

30 killed as wave of violence sweeps Croatia

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Belgrade

was a Croat. His remains are housed under a huge white marble slab in the grounds of his old home, which has been turned into a "memorial centre" to the man who united a fractious group of republics under the Yugoslavian flag through a mixture of personal charisma and naked force.

But today, as Yugoslavia splinters amid an explosion of nationalism in the various republics, more people are referring to the centre as "Tito Disneyland".

"Tito isn't a symbol for us any more," said Branka Jovanovic, a hotel receptionist who supports a move to transport the dictator's remains

back to his home town in Croatia. "It is crazy to keep that home open. Nobody goes there anyway."

The campaign to evict Tito is led by Vojislav Seselj, a fiery Serbian nationalist and leader of the extremist paramilitary group known as the Chetniks. So strongly does Seselj, also known as "the Red Duke", feel about Tito that he threatened to demolish the tomb with his Chetniks to rid Serbia of the "ghost of the Croat Tito" three months ago, on the eleventh anniversary of Tito's death. He was restrained from doing so only by threats from the army.

Since then he has moderated his position. He once suggested Tito's body be cut into six pieces for distribution among the six republics. Now he advocates the transfer of

the remains in their entirety to the dictator's home village of Kumrovec in Croatia. Public opinion in Serbia is rallying to this suggestion, and Kumrovec has signalled approval for the return of its most famous son.

The anti-Tito campaign has been gathering pace with a spate of muckraking newspaper articles in the Serbian press. One rumour revived recently is that Tito was not Yugoslavian at all but a Russian who assumed the identity of a dead Croat. Allegations have also surfaced that he was a freemason.

Stories about Tito's womanising have been recycled, including tales of his supposed liaison, while in his eighties, with an actress who was 60 years his junior.

IN the worst clashes yet between Croats and Serbs, up to 30 people were reported killed yesterday. Witnesses said dozens of corpses lay in fields, woods and bushes after hours of fighting in central Croatia.

Among the victims were 14 Croatian police officers, four Serbs, and a German newspaper photographer, whose car was attacked by Serbian gunmen near Glina. One report said piles of dead bodies lay by the roadside near the scene of the attacks.

In Belgrade, the federal presidency demanded an immediate ceasefire. A statement released by the eight-man leadership warned that the situation in Croatia "threatens to escalate into an all-out war".

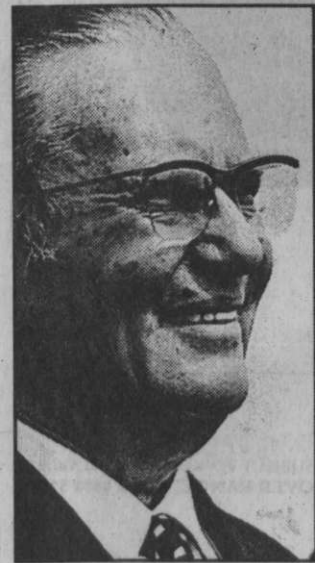
A peace mission to Yugoslavia by prime ministers and

foreign ministers from five European countries — Italy, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland — also failed to find a way of calming the situation.

The mounting disintegration of Yugoslavia is affecting even those who have been dead for years. The corpse of Marshal Josip Broz Tito, who ruled the country with a fist of iron for 35 years, is facing eviction from the palatial mausoleum where it has been housed for 11 years.

It is a measure of the dramatic change in Yugoslavia that the dictator, who died in 1980 at the age of 87, no longer inspires reverent fear. Instead, his remains, entombed on Serbian soil, face banishment to another republic.

The problem is that Tito



Tito: no longer revered