

PATRIOTS, VILLAINS, AND FRANJO TUĐMAN*

James J. SADKOVICH**

Patriots and Nationalists

Asked in April 1993 what he thought of a poll by *Globus* which concluded that it would be “difficult” to list him “among Croatia’s patriots,” Franjo Tuđman replied that he considered himself a patriot (*rodoljub*). “Patriotism,” he said, “I hold as a worthy phenomenon in life, in the feelings of peoples and nations. It is another thing,” he added, “when it turns into chauvinism, imperialism.” But in Croatia, he continued, the chauvinistic parties had obtained fewer votes than elsewhere in Europe. He believed this had occurred because under his leadership the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* – HDZ) had projected a positive image, attracting voters across the ideological spectrum.¹ But the Croatian President refused to concede the mantle of patriot to his more vociferous opponents. Some, like Zvonimir Čičak, a student leader during the 1970s and a human rights activist in the 1990s, Tuđman dismissed as unable to accept the idea of a sovereign Croatia. Others, he explained, opposed the new democratic order and criticized his government because they could not accept anyone in power but themselves.² Nor, many of his critics might counter, could Tuđman.³ His image of himself was clearly not consonant with the image others held of him.

Seeing past the image of any political leader is difficult; in Tuđman’s case, it is doubly so because he was branded as a radical nationalist by the Yugoslav regime, and he was consistently portrayed as a dangerous nationalist when he emerged twenty years later as the leader of the HDZ.⁴ Most people in public

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**James J. Sadkovich, Ph. D., Leiden, Netherlands

¹ Franjo Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ svijetu: Razgovori sa stranim predstavnicima* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada/Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1999), p. 249.

² Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, p. 254–5. Čičak had just accused Croatia of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³ Stjepan Malović and Gary W. Selnow, *The People, Press, and Politics of Croatia* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001), p. 140, quote Marvin Stone, who believes Tuđman “...has instincts that are...uncomfortably close to fascism. He is antidemocratic, powerful, authoritarian and...fascistic.” Drago Hedl’s “Living in the Past: Franjo Tuđman’s Croatia,” *Current History* (March 2000), is a diatribe; Hedl wrote for *Feral Tribune*, a vociferous critic of Tuđman.

⁴ For example, Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin/BBC Books, 1996), pp. 83–4, 86.

life strive to present an image of themselves which is as carefully crafted as are the attacks of their critics. This was also the case with Tuđman. He published practically everything he wrote and left thousands of pages of writing, many defensive, some self-serving and disingenuous, few dispassionate, almost all detailed and turgid. He presented a formal figure in public, yet was prone to off-the-cuff remarks that seemed at best reckless. The images he projected, like the photographs in his 1991 biography, confuse rather than clarify.⁵ His obituaries were almost uniformly unflattering, and his magnum opus was generally ridiculed or condemned in the West.⁶

Politicians, statesmen, and diplomats cannot be expected to be candid, and journalists are as much stenographers for their sources or dramatists for their editors as they are critics or analysts. Yet Tuđman was extremely candid, and journalists seemed to feel compelled to editorialize every time they wrote about him. Most journalists pick up and disseminate what they hear and read, whether it is propaganda, rumor, or hearsay; they rarely probe the beliefs and histories of the participants to a conflict. But they do like to dramatize.⁷ This was certainly the case with Tuđman, whether the laudatory reports in the official press or the vicious denunciations in both the opposition and much of the Western media. Both journalists and politicians tended to reduce complex realities to comprehensible patterns based on existing stereotypes.⁸ When academics and analysts act as members of the media or as partisans for a party or a people, this is true of their work as well. They can be as superficial, uninformed, and biased as any journalist writing against deadline, and during the

⁵ Željko Krušelj, *Franjo Tuđman. Biografija* (Zagreb: Globus, 1991), for Tuđman at official functions, in a cardigan in his library, pruning trees in his garden, smelling a flower, and diving in a skimpy swimming suit. To an American eye, many of the photos are simply odd.

⁶ The Croatian Embassy's obituary, www.croatiaemb.org/tudjman/biography.html, is positive, but the obituary at Teoma.com depicts Tuđman as a "ruthless dictator" who "thwarted democracy and suppressed any internal dissent. Miloš Vasić, "Dr. Franjo Tuđman, 1922–1999," www.vreme.com/arhiva_html/467/08.html, portrays Tuđman as an anti-Semite whose obsession with Bosnia, his scheming with Milošević, and his efforts to rehabilitate the NDH caused all of Croatia's problems. The Serbian editor dismisses the Croatian victory in 1995 as the result of Milošević's decision not to support Croatia's Serbs. For a particularly bizarre interchange, see the documents collected by Joe Tripician at balkansnet.org/joet-jakov.html.

⁷ For critiques of the media, see Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 1988); Norman Isaacs, *Untended Gates. The Mismanagement of the Press* (Columbia UP, 1986); Martin A. Lee and Norman Solomon, *Unreliable Sources. A Guide to Detecting Bias in News Media* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1990); David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman, *Media, Power, Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1981); and Lawrence C. Soley, *The News Shapers. The Sources Who Explain the News* (Westport CT: Praeger, 1992).

⁸ Janusz Bugajski, in Raju G.C. Thomas and H. Richard Friman, *The South Slav Conflict. History, Religion, Ethnicity, and Nationalism* (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 115–116. Some insist that Serbs, not Croats, were demonized, e.g., Anita Lekić, "Words as Weapons: *The New York Times* on the Yugoslav Civil War," *South East European Monitor* (1996) 1(5): 12–22, and Peter Brock, "'Greater Serbia' vs. the Greater Western Media," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (1995) 6 (1).

early 1990s, many savaged Franjo Tuđman, who became the dominant symbol of a dangerous Croatian nationalism.⁹

Dismissed by academics as a loquacious amateur historian and depicted by the media as a nationalist and neo-fascist, Tuđman's past as a dissident was forgotten and his respect for formal, procedural democracy ignored. So David Owen recalls Alija Izetbegović and Milovan Đilas as dissidents, but he labels Tuđman a nationalist and an "opportunist in the cause of Croatia" who conducted "diplomacy by histrionics."¹⁰ For Ian Kearns, he was just another dangerous Balkan politician, a Croatian Milošević. At best, he was an authoritarian leader, not a democrat.¹¹ The Bosnian Croat leader, Mate Boban may have praised the Croatian president for his realism, and Tuđman may have seen himself as a patriot and a democrat, but most foreign observers condemned him for practicing a brutal Realpolitik. Had he not died, Franjo Tuđman would certainly have been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as the leader of a "joint criminal enterprise" and taken his place in the docket alongside the former President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević. Many believe that is where he belonged, not on the pages of Croatian textbooks as the father of his country. Yet those who knew him would disagree.¹²

So who was Franjo Tuđman?

To begin to answer that question, it is first necessary to dispel the layers of propaganda which obscure Tuđman. As Richard Cobb, a historian of the French Revolution, has noted, in troubled times sorting the false from the true is difficult because the meaning of a word depends on who is using it, and

⁹ For example, Ian Kearns, "Croatian Politics: The New Authoritarianism," *Political Quarterly* (January-March 1996), 67 (1), EBSCO Text, pp. 2, 7, thinks "a confused analysis of the nature" of "the Croatian regime" led to diverse views of Tuđman's Croatia as a victim of aggression, a fascist state, or the same as Serbia. He sees Croatia evolving "from war victim to warmonger," with "a new edifice of authoritarian power." He also tends to credit rumor and gossip and to accept the most negative explanation for an event, e.g., he notes a rumor that the HDZ had "moles" in opposition parties, then comments, without verifying the rumor, that the HDZ was "not relying on such tactics alone." For criticism of the "complicity of the routinized academic community," see Ivan Iveković in Stefano Bianchini and R. C. Nation, *The Yugoslav Conflict and its Implications for International Relations* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998), p. 213.

