

The Break-up of Former Yugoslavia and the Serbian War

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Summary

The dissolution of the former Yugoslav federation was to a smaller extent brought about by the national movements, and by a larger by the break down of the old political order. The Communist Party was the only cohesive force of Yugoslav and all other communist federations. Therefore, the collapse of communism provoked the break-up of federal multiethnic states in Eastern Europe. Democracy, political pluralism, market reforms and decentralization tendencies were the essence of the 1989-1991 revolution. Market reforms were the most powerful force of disintegration in former communist societies. Divergent different interests of developed and underdeveloped federal republics produced political confrontation, and stimulated nationalist movements.

The new nation-states emerged as a continuation of the process of nation-building, which was interrupted by either multiethnic empires or communist federations.

Serbia was an underdeveloped republic of former Yugoslavia, which depended very much on federal resources. Serbian leadership opposed to both the political and market reforms, and decentralization tendencies. That policy provoked a massive nationalist response in Serbia and propelled Serbia into war against all other republics and peoples of former Yugoslavia.

Scholars, as well as politicians, tend to see the big 1989 change in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union only as a victory of democracy and the market economy. They fail to recognize that the whole map of the world, and Eastern Europe especially, has been changed. The old security mechanisms have disappeared, and new states have emerged. Many of them couldn't understand that all four elements (democracy, the market economy, security and the nation-states) were inseparable parts of the same process. The common denominator of the whole process was the 1989 revolution.

The lack of security structures in the post-Communist world opened the door for the regional military conflicts and protracted bloody wars. But the main question was: why did all that happen? The essence of the problem was, firstly, the disintegration of the former Communist federations with the emergence of the new nation-states, and, secondly, the particular causes of the bloody break-up of former Yugoslavia.

Superficial analysts are able to see only apocalyptic nationalist strives and the centuries old ethnic hatreds that propel ethnic groups in Eastern

Europe into conflicts and violence. Western statesmen have not demonstrated any clear understanding of the inevitability of the break-up of Yugoslavia or of the causes of the ensuing war. The claim that the driving forces of history in Yugoslavia were "ancient ethnic hatreds" implies that everyone was equally responsible for the war and that nobody was specifically guilty.¹ It means that the attacker and the victims of aggression are reduced to the same status.² In fact, it is impossible to find records of any serious Croatian-Serbian conflicts or wars, before the twentieth century.

The recent public opinion survey on ethnic issues in Croatia and several other countries in Eastern Europe and three western states (Britain, Germany, France — the control group) conducted by the Office of Research and Media Reaction of the United States Information Agency in 1993 and 1994 demonstrated that Croats endorse a multiethnic society. Croatian attitudes toward urban Serbs are quite similar to those expressed by the other east Europeans toward minorities or west Europeans toward the immigrants in their countries (Tab. 1).³ Research has shown that the majority of Croats believe that a multiethnic Croatia is possible. Despite their dislike of Krajina Serbs, and the ongoing war, two-thirds of Croats accept the idea of their homeland as a multiethnic country. A comparison of Croats with other east and west Europeans displays that ethnic Croats "are among the least likely to express majority exclusive sentiments" (Tab. 2).⁴ The conclusion is simple. Croats are among the most tolerant of ethnic groups and they are the most likely to endorse the idea of multiethnic society.

¹ Malcolm Noel recorded a typical example - the statement of former British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd: "Yugoslavia was invented in 1919 to solve a problem of different peoples living in the same part of the Balkans with a long history of peoples fighting each other." Lord Carrington, the EC negotiator, had the same standpoint: "Everybody is to blame in Bosnia and Hercegovina." Noel added that American politicians were not immune to the temptations of such "theories". (Malcolm, Noel, "Bosnia and the West: A Study in Failure", *The National Interest*, Spring 1995, p. 5.)

² Not to mention that the thesis "everyone is responsible" is an essentially racist interpretation referring to the East European peoples as tribes genetically programmed for violence and thus equally to blame for the war.

³ The ethnic Croats strongly dislike "Krajina" Serbs, but they have a more favourable opinion of urban Serbs living in Croatia. The Krajina Serbs started the war against Croatia and with the open support of Serbia proclaimed the separatist Republic of Serbian Krajina on the Croatian territory.

⁴ Source: *Public Opinion in Croatia: A Special Report*, A Special Report Issued by The Office of Research and Media Reaction, U.S. Information Agency, Washington, DC, 1994, pp. 3-5.

