This summer I explored the historical context of ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Despite interethnic tensions Yugoslavia managed to survive over 70 years, only to collapse in a bloody civil war in the 1990s, while many of its successor states still experience segregation, racism and xenophobia.

Working with Professor Miller, I studied the socio-historical background of this complex situation as preparation for an anticipated project connected with conflict resolution in present-day Bosnia. In particular, I explored the following questions: What was the historical experience of the nationalities before Yugoslavia was formed after World War I? According to what principles was it assumed that they could and should form this new country together? How did the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes mediate nationalism? What were the sources of inter-ethnic conflict, and how did they address them? How did the Communists under Tito try to defuse these tensions, and why did they ultimately fail?

I used multiple sources to explore these questions, namely, Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, Dusko Doder's *The Yugoslavs* in addition folk literature and poetry. I learned about the history of Ottoman occupation and its affect on the Serb psyche, the nature of the relationship between Serb nationalism and Kosovo, as well as the ideologies of Pan-Slavism and the impact of Romantic Nationalism on the development of nationalism in the region. Based on my studies thus far, I perceive the trouble spots of the relationship between the Croats and the Serbs rest on their perceptions of each other. Based on Doder's analysis it is apparent that individual nationalist aims supersede the need for regional stability, impeding the ability for these ethnic groups to work together for mutual benefit. The only times the Yugoslav nations appear united is in the face of a common enemy, as exemplified by Doder's experience with the sports match against the Soviet Union. Because each ethnic group considers themselves superior to the others, they equate the success of one group with their own domination and despair, instead of considering the possibility that all the nations could be successful at the same time. I augmented my study of the region’s socio-cultural context by beginning my study of the Serbian language.

I intend on continuing my language study throughout the fall to better prepare myself for studying abroad with SIT’s Peace and Conflict Studies in the Balkans program. Based in Belgrade, Serbia, the SIT program consists of a Peace and Conflict Studies in the Balkans Seminar, Intensive Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian language study, a field studies seminar, and an independent study project, which I intend to incorporate into my senior thesis at Bowdoin. Receiving the Grua O’Connell fellowship provided me with the opportunity to explore my personal and academic interests while equipping myself for future academic opportunities and advanced study.

**Faculty Mentor: Raymond Miller**

**Funded by the Grua and O’Connell faculty/student research award**