¹⁰ David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1995), pp. 6, 15, 36-8, 75, 78, who cites Rebecca West, Fitzroy Maclean, and Milovan Đilas, criticized the Croats for having "attacked" the "Krajina" in 1995, which he believes had been Serb territory for 300 years.

¹¹ Kearns, "Croatian Politics," EBSCO text, p. 3, notes that Tuđman was popular, but believes that he was "accused rightly of an authoritarian style of leadership" because he intimidated HDZ deputies and appointed "friends and close colleagues" to high office.

¹² Karlo Mirth, *Život u emigraciji* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2003), p. 398, recalls his thoughts on his last visit to pay tribute to Tuđman in Mirogoj, the cemetery outside Zagreb. ". . . nobody and nothing," Mirth writes, "can change the historical significance of the fact that here lies the first President of Croatia." Anđelko Mijatović, who worked closely with Tuđman, thinks that without him, it is "doubtful" that Croatia would exist because other politicians lacked both the vision and the resolve to create a Croatian state; personal interview, Zagreb, June 17, 2005.

everyone has his own version of events, his own heroes and villains, his own revolution.¹³ And whatever else they were, after 1989 events in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia were certainly revolutionary. So understanding Tuđman is in part an exercise in deflating propaganda and the precise—historically accurate—use of words.

But disentangling the true from the false is especially difficult in the case of the former Yugoslavia because the levels of deceit there were many and well-established, not only among members of the League of Communists, but among academics and ordinary people.¹⁴ A habit of deceit encouraged a culture of accommodation and self-deception in which conspiracy theories abounded.¹⁵ And conspiracy theories, like all theories and models, appear valid once their basic premises are accepted.¹⁶ As Muhamed Filipović learned, not to collaborate in a system of lies and denunciations was to risk both reputation and livelihood. Few ran that risk, and almost everyone in the professional class was compromised to some extent. There were few dissidents, and they tended to be abroad, in prison or living as non-persons, vilified or ignored by the regime and its supporters.¹⁷ The politics of self-censorship and accommodation even seems to have extended to some academics in the West who made their careers analyzing and praising the peculiar system of socialist self-management cre-

¹³ Richard Cobb, *The Police and the People. French Popular Protest, 1789-1820* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. xvi-xvi, and *passim*, is particularly distrustful of the police, who are not objective observers.

¹⁴ Instructive is the exchange at the ICTY between Stipe Mesić and Slobodan Milošević over whether Vice Vukojević, an HDZ deputy in the Sabor, had been photographed in an HVO uniform and whether he was guilty of war crimes. Milošević insisted he was; Mesić noted that Vukojević was from Bosnia and that he could not have committed the crimes of which he was accused because he was elsewhere at the time they occurred. ICTY, Milošević Trial, October 2, 2002, p. 10687. Malović and Selnow, *The People, Press, and Politics of Croatia*, pp. 62-3, 111, note most journalists served local political parties and few dissidents existed under communism; most people went along to get along, censoring themselves to avoid antagonizing the party.

¹⁵ United Nations, CAT Committee Report, May 6, 1996, noted that one of the problems confronting Croatia was the distortion of “social attitudes’ after forty-five years of communism. Mario Nobile, *Hrvatski feniks: diplomatski procesi iza zatvorenih vrata, 1990-1997* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2000), p. 110, notes the ubiquity of conspiracy theories, including the conviction that Croatia would be sacrificed to preserve Yugoslavia.

¹⁶ For competing “paradigms” in the physical and the social sciences, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), *passim*. Also see “Are They a) Geniuses or b) Jokers?” *New York Times*, November 9, 2002, which cites Dr. Peter Waif and other physicists who note that competing models can be equally valid and that much of the literature in contemporary physics is “complete nonsense,” with interdisciplinary misunderstanding and unintelligible papers common.

¹⁷ Muhamed Filipović, *Pokušaj jedne duhovne biografije* (Sarajevo: Avicena, 1999), p. 134, recalls a colleague who attacked him to save his own job. Filipović deplored a system in which people made careers by lying for others, lying to the public, and lying to themselves. Zlatko Anguelov, *Confessions of an Innocent Victim* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), *passim*, notes the paucity of dissidents in Bulgaria and describes the process by which he was ultimately compromised.

ated by the former communist conspirators and wartime Partisans, Josip Broz Tito and Edvard Kardelj.¹⁸

Among the most vociferous opponents of both Tuđman and his collaborators were those on the Left who had viewed Tito's nonaligned movement as a viable option to the USSR and China. Among the American publications, *The Nation*, *The Progressive*, and *Harper's* all took positions which were critical of Tuđman and his government.¹⁹ Some opposed Croatian nationalism on principle, as a recrudescence of twentieth-century fascism, including some Serbian intellectuals associated with the Zagreb journal *Praxis*.²⁰ Others seemed to have a visceral hatred for both Tuđman and Croatia.²¹ Tuđman's opponents included Leftists like Eric Hobsbawm, whose distrust of small peoples influenced many intellectuals during the 1990s; liberals like Ivo Banac, one of Tuđman's most incisive critics; and *The Economist*, which, like Hobsbawm, suggested that self-determination should be reserved for large nations—a point of view diametrically opposed to Tuđman's insistence that small peoples also should be allowed their own states.²²

¹⁸ Reneo Lukić and Allen Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals. The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 244–5. The problem existed for Sovietologists as well; see Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience. Politics and History since 1917* (New York: Oxford UP, 1986), *passim*.

¹⁹ For example, Chris Hedges, "Planning Croatia's Final Solution," *Harper's*, December 2001, who claims that 600,000 Serbs were "driven from the Krajina region" in 1995 and "up to 400 Serb civilians" killed by the HV in Gospić. Hedges was introducing the minutes of two meetings of the Croatian Council for Defense and National Security held in September 1993. For a fuller discussion of bias in the American media, see James J. Sadkovich, *The U.S. Media and Yugoslavia, 1991-1995* (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1998), *passim*.

²⁰ Christopher Hitchens, Alexander Cockburn, Eric Hobsbawm, and Bogdan Denitch were particularly influential on the Left. See, for example, Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," *Nation*, March 29, 1993, and October 25 and November 20 and 25, 1995, and Alexander Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," *The Nation*, 31 Aug.-7 Sept. 1992. Also see Aleksa Djilas, "The Nation That Wasn't," *New Republic*, 21 September 1993, and Misha Glenny, "The Massacre of Yugoslavia," *New York Review of Books*, 30 January 1992, "The Revenger's Tragedy," *New York Review of Books*, 13 August 1992, and "Yugoslavia: The Great Fall," *New York Review of Books*, 23 March 1995.

²¹ For example, Justus Leicht and Peter Schwarz, *World Socialist Web Site*, 16 December 1999, who condemn Tuđman as "a nationalist, a racist and anti-Semite" who "drove" 400,000 [sic] Serbs out of Croatia, "glorified the medieval roots of the Croatian nation and "trivialized the atrocities of the fascist Ustasha" who "cruelly murdered" "up to 800,000 Serbs, Jews, Roma and anti-fascists" at Jasenovac where Tuđman purportedly claimed only 30,000 had died. They accused him of having supported "notorious war criminals" in Bosnia and possessing "all the negative characteristics—and a few more" of Milošević, making him an "ideal partner" for Germany and the United States, since he was a creature of the German secret service and guilty of aggression against both Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia, and responsible for "pervasive corruption and nepotism" in Croatia. Paul Mitchell, *World Socialist Web Site*, March 27, 2002, claims Tuđman was "an advocate of ethnic cleansing" and "an admirer of the Ustashe Nazi collaborators."