Table 1: Opinion of minority Group by majority group across Europe (in percent)

		Favourable	Unfavourable
Croatia	Krajina Serbs	6	94
	Urban Serbs	48	52
Serbia	Albanians	11	83
Macedonia	Albanians	28	65
Albania	Greeks	47	49
Bulgaria	Turks	52	39
Romania	Hungarians	50	40
Slovakia	Hungarians	43	53
Latvia	Russians	46	43
France	Immigrants	47	46
Britain	Immigrants	40	41
Germany	Immigrants	47	52

Table 2: Share of respondents expressing majority exclusive sentiments (in percent)

	Cannot live in harmony	Country only for nationality
Croatia	23	22
Macedonia	34	59
Albania	60	80
Bulgaria	27	51
Romania	11	14
Slovakia	20	22
Poland	53	40
France	35	38
Germany	38	35
Britain	35	35

Therefore, it is clear that "ethnic hatreds" cannot be the cause of the war in former Yugoslavia. Such an explanation demonstrate the superficiality of approach and ignorance. Intellectual laziness makes it difficult to why all post-Communist federations couldn't survive the break down of communism or why former Yugoslavia was plunged into war, while Czechoslovakia managed to achieve a velvet divorce.

In the discourses dealing with nationalism in Eastern Europe the reader can find renewed distinction between historic and non-historic nations. This differentiation separates the nations who were masters of their history from those who played no role in history because they didn't have an independent state. It is easy to conclude that peoples of the eastern

part of Europe are those who represent non-historic nations.⁵ It simply means that the process of nation-building in Eastern Europe has not been completed.

Sugar tries to support this thesis by referring to Oscar J. Janowsky, who points out that "...unlike western Europe, where relative national homogeneity was achieved before the nineteenth century... eastern and east-central Europe has nurtured differences to the present day."⁶ That is the essence of the issue of the post-Communist nationalism. Therefore, liberty for the old nations, the French and the British, means democracy, and in Eastern Europe liberty represents the absence of foreign rule and the establishment of nation-state. The lack of normal acceptance of a national interest in Communist countries was a form of deprivation — its recovery in the post-Communist era is a form of emancipation. Even in Yugoslavia, where the conflict of confronted national interests escalated into a long and bloody war, the emergence of the new nation-states is a logical consequence of the collapse of communism. The national issue "was necessarily revived after the collapse of Communism, since Communist regimes repressed every autonomy, including that of national groups. Can long-repressed nations be blamed for connecting freedom with independence?"⁷ The implication is clear: the nation-building process in the recent history of Eastern Europe doesn't always mean the revival of extreme forms of nationalism. Of course, the chauvinistic and militant, violent forms of nationalism are possible too. It depends on the historical circumstances which form will prevail. The newly established political pluralism includes the recognition of all interests existing in a society. National interests have already existed. Communist dictatorships tried to suppress the free expression of national interests. Therefore, the new democracies inevitably include the revival of national interests and efforts to complete nation-states. The whole problem cannot be solved by suppression of nationalism. However, the control of the transition process and establishment of democratic principles could be a realistic solution.

⁵ For the origin of the theory of historic and non-historic nations and its application to the present developments in Eastern Europe, see: Sugar, P.F., "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism", in: Sugar, P.F. and I. Lederer (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1994, p. 21.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷ Ivo Banac, "Introduction" to the book: Banac, Ivo (ed.), *Eastern Europe in Revolution*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 1992, p. 11.

The Break-up of Yugoslavia and the Disintegration of Post-Communist Federations

The West is embarrassed with the developments in Eastern Europe. The idea of nation-state in the post-Communist countries emerged as a quite opposite tendency in comparison with the process of integration of West Europe.

The post-Communist period in the East displayed the revival of the idea of nation-state. The concept of a nation-state is not very old in the West, either. The nineteenth century was the time of the emergence of national movements and creation of nation-states in Europe. With the exception of Great Britain and France, all other west European nations established their nation-states in the nineteenth century. In four of the five wars taking place in Europe between 1859 and 1871 the creation of nation-states was the main issue. Italy established its unity between 1859 and 1871. Germany did the same during the French-German war 1870—1871. The contemporary USA federation was created after the civil war 1861—1865. The creation of France as a nation-state was a product of the Great Revolution of 1789. The French celebrated its 200th anniversary as recently as six years ago. The Russian Empire, with the same size as today's Russian Federation, was created only 150 years ago.

The foundation of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy in 1867 was also the creation of Austrian and Hungarian nation-states. The Austrian-Hungarian monarchy at the same time blocked the establishment of nation-states of the other nations in the dual monarchy. For example, the Iliric Movement (1835—1848), which was the Croatian National Renaissance, failed to establish Croatia independence, but the Croatian-Hungarian treaty of 1868 provided Croatia with more political rights than the other nations in the dual monarchy had.

The conclusion could be that the history of nation-states is relatively recent phenomenon. In the post-Communist period east-European nations only resumed the process blocked by the multi-national states in the nineteenth century, and by the Warsaw pact and Communist federations in the twentieth century.

