliefs and opinions of the vast majority of the public, serving as an accessible propaganda tool that at the same time showed exceptional mobilizing potential. The symbolic function of the peasant’s hat, here observed primarily in the sense of a political symbol, was reflected in the fact that it was used by political players to convey certain political meanings and values. Visualized within the cartoons, the hat was used and mis-used in the crisis political moment to contribute to the development of national consciousness and to remind the audience about all the heroic and liberating deeds, bringing back the heroic days of Serbian military glory, calling for unity, harmony, and action, which eventually brought to extreme nationalism.

⁵² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

⁵³ Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Richard Bienvenu (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 13.

⁵⁴ Slobodan Naumović, *Upotreba tradicije u političkom i javnom životu Srbije na kraju dvadesetog početkom dvadeset prvog veka* (Belgrade: Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju IP „Filip Višnjić“ a.d., 2009), 56-59.

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