²² Eric Hobsbawm, "The Perils of the New Nationalism," *The Nation*, November 4, 1991, argues that self-determination for small nations is impractical, "as Kuwait and Croatia show." He sees Eastern Europeans embracing nationalism because they are insecure and disoriented and in search of "simple, intuitively comprehensible beliefs that substitute for less understandable political programs." Ivo Banac, *Protiv straha. Članci, izjave i javni nastupi, 1987-*

The Left's position was not born only of support for Tito's regime or Marxist disdain for peasants and populists; the Left had a tradition of attacking Croatia and Croats. Marx and Engels had laid considerable blame for the failure of the revolutions of 1848 on the Croats, and Rebecca West found ways to blame the Croats for the repression exercised by King Alexander's dictatorship during the 1930s.²³ In the 1970s, commentators sympathetic to the Prague Spring, either ignored the Croatian Spring or portrayed it as an ugly eruption of retrograde nationalism.²⁴ When information conflicted with conventional wisdom, it tended to be ignored or explained away, so much so that the ICTY has labeled Tuđman the "leader" of a "criminal enterprise" because he supported Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina against both Serbs and Muslims during the early 1990s.²⁵ The accusation is a sad irony; in early 1993, Tuđman, along with other Croatian leaders, had pressed for the creation of an international court to try war crimes, and during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, his government sheltered Muslim refugees not welcome in the West and helped to funnel weapons to the armed forces of the neighboring state.²⁶

1992 (Zagreb: Slon, 1992), pp. 119–20, and *Why Bosnia?*, p. 154, rejected Hobsbawm's assertion that the nationalist era was past as poorly informed and characterized his new book as "blindly polemical, semantically flawed and full of factual errors." ("*Hobsbawmova je knjiga do te mjere slijepo polemična, semantički nedomišljena i puna činjeničkih grešaka.*") Banac also considered the work of Anthony Smith and Ernest Gellner to be incomplete. Davorin Rudolf, *Rat koji nismo htjeli. Hrvatska 1991* (Zagreb: Globus, 1999), p. 327, notes that UN members include sixteen nations smaller than Croatia, and *The Economist*, June 29, 1991, writes, "The idea of self-determination applies to Croats and Slovenes as much as to Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians." Noting that Luxembourg is a fifth the size of Slovenia, it concludes that, "small does not mean unrecognizable. . . ."

²³ For Marx and Engels, see Diane Paul, "In the Interests of Civilization: Marxist Views of Race and Culture in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1981) 42(1): 115–38, and Franjo Tuđman, *Velike ideje i mali narodi. Rasprave i ogleđi* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1970), *passim*. Unlike Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. A Journey through Yugoslavia* (New York: Viking, 1941/53), *passim*, Karl Lowenstein, "Autocracy Versus Democracy in Contemporary Europe," *American Political Science Review*, 29 (August 1935) 4: 571–93, saw Alexander's regime as one of several autocratic, fascist regimes.

²⁴ Vladimir V. Kusin, "An Overview of East European Reformism," *Soviet Studies*, 28 (July 1976) 3: 338–61, discusses the Prague Spring, but ignores the Croatian Spring; instead, he describes reforms in 1958 and self-management. Gale Stokes, ed., *From Stalinism to Pluralism. A Documentary History of Eastern Europe since 1945* (New York: Oxford, 1991), pp. 6, 95 ff., 115 ff., 224 ff., includes readings on the Prague Spring and Poland's Solidarity movement; Yugoslav self-management and its "new class"; Serbian nationalism; and the *Praxis* group, which was anti-Croatian and pro-Yugoslav. Two of the three readings in the sections on self-management and the "new class" are by the Montenegrin, Milovan Đilas, and one of three readings on nationalism is by "a Belgrade lawyer," Veljko Guberina. The section on the *Praxis* group is by "a Belgrade philosopher," Mihailo Marković, who focuses on events in Belgrade; lists the creation of Serbian and Yugoslav associations in "all the other republics"; and notes that *Praxis*, although published by the Croatian Philosophical Society of Zagreb from 1964 to 1974, was edited by a "group of Yugoslav philosopher" (Gajo Petrović, Rudi Supek, and Danilo Pejović). For a critical discussion, see Stanko M. Vujica, "The Humanist Marxism in Croatia," *Journal of Croatian Studies* (1968–1969), pp. 3–40.

²⁵ ICTY, Indictment of Jadranko Prlić, et al., Paragraph 36.

²⁶ Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 373, for Tuđman's attitude toward the Tribunal, which was established by UN Resolution 808 of February 22, 1993. For the creation of the ICTY, see Pierre

Yet in 1991, Western observers chided Tuđman and his government for provoking Croatia's Serbs, and in 1993, pundits, academics, and politicians in the West accused the Croatian army of vicious attacks on Bosnia's Muslims.²⁷ Many Western scholars, both radical and conservative, followed the lead of their Yugoslav counterparts and constructed a negative image of Croats and Croatian leaders.²⁸ A recent analysis uses the jargon of anthropology and literary criticism to argue that the Croats "constructed" a state, then justified it by "elevating" a "regional dialect" to the status of a language and distancing themselves from their Serbian cousins by constructing the Serb as "the Balkan other."²⁹ It is an interesting gambit, but it is only a gambit, which ignores the persistence of Croatian culture over centuries and the practical exercise of many aspects of a sovereign state by Croatian institutions prior to 1918. Like many literary arguments, it is historically naive. But both historians and social scientists fell into the trap of confusing abstractions with reality, seduced by theories and enchanted by models, including the biggest theoretical model of all—Yugoslavia itself.³⁰ As Lukić and Lynch note, "entire careers" had been built by singing the praises of Yugoslavia.³¹ And Tuđman was tearing it down.

Hazan, *Justice in a Time of War. The true story behind the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004).

²⁷ For Tuđman's views, *Hrvatska riječ*, pp. 22–3. Banac, *Protiv straha*, p. 209, lists, and rejects, some of the charges against the Croats, which included their past as "mercenaries," their role in the suppression of the revolutions of 1848, their opposition to the Versailles order, their Germanophilia, and their support for the Ustaša.

²⁸ Banac, *Protiv straha*, pp. 223–5 and *passim*, thinks Croatian emigrants "failed" to create the institutions and university chairs needed to write and disseminate a Croatian version of Croatian and Yugoslav history. He sees a need to write new histories, believes Yugoslav historiography needs a "large injection of independent thinking" (*velika injekcija slobodoumlja*) and praises Dušan Bilandžić as one of the few historians who have tried to write honestly. Dušan Bilandžić, *Propast Jugoslavije i stvaranje moderne Hrvatske. Eseji, članci, intervjui, analize, izvješća, izjave* (Zagreb: AGM, 2001), pp. 306–307, urges a general revision of the historiography on Yugoslavia, which he believes prejudiced the French and British against Croatia.

²⁹ Nick Ceh and Jeff Harder, "Imagining the Croatian Nation," *East European Quarterly* (January 2005), pp. 409–416, base their analysis of Croatian "constructions" on 25 hours of interviews, but the authors never examine the reality of the "constructs." Ceh and Harder seem to be unaware that by arguing for language as the primary marker of nationality, they are in effect repeating the arguments of Vuk Karadžić, the father of modern Serbian nationalism.