The dissolution of post-Communist federations is the resumption of the processes interrupted by the long period of Communist rule. The situation is complicated by the fact that 50 or 70 years of Communism intended to create "a new society" where anything connected with the previous civilization was destroyed. The post-Communist countries are now passing through the same processes as the West, but 150—200 years later. Everything is the same, except that the countries and time differ. It stands to reason that some nations use the opportunity to establish their own nation-states and to complete the process of nation-building.

Therefore, it isn't a very wise conclusion that the West is undergoing an integration process and that the East is headed in quite the opposite direction. They are both going toward the same destination, but not at the same time and not in the same manner.

The West is going to be much more integrated than ever. The truth is that the East is going to be completely disintegrated. However, the integration of the West is the result of successful economies, interests, and the freedom of choice. The integration of the Communist federations has been based on the political voluntarism, the absence of economic rationality and nondemocratic decisions. Therefore, no one in the East, with the exception of the Serbian and Russian nationalists, wants the return of old Communist integrations. The new forms of integrations are acceptable. All east Europeans want to become the members of the EU.

The Western federations are much more durable than those in the East. The Western federations have been the result of the long lasting expansion of the market economy. The USA is a classic example. In contrast, the uniting stuff of the Communist federations was nothing else but political power. Hence, the collapse of Communist power was the simultaneous collapse of federations.

The multi-national federations are justified only if the nations involved have an interest to be together. In politics only interests are eternal. However, ethnic communities have lost any interests to live together in the old Communist federations. This has not been the crisis of the Soviet or Yugoslav or Czechs and Slovaks federation. This has been the crisis of the idea of multi-ethnic states in the post-Communist societies. And the disease has been terminal.

Market reforms, democratization, and decentralization in the former Communist countries were inseparable components of the same process. Hence, it was impossible to welcome the end of Communism, democracy and the market reforms and try to save the multi-ethnic federations at the same time.

In Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union democratization and the market reforms were followed by decentralization and stronger power of federal units. The Khrushchev's de-Stalinization was at the same time economic decentralization, democratization, and the suspension of persecution of alleged nationalists. The Prague Spring of 1968 brought the first elements of federalism in Czechoslovakia. After the Velvet Revolution of 1989 the development of federalism went on in the same direction. The federation even changed its name (The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic) just to demonstrate the equality of the two federal units. At the very beginning of perestroika Gorbachev announced the strengthening of power of the federal republics and the autonomy of their party organizations.

Democratization in Yugoslavia, after the removal of vice-president and the long time police chief Rankovic in 1966, was followed by the decentralization of the Party and the devolution of federal powers to republics. In 1969 the principle of democratic centralism was partly derogated in the Yugoslav Communist Party. The autonomy of republic's party organizations created the federal-confederal structure in the Yugoslav Communist Party (The League of Communists of Yugoslavia).⁸ Constitutional amendments of 1971 and Tito's 1974 constitution introduced confederal components in the Yugoslav federation just to demonstrate the new stronger power of republics. It was evident that the introduction of political pluralism, even in a very rudimentary form, includes the legitimization of national interest too.

The Communist countries had highly centralized economies. The ruling party, which controlled the state and the economy, was extremely centralized with its principle of democratic centralism, too. Both of them were the main cohesive forces of the former Communist federations, especially the party. With the market reforms, centralized economy ceased to exist. And the break down of Communist parties was at the same time the end of federal states. It means that the break down of the CPSS in August 1991 was the actual end of the Soviet federation. The meeting of republics' leaders in December 1991 was only a formal proclamation that the Soviet Union ceased to exist. It was the same with the Yugoslav federation. The collapse of the Yugoslav League of Communists at its 14th Congress in January 1990 was the death of the federal state, too. The international recognition of the new successor states in January 1992 was the decision of the EC to break diplomatic relations with the dead political entity — Yugoslav state.

Therefore, all military conflicts in former Yugoslavia after January 1991 were not "civil wars" but only interstate wars with an obvious aggressor — Serbia.

Centralism was the ideological bias of Communist hard-liners. Universalism was essential in the Communist movement. The core of that universalism was the idea of world revolution. The whole Communist movement was highly centralized with Moscow as the Communist Vatican. All the

⁸ The Communist party as a single ruling party in a multi-ethnic federation essentially diminished the meaning of federation. Carl J. Friedrich has explained the point: "A great deal depends upon the degree of self-restraint which the Communist Party will exercise in the deployment of its concentrated power. In the Soviet Union, there is little evidence of such self-restraint; the federal order has therefore, in spite of certain operational aspects, largely remained a facade for a centralized political order." (Friedrich, C.J., *Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice*, Frederic A. Praeger Publishers, New York etc., 1968, p. 168.) But in former Yugoslavia the Communist Party developed certain federal-confederal traits in 1969 and thus the Yugoslav federation was able to become a real federation with the forthcoming constitutional changes.