³⁰ Robin Okey, "Central Europe/Eastern Europe: Behind the Definitions," *Past and Present* 37 (November 1992), p. 131, notes, in a slightly different context, that value-based discussions in which concepts trump reality are normal.

³¹ Lukić and Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans*, pp. 244–5, and Christopher Cvić, "Perceptions of Former Yugoslavia: An Interpretive Reflection," *International Affairs* 71 (4) (1995): 824–26. Where journalists and scholars did their research and where they were based influenced their views, e.g., Christopher Bennett and Mark Thompson were in Slovenia and tended to be critical of both Serbs and Croats, but not of Slovenes; Silber and Little were in Belgrade and tended to echo official sources, who were sympathetic to Serbia and hostile to Croatia and Slovenia. Susan Woodward and Norman Cigar were both in Washington, D.C. Woodward blamed the West and structural factors for Yugoslavia's violent breakup; Cigar was critical of the JNA, Milošević, Belgrade's "orientalists," and Serbian Orthodox leaders.

The Indispensable Villain

By the time Tudman came on stage in Yugoslavia, the sets had been carefully arranged and the role he was to play had been written by others, including Westerners whose major bias was a tendency to view the rest of the world as an imperfect realization of their own societies.³² The American media wrote about Tudman, but they rarely talked with his collaborators. Instead, they conversed with his enemies and consulted old Yugoslav hands, like the American diplomats Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger, or instant experts like the British commanders of UN forces in Bosnia, Lewis MacKenzie, Robert Stewart, and Michael Rose.³³ Members of the informed public read journalists like Robert Kaplan, whose *Balkan Ghosts* influenced world leaders like Bill Clinton, and they sought out accessible writers like Rebecca West, recommended by *The Nation* as the indispensable work on Yugoslavia. In effect, Westerners suffered from a severe case of group think, a phenomenon described by Irvin Janis in the early 1970s, but still useful for understanding why individuals give unanimity priority over realistic appraisals of an individual or an event. Indeed, academics, journalists, and experts seemed to present textbook cases of the phenomenon; they sought security in consensus, rejected criticism from outsiders, and shaped information to fit their paradigms and their collective internalized maps. Whether doing so allowed them to reach “premature cognitive closure,” it certainly made it easier to meet their deadlines and get published in academic journals.³⁴ Preconception, prejudice, and convention trumped research, objectivity, and reality, as models and method overwhelmed fact.³⁵ Chronology became pliable, extrapolation tainted analysis, and assertion replaced interpretation. As Brendan Simms notes, experts,

³² Stjepan Meštrović, Slaven Letica, Miroslav Goreta, *Habits of the Balkan Heart. Social Character and the Fall of Communism* (College Station TX: Texas A & M UP, 1993), pp. 46–7.

³³ Timothy Sanz, “The Yugoslav Conflict; Review of the Literature,” *European Security* (Autumn 1992), pp. 427–41, shows the variety of sources when he groups Nora Beloff, who was pro-Serbian, and Slavenka Drakulić, a radically chic opponent of Tudman, in an analytic section with a political commentator, Janusz Bugajski; three journalists, Misha Glenny, Robert Kaplan, and Branka Magaš; and two scholars, James Gow and Reneo Lukić.

³⁴ Irving Lester Janis, *Victims of Groupthink. A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), pp. 3–12, and Norman Cigar, “Norman Cigar, “Paradigms and U.S. Policymaking for Bosnia (1992–1995),” in Francis R. Jones and Ivan Lovrenović, eds., *Reconstruction and Deconstruction* (Sarajevo: Forum Bosnae, 2002), esp. pp. 59, 62–4, for Kuhn, Sandole, and Jervis on paradigms and related theories, the influence of Kaplan and West, and *passim*, for the damage preconceptions cause. Robert H. Mnookin and Lee Ross, “Introduction,” in Kenneth J. Arrow, et al., *Barriers to Conflict Resolution* (New York: Norton, 1995), pp. 17–18, for the correlation between groupthink and overconfidence. John N. Warfield, “Complexity and Cognitive Equilibrium: Experimental Results and Their Implications,” in Dennis J. D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe, *Conflict Resolution theory and practice. Integration and application* (Manchester UP, 1993), p. 70, sees consensus via groupthink as fragile.

³⁵ For an example of a model-driven analysis, see Keith Webb, Vassiliki Koutrakou, and Mike Walters, “The Yugoslavian Conflict, European Mediation, and the Contingency Model: A Critical Perspective,” in Kenneth J. Arrow, R. H. Mnookin, L Jacob Bercovitch, eds., *Resolving International Conflicts. The Theory and Practice of Mediation* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

including academics, “inevitably become part of the official culture”—“too caught up in official ‘group-think’ to break ranks” and “fearful of giving offence, and thus losing influence,” to proffer “sound analysis.”³⁶ Sycophancy, group think, bias, stereotypes, and off-the-cuff scholarship made for extraordinarily muddy thinking, not just about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but about Franjo Tuđman and contemporary Croatia as well.

Just as Croatia became the necessary aggressor to relieve Serbia of sole guilt for the wars, Tuđman became a necessary excuse for the failures of the West, the indispensable, if somewhat dim, corollary to Milošević.³⁷ Tuđman became the mandatory trickster in the narrative of Yugoslavia’s destruction, the explanation of the evil, accidental and intentional, random and planned, which was unleashed in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1991 and 1995.³⁸ Yet, as Slaven Letica notes, if Tuđman was guilty of leading a “criminal conspiracy,” then Stipe Mesić and his collaborators from 1990 through 1994 must be as well, and the Croatian state itself can be dismissed as the illegitimate creation of criminals.³⁹ This, of course, is not possible, so like a scapegoat, Tuđman carried the sins of others as well as his own.⁴⁰ To paraphrase Voltaire, had he not existed, it would have been necessary to invent him.

Tuđman must be guilty, because, as Misha Glenny argued, the Serbs were not evil and could not possibly have caused all this havoc on their own; they must have had a Croatian accomplice.⁴¹ The West certainly could not be criti-

³⁶ Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour. Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 252 and 223–72, for critiques of Misha Glenny, James Gow, Jonathan Eyal, John Zametica, John Keegan, and others who influenced public opinion and official policy.

³⁷ Slaven Letica, *Strašni sud: kronika hrvatske apokalipse* (Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, 2002), pp. 165–9, 175, for Croatia as the necessary aggressor. Mark Almond, *Europe’s Backyard War. The War in the Balkans* (Toronto: Mandarin, 1994), p. 391, is typical in believing that Milošević “always out-smarted” Tuđman.

³⁸ The pairing of the Tuđman and Milošević and of Croat and Serb, was commonplace, e.g., William Pfaff, “The Shame of Bosnia,” *New York Review of Books* September 24, 1992, blames the war in Bosnia on both Serbs and Croats who “expand” by “aggressive war, conquest,” and “religious-purge and murder.” Ivo Banac, *Raspad Jugoslavije. Eseji o nacionalizmu i nacionalnim sukobima* (Zagreb: Durieux, 2001), pp. 121–2, 145, would have preferred Tuđman to include Serbs in a “civil society” rather than provoke them through the use of Croatian symbols and purges of the police and the bureaucracy. But while doing so might have disarmed Croatian nationalism and strengthened the legitimacy of Croatian independence, Banac believes that “not even such a politic by Zagreb would have deterred Milošević.” (“*Doduše, ni takva politika Zagreba ne bi zadržala Miloševića.*”)

³⁹ Letica, *Strašni sud*, pp. 165–9.

⁴⁰ Rudolf, *Rat koji nismo htjeli*, pp. 19–35, 28–9, notes that everyone has their favorite scapegoats, but that most blamed Tuđman, and occasionally Milan Kučan, for triggering the war.