Communist parties were extremely centralized on the bases of the so called principle of democratic centralism. The highly centralized organization of the single ruling party produced centralization of Communist federations in spite of their decentralized constitutional structure.

This can explain why the last days of Communism were marked by the struggle of hard-line Communists to save the federations. That struggle was actually an effort of Communist party elite to retain the monopoly of power. The Communist hard-liners felt that decentralization and shift of authority to republics could be terminal loss of power. Stalinists have always considered the idea of decentralization extremely dangerous. For example, the principle of polycentrism, proclaimed by the Italian Communist leader Togliatti, was subjected to harsh criticism. Communist hard-liners in Yugoslavia considered the 1974 constitution with strong confederal elements unacceptable. In the summer of 1991 Moscow's Stalinists concluded that the new Union Treaty, which aimed to establish the Union of Sovereign Republics, could shift power to republics and therefore they felt that the new constitutional solution was dangerous. Their response was a coup d'état.

History demonstrated that centralism and decentralization was a crucial line of division between Communist hard-liners and supporters of democracy and the market reforms. The consequent conclusion was, that any attempt to save the Communist federations was practically an endeavour to save the power of die-hard Communists.

The maintenance of federations was not interest of Communist hard-liners only. Those whose survival depended on the existence of central (federal) bodies shared the same interests: federal bureaucracy, police, military, and the underdeveloped republics depending on federal aid. In the Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia the army command staff was strongly against any degree of decentralization. In former Yugoslavia such policy was supported by the underdeveloped federal units: Serbia, Montenegro, and at the beginning, Bosnia and Macedonia.⁹ In the former Soviet Union the underdeveloped Muslim republics supported centralism practically to the last days of the Soviet federation.

Civil society and the market economy have been the centripetal forces of Western federations. On the other hand, the lack of civil society has been the common history of Eastern Europe.¹⁰ The cohesive influence of

⁹ Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have later changed their attitude. The danger of Serbian centralism was much bigger than the loss of federal aid. That dilemma of the underdeveloped republics in the sixties has been pointed out by Dennison Rusinow (Rusinow, D., *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974*, C. Hurst and Co. for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1977, pp. 135-136).

¹⁰ On weak or non-existent civil society in Eastern Europe between the World Wars, see: Schöpflin, George, *Politics in Eastern Europe 1945-1992*, Blackwell

the market economy was impossible, too: the Communist countries did not have market at all. That was the essential difference between the Western countries and Eastern Europe.

From the Western standpoint it was not so easy to understand that the market reforms in the East did not produce any integrative potential. Just the opposite. The first steps toward the market economy in the Communist countries had an extreme dissolution power. The introduction of market competition demonstrated obvious development differences. The underdeveloped federal republics were less able to compete and less willing to accept the radical turn toward the market principles. Later, these inequalities led to increasingly different political interests and confrontations. The underdeveloped federal units wanted a permanent distribution of financial aid. That included centralization and the delay of the market reforms. On the other side, the most developed units considered that they would establish the market economy and become the members of the EC sooner, if they were independent.

The differences between the developed and the underdeveloped republics in former Yugoslavia were extremely significant. They were bigger than the differences between the EC members. The differences, supported by nationalists, developed into an unbridgeable political gap. The case of Serbia was instructive. Serbia was an underdeveloped republic of former Yugoslavia but a politically powerful unit. Serbian economy was too weak for a radical shift toward the market economy and it could not survive without leveling corrections of federal authorities. Serbia wanted centralization and the delay of the market reforms. When Serbia failed to realize its interest by political means, the continuation of the same policy was the war (Clausewitz) against Kosovo, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia — an attempt to revive centralized Yugoslavia or to conquer territories for Greater Serbia.

The Causes of Recent Serbian Nationalism

There is no doubt that the war raging in former Yugoslavia has been a Serbian war. It is not a civil war because Serbian state's leadership planned, organized, furnished and supported the war in every possible way in all parts of former Yugoslavia. Serbia eradicated autonomy of Serbian provinces Kosovo and Vojvodina (Kosovo was occupied by federal army and by Serbian units later). Serbian leadership organized a coup d'etat in Montenegro. This former federal republic of previous Yugoslav federation is nothing but a simple administrative unit in the new Serbian controlled

federation in spite of its formal status of federal republic. Serbian policy pushed the former federal army (YPA) into the war against Slovenia. Serbian leadership subsequently pushed the YPA to take control of the future borders of Serbian areas in Croatia and Bosnia, to distribute arms among ethnic Serbs in both states, and to attack Croatian and Bosnian towns and villages. Serbia organized uprisings of ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Serbia tried to do the same in Macedonia but for the time being Serbian leaders haven't pulled the trigger. Serbia has supplied the Serbian side in Croatia and Bosnia with weapons, officers, military units, oil, food, political leaders.

All observers and political analysts could agree that Serbian nationalism has been the most important force generating the war. This is not the war originated by ancient Serbian nationalism. New causes produced the explosion of new Serbian nationalism. They can be found in the tottering Serbian economy faced with the market reforms.

Serbian frustrations the economic reforms and the introduction of market principles produced a politically explosive situation considering the fact that Serbia was an underdeveloped but politically strong republic with the YPA support. By the beginning of the sixties Serbia felt deprived with the first steps of the market economy in Yugoslavia. Serbian response was an attempt to dilute reforms. Serbia demanded centralization instead of decentralized consequences of the market reforms. Serbia formed the conservative bloc together with the other underdeveloped republics.

The leader of the bloc was federal vice-president Alexander Rankovic, who controlled the political police for a long time. Rankovic confronted Tito. President Tito finally defeated Rankovic in 1966.¹¹ The next Serbian attempt were protest meetings of Belgrade's students against social differences and unemployment in 1968. It was the extreme left movement protesting against the consequences of the market reforms. The implication was clear: the denunciation of the market economy as a capitalist deviation. Anti-market attitude has been constant feature of Serbian policy with only one exception. The Serbian liberals, Marko Nikezić and Latinka Perović (the leaders of Serbia 1968—1972) had an explicit pro-market stand.¹²

The document prepared by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the so called Memorandum (1986), was the programme of recent Serbian nationalism and president Milošević himself. Memo-Memorandum had an explicit anti-market attitude. Authors of the document wrote that the period between 1953—1965, the era of command Soviet-type economy in Yugoslavia, was "a period of successful development". "Fatal turning-point"

¹¹ See: Rusinow, *ibid.*, pp. 135-136 and 180-183.

¹² See: Bilandžić, D., *Historija SFRJ. Glavni procesi 1918-1985*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1985, p. 519.

was the market reform of 1965. By then developed republics had dominated, and Serbian acquisitions were social differences and unemployment. Therefore, the conclusion was that the whole 1965 project of liberalization of economy was "a wrong strategic turning-point".¹³ In consequence, Milošević's leadership accepted the market economy only formally, and opposed any consequent realization of market principles.¹⁴

Economic frustrations provoked enormous rise of Serbian nationalism. The next issue was Yugoslav federalism. The constitution of 1974 was faced with harsh criticism of Serbian scholars and politicians. After Tito's death the constitution of 1974 was the primary target of Serbian nationalism.¹⁵ The point was decentralization, which shifted considerable power to the republics and, particularly, the new status of autonomous provinces. Vojvodina and Kosovo, the multi-ethnic provinces of Serbia, had a federal status practically equal to that of republics.¹⁶ Nationalists considered that such a change impaired the sovereignty of Serbia. The so called "Blue Book" on provinces (1977) demanded restoration of Serbian integrity. Tito rejected the idea.

After Tito's death (1980) the first objectives of the organized Serbian nationalist campaign were Kosovo and the attempt to curb Albanians. With Milošević at the helm, Serbian nationalism became aggressive. Serbian leadership tried to overtake the control over the Yugoslav party. Milošević managed to convene an non-regular Party's Congress. The Slovenes and Croats opposed the Serbian endeavour. Hence, the only effects of the 14th Congress of the League of Yugoslav Communists were the

¹³ See: "Memorandum" SANU, in: *Izvori velikosrpske agresije*, August Cesarec, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1991, pp. 257-258, 263, 273, 275-276, 282 284.

¹⁴ Griffiths, who accepted many pro-Serb "arguments", had a similar opinion about Milošević: "Milošević, a communist as well as a nationalist, also refused to give economic reform, as demanded by the Western-oriented republics Slovenia and Croatia, any kind of priority..." Griffiths, Stephen Iwan, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict: Threats to European Security* (SIPRI Research Report No. 5), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1993, p. 42.

¹⁵ "The first attacks against the constitution of 1974 were launched in 1981, notably in the theses of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia (SKS), which included claims that Serbia was the only republic not constituted as a state due to the disruptive role of the autonomous provinces." (Magaš, Branka, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-up 1980-92*, Verso, London and New York, 1993, p. 175.)

The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts directed its sharpest attacks at the 1974 constitution, too. See: Zametica, John, *The Yugoslav Conflict*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1992, p. 21.