⁴¹ Glenny, “The Massacre of Yugoslavia,” p. 30, blames Tuđman for provoking Croatia’s Serbs who “make up between 12 and 20 percent of Croatia’s population,” and in “Yugoslavia: The Great Fall,” pp. 38–41, 56–63, he argues that “to accept the war as being exclusively a matter of Serb aggression, one has to show that Bosnia-Herzegovina was a stable, established state, and it was not”; he claims that only three things grow in Herzegovina, “stones, snakes, and ustasas”; he believes Tuđman and Milošević struck a deal at Karadžević; and he thinks “Serbs and Croats have found it impossible. . .to overcome the desire to exterminate one another. . .”

cized for the carnage in Yugoslavia; its humanitarian credentials were in order. Nor could Tito and self-management be blamed, save by Serbian nationalists bitter at their slightly diminished role in his Yugoslavia. For many in both the West and Yugoslavia, the supranational, self-managed Yugoslav state and its policy of nonalignment were attractive options to reactionary nationalism and totalitarian communism. So critics of Yugoslavia, including Tuđman, must in some basic way be flawed, and condemning “separatist” nationalism became a necessary corollary to supporting what was generally viewed as a basically humane communist regime with an innovative ideology.

Joseph Rothschild, whose books on Eastern Europe have been standard reading in many university classrooms, reflected a consensus among American scholars. Croats, he wrote, had “an almost morbid distrust of governments and of power *per se*,” and they placed “a high value” on “defensive obstructionism.” His bias is apparent in his view of Croatia’s most influential politician, Stjepan Radić, who led the Croatian Peasant Party until June, 1928, when a Montenegrin who was close to the Serbian Court and a protegee of the Serbian politician Nikola Pašić, shot Radić, who died of his wounds in early August.⁴² The Croatian politician, Rothschild writes, was “an erratic tactician and sterile strategist who generally opted for the politics of abstention, boycott, and withdrawal.” Worse, his behavior was tolerated by other Croats, who “consistently lionized him for articulating their frustrated rages.” Suggesting that “only” Serbs were fit to rule Yugoslavia, the American academic concludes that King Alexander’s imposition of a dictatorship was necessary. If the Serbian king’s “political instincts” were “authoritarian and manipulative,” Rothschild believes he was “personally courageous and even gallant,” and “motivated by the high ideal of Yugoslav unity.”⁴³

⁴² Stjepan Radić considered the King personally responsible for the shootings, which killed two Peasant Party leaders and fatally wounded him; see his Deposition, July 24, 1928, attached to the Italian consul in Zagreb’s telegram of August 24, 1928, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Folder Jugoslavia 1928, Envelope 1341. Also see Zvonimir Kulundžić, *Atentat na Stjepana Radića*. (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1967).

⁴³ Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), pp. 207, 212, 246–7, is in a tradition which includes Lowenstein, “Autocracy Versus Democracy,” p. 585, who believed Alexander sought to preserve Yugoslavia’s “national integration,” and J. B. Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941* (New York: Columbia UP, 1962), pp. 7, 9, who compared Radić unfavorably to Pašić, because the Serb politician “recognized the need for compromise,” but the Croat “seems to have wanted all or nothing.” Hoptner rationalized Alexander’s dictatorship as permitting “a consistent foreign policy.” John Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History. Twice There Was a Country* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. xv–xvi, 5, 161–73, suggests that Radić’s assassination was the work of a single person, even though Serbian politicians and journalists had called for Radić’s death. Lampe depicts Alexander’s dictatorship as a necessary expedient and even a reformist regime with “creative” energies. Lampe was trained by Michael Petrovich and Fred Singleton, both strong supporters of Serbia and Yugoslavia, and he considers Milorad Ekmečić, whom Ivo Banac criticizes for espousing “false history,” a “respected Sarajevo historian.” Even the recent political study of Radić by Mark Biondich, *Stjepan Radić, the Croatian Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), provides a partial correction to earlier stereotypes of the Peasant Party leader. Also see James J. Sadkovich, “Stjepan Radić, the Croat Peasant Party, and the Politics of Mass Mobilization, 1904–1928, by Mark Biondich,” *Journal of Croatian Studies* (2002).

Leaving aside the question of whether an integralist Yugoslav “nationalism” was a high ideal, it follows that if Serbs and their King were motivated by high ideals, then their main antagonists, the Croats, even the martyred Radić, must have been moved by baser convictions. If not, why did he and other Croats oppose the well-meaning Serbs? Tuđman was not unique. Ban Josip Jelačić, the bane of Hungarian liberals; Stjepan Radić, the erratic populist; and Ante Pavelić, the ultra-nationalist leader of the Ustaša—all were lumped together by American and British writers and scholars as an undifferentiated, erratic, authoritarian, reactionary, nationalist conspiracy of villains, incompetents, and ne'er-do-wells. Croatian leaders, like Croatia and Croats in general, had suffered a negative image abroad for a very long time before Tuđman became the country's president in 1989.

A Provincial Anachronism

Even at his best, Tuđman was old-fashioned, an anachronism, both formal and distant. As the leader of Croatia, he sought to set an example for other small states, as Tito had during the Cold War, when he and Nehru had formed non-aligned movement, which was then a welcome relief from the politics of mutually assured destruction. But Tuđman was president of Croatia during the 1990s, an era of multi-cultural civil societies and the mandatory and ubiquitous free market.⁴⁴ Mario Nobile considered him the antithesis of the post-modern politician; his stiff style and historical allusions seemed pretentious, the stuff of an earlier period of history.⁴⁵ Mate Granić, his Foreign Minister, saw Tuđman as “a politician of the old mold,” who saw demands that his government guarantee human rights as at least in part an effort to put pressure on Croatia.⁴⁶

From his writings and his public appearances, it appears that Tuđman strove to leave an impression of a cultured individual conscious of his historical mission, a posture which John Kennedy or Richard Nixon might have grasped, but which befuddled the statesmen and politicians of the 1990s. Although he tried mightily to convince the international community that he did not desire war and was prepared to compromise and collaborate with international initiatives, Tuđman appeared to most a provincial politician, mired in historicism, stubbornly defending his views, humorless, authoritarian, and danger-

⁴⁴ Or an era which paid lip-service to these ideals. Pavao Pavličić, *Lament over Europe* (Trans., Nikolina Jovanović) (Zagreb: Most, 1994), pp. 14, 18–20, 23–5, 29–30, 53–7, accuses Western Europe of being callous, committing sins of omission, being guilty of hypocrisy, and offering “truisms” about tolerance, democracy and minority rights while casting South Slavs as “less human than they are” and blaming the victims for their plight. “Their nationalism,” he complains, “is considered natural and indisputable, ours twisted, perverse and dangerous.”

⁴⁵ Nobile, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 109.

⁴⁶ Mate Granić, *Vanjski poslovi. Iza kulisa politike* (Zagreb: Algoritam, 2005), p. 82. Interview with Mate Granić, June 24, 2005, Kameniti stol. Granić believes Tuđman was too open and too frank to be a truly good diplomat, always the historian first, the statesman second. But Granić considered his courageous and if autocratic, not a dictator, and he thinks that Tuđman's colleagues *wanted* a strong leader, while Tuđman did not like strong personalities around him.

ous. He was the quintessential negation of postmodern man. How completely he played the role of archaic intellectual is clear in his prose, which recalls the conceit of the Baroque, and in his prison diaries, which include conversations with authors he was reading, self-conscious introspection, and grand philosophical speculation.⁴⁶ Hardly the sort of thing Bush senior would write, certainly not the simple prose of Bush junior, and far from Clinton's folksy manner or Reagan's nonchalant absent-mindedness. Americans did not need to construct Tuđman as the Balkan other; he did it for them.⁴⁸

When he first saw Tuđman at a conference in Munich in 1990, Nenad Ivanković was not impressed. If energetic, the Croatian leader was also long-winded and old-fashioned, hardly the ideal contemporary politician. That he could be consumed by anger was not an advantage, and his stubbornness could be either virtue or vice. Always a loner, in his later years Tuđman withdrew into himself. But when in a good mood, Ivanković found that the former dissident could be amiable, quite unlike the stereotype created by the media. Pompous and overbearing, the Croatian president could also be gracious, as the master of the house should be with his guests.⁴⁹ But he was also demanding, like a prince with his courtesans. He tended to lecture associates, journalists, and diplomats, and he cajoled and dunned his collaborators and subordinates to provide precise information and to perform their jobs well.⁵⁰ Tuđman

⁴⁷ Franjo Tuđman, *Petrinjska 18. Zatvorski dnevnik iz 1972* (Zagreb: Naklada P.I.P., 2003), pp. 26, 49–50. “This year,” he writes, “I turn fifty. I do not yet for a second feel myself old, still I always seek solitude, and I would like to finish writing my major scholarly work. Will I be able to do so? Will I have the strength of body and mind to manage it.” In his first days of confinement, Tuđman read Kafka's *The Trial*, a choice that seems both fortuitous and contrived. Why, he wondered, was he in jail? “Only because I am a Croat,” he answered, “who sought to be a Croatian revolutionary in his youth and a Croatian historian in his mature years. What now?” Stjepan Radić also wrote prison memoirs, *Uzničke uspomene* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1971).

⁴⁸ Interview with Bob Hand, United States Helsinki Commission, Washington, D.C., 2004. Hand noted that Tuđman had liked pomp and circumstance and had a very formal manner, while Milosevic was friendly and open. While Tuđman always had answers ready and read long introductory statements, which Hand likened to monologues, Milosevic was informal and had an open, friendly style. Both men understood English, but while the Serb leader used it to converse with visitors, Tuđman used a translator and responded in Croatian. Hand thinks he did so because it gave him time to think.

⁴⁹ Nenad Ivanković, *Predsjedniče, što je ostalo?* (Zagreb: Naklada P.I.P. Pavličić, 2000), p. 10–11, 19–21, and 41, for Tuđman's tendency to maintain his distance from everybody. Ivanković describes Tuđman lunch-time ritual which he scrupulously observed and used to get information from his collaborators and satisfy his need for company. Ivanković recalls Tuđman as a “vrlo usamljen čovjek” who kept a “gospodska” distance from others, making it difficult to approach him and impossible to become truly close to him. Yet Ivanković believes he values people, even if he was not a good judge of character.

⁵⁰ For example, Lucić, *Stenogrami*, Vol. I, p. 216, and *passim*, for his comment to Miljenko Brkić that he wanted the Bosnian Croat's opinion, and his repeated efforts to get his associates to perform at a high level. Conversation with Slobodan Lang, Zagreb, May 28, 2005. Lang described Tuđman's management style as controlled; he would consult with a number of groups on a given question, each tasked to discuss a particular aspect of the problem. Rather than free-wheeling discussions, he asked each member of a group their opinion in turn, usually withholding his approval or disapproval and often reaching a decision later by himself. The transcripts in *Stenogrami* confirm Lang's observations in part; depending on the question, Tuđman could allow very open discussions and he would regularly reach conclusions while with the group; he tended to play the role of facilitator and chair, keeping participants focused and soliciting information.

was both very “precise” (točan) and a hard worker, who was always prepared for meetings. He believed that he had a historic task to help defend Croatia, and there is a consensus among those who worked closely with him that he was the key to the creation of Croatia.⁵¹

Tuđman was already an old man in 1991, his character formed in another era. But he was also a wounded man; defamed and denigrated for much of his adult life, he viewed the world as a hard place full of weak people and sudden, unexpected misfortune.⁵² He appears to have been a poor judge of character who sometimes chose his collaborators badly. Or perhaps he was simply a hard-nosed realist who understood that only saints are not in some way flawed. In either event, he kept people around him whom he did not trust and did not like, and he turned a blind eye to double-dealing and dirty deals. Lacking a group of trusted confidants, the Croatian leader used people, deploying them like pieces on a chess board for the benefit of Croatia, a fitting metaphor for the leader of a country whose coat-of-arms was a white and red checkered field. Whether, as his former adviser Slaven Letica concluded, Tuđman’s personality and style were suited to the task of creating a state is debatable, but certainly possible. Letica considered Tuđman obsessive and narcissistic, useful traits in war, but damaging to democracy. While he welcomed everyone into his tent, the Croatian leader insisted they obey him once they were inside.⁵³ That his virtues were also vices that eventually eroded morale in the HDZ and alienated Western politicians and journalists seems indisputable.⁵⁴

If not a cynic, Tuđman was not quite a realist. At one point, he considered himself an “optimistic realist” and a “realistic optimist.”⁵⁵ He professed to believe that in politics only interests count, a lesson undoubtedly driven home

⁵¹ Interview with Zdravko Tomac, Zagreb, June 1, 2005. Like many Croats, Tomac is upset with efforts to “criminalize” both Croatia’s late President and the Homeland War; see his *Predsjednik. Protiv krivotvorina i zaborava* (Zagreb: Slovo, 2004), esp. pp. 13–20, 287–300.

⁵² Tuđman, *Petrinjska 18*, pp.42, 44, 47, noted that he had real friends and those who pretended to be friends. So it was best not to expect help nor fear betrayal by others, but to do what one can on one’s own. The human condition, he wrote, consists in the sudden blow, senseless and unexpected, which one cannot escape no matter how one tries to do so.

⁵³ Letica, *Strašni sud*, pp. 360–3, 367, concludes that Tuđman “was not such a bad president...as one might think.” Interview with Anđelko Mijatović, Zagreb, June 17, 2005. Mijatović notes that while Tuđman has been saddled with the image of a dictator, he does not prove to be one if one takes the time to look at what he said, wrote, and did. Zdravka Bušić, who managed Tuđman’s office, considered him a considerate but meticulous man, who worked hard and expected his colleagues to do so as well. Interview, Zagreb, June 20, 2005.

⁵⁴ Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 108, notes that journalists disliked Tuđman because he was “mračnan, srdit i nemodernan sa svojim zagrižem historicizmom.” Ivanković, *Predsjedniče*, pp. 22–4, and 31, for Tuđman’s pride and stubbornness. Echoing Radić’s phrase, Ivanković saw him as “pokvarene inteligencije” (deformed intelligentsia). Letica, *Strašni sud*, p. 362, criticizes those who shaped opinion in the West for their poor judgment regarding “acceptable” post-communist leaders. Darko Hudelist, *Tuđman: Biografija* (Zagreb: Profil, 2004), p. 503, and *passim*, tends to view Tuđman as a conflicted personality whose nationalism drove him to poor personal and policy choices, but quotes Gojko Borić, a Croatian emigrant in West Germany, who considered Tuđman a “wise, reserved and cultured man” (*mudra, suzdržana i blaga čovjeka*).