¹⁶ The same conclusion on the 1974 constitution issue can be found in Griffiths, op. cit., p. 41.

break-up of the federal party and collapse of Communism in the country. After that failed endeavour, Serbian leadership tried to grasp control over the federal state. When that failed, the war became the only possible way to achieve the Serbian nationalists' goals. The aims were very clear-cut: to conquer the whole Yugoslavia and establish a centralized state, or to grab as much territory as possible and establish Greater Serbia.

The main Serbian ally was the YPA. At the beginning of the dissolution of Yugoslavia the former federal army was divided into two factions: the first, formally pro-federal, and the second, pro-Serbian. But former disappeared, and the latter prevailed.¹⁷ The YPA had already become the tool of Serbian nationalist policy in Kosovo since in the early eighties. Acting outside all constitutional provisions and in defiance of the civilian authorities, the YPA started the war against Slovenia, a part of Yugoslav federation. That was actually an attempt of military coup organized in full co-operation with Serbian leadership. In Croatia the YPA was entirely a Serbian force.¹⁸

The YPA preparations for future Serbian wars were made much earlier. In 1980 the YPA took over the control of the Territorial Defense, a military organization which had previously been under the decentralized control of federal republics. Opposing the break-up of Yugoslavia, the YPA introduced (1988) a new territorial organization of army districts, which eliminated the congruity of army district borders with the borders of federal republics.¹⁹ During the preparations for the war Slovenian and Croatian units (in Slovenia and Croatia) were transferred and replaced by more reliable Serbian units, and ethnic clean all-Serb paratroop units were formed.²⁰ In May 1990 the YPA confiscated the weapons of the Territorial Defense in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia.

¹⁷ The YPA had the same objectives as Serbian nationalism. Of course, motives varied. The army tried to save the federation because the federal administration and federal party were its employers. The YPA tried to establish a military party: the League of Communists—Movement for Yugoslavia in November 1990. The purpose was clear. The army tried to regenerate its employer.

¹⁸ During the war in Slovenia "...the JNA (the YPA) was seen and treated as such by the population as an invading, foreign (Serbian) force and was humiliated. The war then moved on to Croatia. Here the army, by now effectively having discarded the fig leaf of ostensibly being a Yugoslav institution and now clearly and nakedly a Serbian force..." (Poulton, Hugh, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publications, London, 1993, p. 211)

¹⁹ On concentration of military power in the hands of federal army bodies, see: Gow, James, *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis*, Pinter Publishers, 1992, pp. 95-99.

²⁰ See: Poulton, *ibid.*, p. 100.

The pro-Serb stance of federal army could be explained with the fact that the YPA was dominated by a predominantly Serb officer staff. The ethnic distribution of the 60,000 officer corps in early 1991 was as follows: Serbs 60 per cent; "a further 5.4 per cent were 'Yugoslavs' and likely to be Serbs;" Montenegrins 6.2 per cent; "Croats, 12.6 per cent; Macedonians, 6.3 per cent; Muslims, 2.4 per cent; Slovenes, 2.8 per cent; Albanians, 0.6 per cent; Hungarians, 0.7 per cent; others, 1.6 per cent."²¹

The political position of the YPA is evident from a document titled *Information on the Current International and Domestic Situation and the Forthcoming Tasks of the YPA*, which was prepared by the political administration of the Ministry of Defense and released as the document of the Federal Council of National Defense at the end of January 1991. Briefly, the document was extremely anti-Western. The YPA leaders were encouraged by the growing strength of Soviet conservatives at the end of 1990, whereby "the process of disintegration of this great country has been slowed down." Political planners of the YPA demonstrated its Russian connection: "The Soviet Army is also being mobilized. This development of the situation in the USSR, irrespective of where it may lead, limits the West's freedom of action and scope for influencing world events. In Yugoslavia too, socialism has not yet been finished off, brought to its knees. Yugoslavia has managed to withstand, albeit at a high cost, the first attack and wave of anti-Communist hysteria. Real prospects of maintaining the country as a federate and socialist community have been preserved..."²²

The Serbian nationalist policy had been planned many years earlier. Memorandum of the Serbian Academy (1986) proclaimed that the integrity of the Serbian nation in Yugoslavia was the crucial issue of its existence. The document also emphasized that the solution of the national issue of the Serbs in Croatia was the most important political issue of the day.²³

²¹ Gow, James, op. cit. p. 142. The share of Serbs in the army staff was even more disproportionate before the Second World War: "...in 1938, of 165 Generals, 161 were Serbs - leaving two Croats and two Slovenes." (Tomasevich, Jozo, *Peasant, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia*, Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, 1955, p. 261)

²² KOS, the Army counter-intelligence service, made all preparations for military coup in Croatia. At the end of January 1991, the Army was put on full alert. Croatia appeared on the brink of invasion. In the event, nothing happened. The YPA had no courage to start with the coup. The text of army document and explanation of circumstances concerning the YPA role in Yugoslav crisis, see: Magaš, Branka, op. cit., pp. 268-272; Banac, Ivo (ed.), *Eastern Europe in Revolution*, Ithaca, N.Y., London, Cornell University Press, 1992, p. 183.