⁵⁵ Tuđman, *Petrinjska 18*, pp. 38–41.

during his years as a non-person in Yugoslavia. But he combined a romantic naiveté with a seemingly hard-nosed approach to politics. So while he believed that Germany recognized the fledgling Croatian state to serve its own concrete interests, not to honor abstract moral principles, he hoped for much more from the Germans.⁵⁶ London's *Economist* disingenuously discerned a link between Croatia and Germany, and reminded its readers that Nazi Germany and Croatia were once allies by running "Hail, Croatia" as its headline for a piece on German pressure to recognize Croatia in December 1991.⁵⁷ The message was clear; Tuđman was something other than a democrat. Others have taken an equally skeptical view of Tuđman's policies and see his democratic pretensions as a sham and his support of Sarajevo as a cover for political penetration and eventual annexation of Herzegovina.⁵⁸

Again, separating reality and rumor is difficult. Propaganda was a staple of the media in all of the Yugoslav successor states, just as poorly informed and superficial analyses shaped the policies of the major powers. Sadly for Tuđman and Croatia, they lost the propaganda war to Croatia's Serbs in 1990 and early 1991, just as Mate Boban lost it to Bosnia's Muslims in 1993. The combination of malicious information and faulty analysis combined to reinforce ill-considered decisions taken in haste, including the West's refusal to use force to end the conflicts, the Security Council's imposition of an arms embargo on all participants, and the international community's determination to contain the killing and let events run their course, the last a bizarre application of the axiom that conflict resolution works best when all sides are exhausted.⁵⁹ To ratio-

⁵⁶ Tuđman, *Petrinjska* 18, p. 194, for politics as an activity only for those who are hard-nosed and obstinate. Ivanković, *Predsjedniče*, pp. 36–7, and 40–1, believes Tuđman was "some sort of mix of an ontological pessimist and an existentialist optimist." (*neka vrst mješavine između ontolopesimista i egzistencijalnog optimista.*) Nobile, *Hrvatski feniks, passim*, for Tuđman's repeatedly disappointed expectations regarding Germany. For German policy, Sabrina P. Ramet and Letty Coffin, "German Foreign Policy Toward the Yugoslav Successor States, 1991–1999," *Problems of Post-Communism* (January/February 2001), pp. 48–50; Hans Dietrich Genscher, *Rebuilding a Home Divided* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998/1995), pp. 487–518.

⁵⁷ "Hail, Croatia. With Those words, Germany drags the European Community its way and risks a bigger Balkan bust-up," *Economist*, December 21, 1991, comments that "it is part of Yugoslavia's tragedy that there is no good policy towards it, only a choice of bad ones."

⁵⁸ For a critical assessment of Croatian policy vis-à-vis the UN and the international community, see Damir Grubiša, "The Peace Agenda in Croatia: the U.N. Peacekeeping Operation between Failure and Success," in Stefano Bianchini and R. C. Nation, *The Yugoslav Conflict and its Implications for International Relations* (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998), *passim*, esp. pp. 89–98; for a more complete account, see Nobile, *Hrvatski feniks, passim*.

⁵⁹ John A. Vasquez, "Why Global Conflict Resolution is Possible: Meeting the Challenge of the New World Order," in Vasquez, et al., 131, 141, notes that when "Symbolic and transcendent stakes" (values and ideology) are at issue, conflicts will tend to be intractable, e.g., "the civil war [sic] in Yugoslavia and the ethnic disputes in Armenia and Azerbaijan," both "intractable struggles of the past." James Gow, "Nervous Bunnies. The International Community and the Yugoslav War of Dissolution," in Lawrence Freedman, ed., *Military Intervention in European Conflicts* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), esp. pp. 25–32. John Hillen, "Superpowers Don't Do Windows," in *Orbis* (Spring 1997) 41(2): 251, dismissed Bosnia as a "peripheral, ambiguous and inconclusive" security mission because he placed it within a fairly rigid hierarchical security model. For a pro-

nalize and justify such policies, the West had to believe that Tuđman and the Croats were as bad as Milošević and the Serbians; if they were not, then the Western democracies and the UN were complicit in aggression against innocent peoples and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was not as simple as it appeared to be.

But even had Tuđman's image been better, Croatia's would still have been bad. Radić's supposedly "erratic" actions during the 1920s had upset historians like Rothschild, and Ante Pavelić's Independent State of Croatia, a quisling entity, had murdered thousands and provided grist for propaganda mills and pundits. Serbian spokesmen and influential journalists, diplomats, and scholars focused the attention of policy-makers and the general public on Croatia's role as an Axis creation and client during World War II, making it difficult to see either Tuđman or his country as democratic, but easy to see them as a threat to others.⁶⁰ Foreign observers repeatedly blamed Tuđman and his government for not being sensitive to Croatia's Serbs and chided both for provoking Bosnia's Muslims. But the tendency to rationalize Serb and Muslim actions by condemning Croat intentions seemed a double standard to Tuđman, who had fought Pavelić's regime during the Second World War, and who complained that the Serbs could do as they pleased in Bosnia and Herzegovina because the international community did nothing. The Croats, on the other hand, were condemned for helping their cousins there ward off Serb aggression and then Muslim attacks, despite Tuđman's conclusion of a military accord with the SDA leader, Alija Izetbegović.⁶¹

Such complaints, of course, only confirmed the belief in the West that Croatia and Tuđman were recalcitrant and dangerous. During the liberal sixties, even Croatia's progressive leaders got bad press in the West.⁶² Yet it seems odd that during a decade enamored of conflict resolution, it did not matter that Tuđman seemed to be the only leader in the former Yugoslavia who was sincerely committed to finding a negotiated settlement.⁶³ Few seemed to notice that Tuđman accepted every peace proposal put forward by the West,

Serbian analysis, Vanni Cappelli, "The Bosnian Question and the Great Powers," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (Winter 1997) 8(1): 92-114. W. Raymond Duncan and G. Paul Holman, Jr., eds., *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict. The Former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), esp. 19-43, assigned guilt to all parties to the conflict in Yugoslavia, which he viewed as both a prototype for future ethnic wars and a lesson in conflict management and crisis prevention. Also see Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and the Dissolution of Yugoslav after the Cold War* (Washington DC: Brookings Inst., 1995), who influenced events both as a writer and as an adviser to Yasushi Akashi, UN representative in Croatia and Bosnia.

⁶⁰ For Croatia's image, see Sadkovich, *The U.S. Media and Yugoslavia*, pp. 127-33. For propaganda, see, e.g., www.ihr.org/jhr/v13/v13n4p19_Weber.html for Mark Weber, "Croatia's Leader Denounced as Holocaust Revisionist," *Journal of Historical Review* (August, 1993), and <http://222.mosquitonet.com/~prewett/tudjmanscroatia.html>, for Christopher Long, "Tuđman's Croatia continues the policy of the fascist Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945)."

⁶¹ Franjo Tuđman, press conference, *Vjesnik*, 6 July 1993.

⁶² Ante Čuvalo, "Croatian Nationalism and the Croatian National Movement (1966-1972) in Anglo-American Publications. A Critical Assessment," *Journal of Croatian Studies* (1989).

⁶³ Martin Špegelj to Tarik Kulenović, *Ljiljan*, June 5, 1996, and Špegelj to Vlado Vurušić, *Globus*, July 2, 1993. Špegelj had argued for military action in 1991-92, but Tuđman favored a political-diplomatic solution to the crisis.

including the Vance Plan to end the war in Croatia in late 1991, the Lisbon agreement to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina into cantons mediated by José Cutilheiro in 1992, and the Dayton agreements concluded under the aegis of the United States in 1995.⁶⁴ If anyone did notice, they tended to seek ulterior motives in his acceptance of the plans, reading dark secrets into state interests. In the postmodern world of PR and spin doctors, image always trumps reality, particularly when so little is known about the realities under discussion.⁶⁵

With regard to Yugoslavia, little was available in English because only a handful of scholars had studied the country; Eastern European studies had been stunted by Soviet studies, the USSR's colonies and countries in its sphere of influence considered less important to Western scholars and policy-makers than the communist metropol.⁶⁶ Unlike Alija Izetbegović, who refused to talk to those who had murdered his people, Tuđman talked at length with them; he even sent Hrvoje Šarinić to keep in touch with Milošević, and he reminded the Muslim leader that if the Croats had not negotiated with the Serbs, peace would never have come to Croatia.⁶⁷ If this practical side of Tuđman was lost on most observers, Krsto Cvijić believed that many considered him crucial to stability in the region precisely because he was cooperative. Tuđman was, as Maggie Thatcher once said of Gorbachev, "a man we can do business with."⁶⁸ It was not necessarily a compliment.