²³ In 1986 the Serbs in Croatia were overrepresented in Croatian politics. For instance, the president of the Central Committee of the Croatian League of Communist was an ethnic Serb, as well as the editor-in-chief of the main Croatian daily *Vjesnik*, the general manager of Zagreb's radio and TV, the chief

Serbia's new (1990) constitution claims the right to intervene in all Yugoslav republics and provinces with the Serbian minority. And President Milošević has openly and repeatedly endorsed non-constitutional and violent forms of political change in Yugoslavia. On 25 June 1990 Milošević issued a warning that current republican borders were only administrative borders, connected with federal Yugoslavia. In case of confederal transformation, or separation, the question of Serbia's borders would be an open political issue.

The Serbian political opposition shared Milošević's view. For many of them, the western borders of Serbia ought to be drawn in such a way that much of present-day Croatia would be a part of Greater Serbia.²⁴ By the way, according to all federal constitutions, Yugoslavia's republics have not been administrative units but nation-states and their borders were not drawn ad hoc, but on the basis of ethnic and historic considerations. No border could be changed except by agreement with the federal republics concerned.²⁵

Milošević proclaimed Memorandum's policy as official policy of Serbia: all Serbs must live in the same state.²⁶ Hence, Milošević offered to non-Serbian republics to choose between the federation under Serbian control and the creation of Greater Serbia at the expense of territorial integrity of the other republics. This policy was practically a declaration of war.

The Serbian media tried to blame all other sides for the war. For instance, the introduction of the traditional Croatian flag and the coat of arms was seen by the Serbs as allegedly a revival of Croatian fascists symbols.²⁷ The Serbian propaganda tended to overestimate the number of

of secret service etc. Mihailo Crnobrnja, Serb himself, confirmed that: "In Croatia ... the Serbs were if anything overrepresented in many significant walks of life: in politics, the media, the police, the army. The backlash against this imbalance was later to become a part of the problem. None the less, the Serbs' relatively larger representation can be explained, if not justified." (Crnobrnja, Mihailo, *The Yugoslav Drama*. London, New York, I.B.Tauris Publishers, 1994, p. 96).

²⁴ For instance, Mihailo Crnobrnja, who wouldn't accept that he is a Serbian nationalist and follower of Milošević, demand the same: "Some border corrections should be seriously contemplated." *Ibid.*, p. 264.

²⁵ The Conclusion of the Arbitrarian Commission of the European Community Conference on Yugoslavia (so called Badinter's Commission) was that "Yugoslavia as a state is in a state of dissolution" which included the recognition of internal borders as the borders of the new independent states (December 1991).

²⁶ See: Zametica, John, *The Yugoslav Conflict*, op. cit., 1992, pp. 20-22. (Zametica is an ethnic Serb, not John but Jovan, and now he is working for the Bosnian Serbs' leader Karadžić)

²⁷ Of course, the Croatian fascists symbols were different (letter "U"). Croatia has always had some constant parts of national symbols - but those have not been fascists (for instance chess-board in the coat of arms). Those symbols have

Serbian victims in the Second World War killed by Croatian fascists. The intention was obvious: the new Croatian state could repeat the massacre and therefore the uprising of Serbs in Croatia is legitimate. They claim that 700,000 of Serbs were killed in the Ustasha concentration camp at Jasenovac (Croatia) alone. According to one of the most reliable Serbian authority — Bogoljub Kočević, the actual wartime losses suffered by the main Yugoslav nationalities were as follows (in thousands):

Serbs	487	Moslems	86
Croats	207	Macedonians	7
Slovenes	32	Albanians	6
Montenegrins	50	(Jews)	(60)

Concerning the share of population, the Jews suffered the most, then the Moslems (8.1 per cent), the Serbs (7.3 per cent) and Croats (5.0 per cent).²⁸

The conflicts with the new government in Croatia couldn't be blamed for the uprising of Serbs in Croatia. The Serbs started and sharpened the confrontation.²⁹

The Serbian "uprising" in Croatia, as well as the Serbian war in Bosnia, is aimed at conquering as much territory as possible for the emerging Greater Serbia. That was not an attempt to protect or "to liberate" ethnic Serbs living there. The Serbian war goals are the territories with a very small or non-existing Serbian minority. Ethnic cleansing has been the main instrument for the implementation of Serbian policy as well as mass killings, mass rapes and the displacement of more than 2 million non-Serbs.³⁰

been the same in the Communist Croatia and in the contemporary independent state.

²⁸ For more details, see: Magaš, Branka, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

²⁹ "Whatever criticism can be made of the Croatian government's treatment of the Serb minority, there have been few signs of systematic persecution, certainly not of the kind suffered by the national minorities in Milošević's Serbia." (Magaš, *ibid.*, p. 316).

³⁰ Ethnic cleansing "of non-Serb populations from Serb-conquered areas was not just a by-product of the fighting, but belonged to its central purpose." Malcolm, Noel, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

"There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the practice of 'ethnic cleansing' were not coincidental, sporadic or carried out by disorganized groups or bands of

The Serbian military tried to conquer the old Croatian town Dubrovnik with practically no Serbs living there (only 6%). They destroyed Vukovar, once a town of 50,000 inhabitants, with 43 per cent of Croats, 37 per cent of Serbs, 20 per cent of Hungarians and others. The whole area of Eastern Slavonia, which Serbia probably intended to include in its state territory, had a total population of 647,853 inhabitants in 1991. The ethnic composition of Eastern Slavonia was as follows: 66 per cent Croat, 14.4 per cent Serb, and 19.6 per cent others (mainly Hungarians). The part of Eastern Slavonia occupied by Serbs (the last occupied territory in Croatia) had 194,809 inhabitants in 1991 (87,051 or 45 per cent Croats; 67,878 or 34.8 per cent Serbs; 39,880 or 20.5 per cent Hungarians and others). It should be also noted that the territory has never been part of the Serbian state. In all territories occupied by Serbs in Croatia (according to the census of 1991) lived 549,083 inhabitants on 3 January 1992. Ethnic picture was as follows: Croats 203,656 (37.1%); Serbs 287,830 (52.4%); others 57,597 (10.5%). After Serbian occupation non-Serbs have practically disappeared.³¹

A similar pattern was repeated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbs claimed 65% of territory. However, ethnic composition was disproportionate in relation to Serbian demands: 45% Bosniacs (Moslems), 31% Serbs, 17% Croats.³²

The result of the Serbian war in former Yugoslavia has been appalling: more than 2,000,000 persons have been displaced, about 200,000 killed, with mass rapes and with the destruction of enormous number of towns and villages.³³ The international community tried to stop the war but

civilians who could not be controlled by the Bosnian-Serb leadership." The patterns of conduct, the manner, the length of time, and the areas in which they occurred "combine to reveal a purpose, systematicity and some planning and coordination from higher authorities... and indicate the existence of an element of superior direction... With respect to the practices by Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, ethnic cleansing is commonly used as a term to describe a policy conducted in furtherance of political doctrines relating to 'Greater Serbia.'" See: *Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)* (so called Bassiouni's Report to the Security Council of the United Nations), May 1994, p. 33-35.

³¹ There was an estimation that only 5% of non-Serbs lived in the so called Serbian Krajina in Croatia. (Magaš, B., *ibid.*, pp. 312-313; Šterc, Stjepan, and Nenad Pokos, "Demografski uzroci i posljedice rata protiv Hrvatske", *Društvena istraživanja*, No. 4-5, 1993, pp. 305-319, 322-328.)

³² See: Magaš, *ibid.*, p. 226; Griffiths, *ibid.*, p. 52.

³³ "The territory over which most of the victimization occurred had a population base of an estimated 6 million persons, of whom 1.5 to 2 million are now refugees... Most of them were deported or forced to leave and are unable to return. The civilian and military casualties among all warring factions are reported to exceed 200,000. The number of reported mass graves, 150... tends to

failed. The Western democracies were not ready to take the side. No one could stop a fascist type war only by diplomatic means. To stop the war in former Yugoslavia meant opposing the aggressor.

We can agree with Noel Malcolm that "this war will only end by military means."³⁴ That does not mean only military defeat of the aggressor. NATO peacemaking operation could establish peace too — if IFOR (Implementation Forces) is a resolute effort.

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support the estimates of the number of casualties. Over 700 prison camps and detention facilities are reported to have existed... The rape and sexual assault study and investigation... suggests a very high number of rapes and sexual assaults in custodial and non-custodial settings. Thus, earlier projection of 20,000 rapes made by other sources are not unreasonable considering the number of actual reported cases." (*Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)*, op. cit., p. 84).

The recent report issued by the CIA blamed the Serbian side for 90 per cent of war crimes committed in the war in former Yugoslavia. Bassiouni's Report confirmed that the other warring factions committed significantly fewer war crimes and that the Commission could not find indications that their crimes were part of the government policies.

For war crimes see journalist documentation: Gutman, Roy, *A Witness to Genocide*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1993.

³⁴ Malcolm, Noel, op. cit., p. 14.