Propaganda

Perhaps the most harm to Tuđman and Croatia in the United States was done by the journalist Robert Kaplan, who helped to spread a negative image of Tuđman and Croats as vicious anti-Semites through his book *Balkan Ghosts* and his articles in *The New Republic*. Before the fighting started, Kaplan had informed readers of the influential magazine that "racially" Serbs and Croats are a single people, but the latter, as Catholics, had been encouraged to despise the Serbs and to support "the Nazi puppet state of Croatia," whose supporters killed "more than half a million Serbs." According to Kaplan, Serbs were never

⁶⁴ Tuđman's efforts to cooperate with international negotiators to end the wars and their efforts to use him are clear from the papers collected in B. G. Ramcharan, ed., *The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Official Papers* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997), 2 Vols.

⁶⁵ For the power of image and the distortion of reality, see Ewen Stuart, *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), and Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁶⁶ Banac, *Protiv straha*, p. 233, notes that few knew any Yugoslav history in the West, so it was always necessary to begin from the beginning. Banac dismissed the explanatory usefulness of concepts like "modernization" and of methodologies based on "social structure." He believed a study of the continuity of Yugoslavia's "national elites" would be more profitable, with the stress on Serbia and its "fears."

⁶⁷ See Hrvoje Šarinić, *Svi moji tajni pregovori sa Slobodanom Miloševićem* (Zagreb: Globus, 1999).

⁶⁸ Krsto Cvijić, *Globus*, November 7, 1998.

“compensated” for Croatian and Slovenian atrocities against them, but instead had seen their “power” “curtailed” in “Communist Yugoslavia.” Tuđman and the HDZ were supposedly rabid Catholics, and the Vatican had a “moral reckoning” coming which would force it to choose between “Croatian nationalism” and “Christian unity.”⁶⁹ Kaplan’s interpretation echoed Yugoslav integralists and he posed a choice as stark as that faced by young Luke Skywalker, who had to choose between the Force and the Dark Side. But Kaplan’s analysis was shallow and his bias clear; he did not discuss Chetnik or communist atrocities, whether in World War II or the early 1990s.

In September 1991, after Serbian forces had overrun Croatian villages and murdered or expelled thousands of their inhabitants, Kaplan published a second piece with the influential policy journal, in which he insisted that 90 percent of Croatia’s Serbs, who made up 15 percent [sic=11.5 percent] of the population, did not want to be part of a Croatian state whose bars and streets were “decidedly Ustashe, with the flags, the eerie war chants, and . . . the reticence of the population and especially the Catholic Church to face squarely the record of Croatia’s involvement with the Nazis.”⁷⁰ In November, as Serb forces were dropping as many as 7,000 shells a day on the unfortunate city of Vukovar, Kaplan published an article in which he discussed Tuđman’s *Bespuća* and accused him of claiming that Jews were selfish, crafty, unreliable, miserly, and underhanded. So biased was the Croatian leader, Kaplan informed his American readers, that he claimed that Jews had participated in the liquidation of Gypsies at the Ustaša concentration camp at Jasenovac. Tuđman, Kaplan insisted, was a Holocaust revisionist who wrote a “dense and inflated prose” that was essentially anti-Semitic. “You can be sure,” the American journalist wrote, “that when the Serbian strongman Slobodan Milošević bares his soul about the Croats it is no less callous than when Tuđman bares his about the Jews.”⁷¹ It is not clear how Kaplan knew this, since he did not read Croatian and there was no translation the work the journalist was citing, but the essential relationship was established.⁷² Tuđman was definitely on the Dark Side with Milošević.

Of the two readers whose critical replies to Kaplan were published by *The New Republic*, Malick Ghachem did little to help Tuđman’s image. “What Franjo Tuđman’s wacky views about the Holocaust have to do with the current situation in Yugoslavia,” he wrote, “is not clear to me, nor does it seem so self-

⁶⁹ Robert D. Kaplan, “Bloody Balkans,” *The New Republic*, April 8, 1991.

⁷⁰ Robert D. Kaplan, “Yugo First,” *The New Republic*, September 2, 1991.

⁷¹ Robert D. Kaplan, “Croatianism,” *The New Republic*, November 25, 1991. Tuđman cited Ante Ciliga, a Croatian communist with Italian citizenship, who noted that Jews were used as capos at Jasenovac in his memoir, *Svjedok najvećih laži dvadesetog stoljeća. Sam kroz Evropu u ratu (1939.-1945.)/ Protiv unitarističkog koncepta jugoslavenske kompartije/ Politička razmatranja iz Nove Evrope/Pisma/Testamear* (Zagreb; Dora Krupičeva, 2001), pp. 137–215, esp. p. 175, who claims his experiences at Jasenovac changed his opinion of Jews.

⁷² Katarina Mijatović’s translation of Franjo Tuđman’s *Bespuća povjesne zbiljnosti: Rasprava o povijesti i filozofiji zlosilja* (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1989), *Horrors of War: Historical Reality and Philosophy* (New York: M. Evans, 1996), was not available when Kaplan wrote his articles.

evident that his ridiculous book helps to explain a war that people in the West find so unfathomable.” Like those who believe Croatians have “constructed” the “myth” of a Croatian state out of their hatred for Serbians, Ghachem was not interested in what Tuđman’s actual views might be; he believed Kaplan. For Ghachem, “the Tudjmans and the Miloševićs of the world” were one thing, the innocent victims of their vile policies another. The second letter, from Katarina Mijatović, the translator who had rendered *Bespuća povjesne zbiljnosti: Rasprava o povijesti i filozofiji zlosilja* (*Wastelands of Historical Reality: A Discussion of the History and Philosophy of Aggressive Violence*) into English, was a detailed, if brief, rebuttal of Kaplan, accusing him of having quoted Tuđman out of context and of having attributed quotes from other sources to him. She pointed out that Tuđman had cited “numerous sources” and that he had concluded that Raul Hilberg’s estimate of five million dead was probably the most accurate estimate. She noted that Tuđman had not coined the term “Judeo-Nazism,” but had quoted an “Israeli professor” (J. Leibowitz) who had done so. Nor, she wrote, had Tuđman claimed that Jewish culture was responsible for genocide. Kaplan had misquoted him regarding Jews and misrepresented his position on the concentration camp at Jasenovac. Not only was Tuđman not an anti-Semite, Mijatović insisted, but Abraham Foxman, then national director of the Anti-Defamation League, and Nenad Porges, president of the Jewish Community Council in Zagreb, had both praised him for his condemnation of neo-fascism and anti-Semitism.⁷³

In his reply to the letters, Kaplan, who could not read Croatian, acknowledged that he had not read Tuđman’s work, but rather a translation which had been used by other journalists. He then implied that Tuđman was a Holocaust revisionist because he had recently told Canadian television that he tended to agree with scholars who consider the figure of six million Jews who perished during the war too high. But Kaplan did not indicate how many Jews Tuđman believed had perished, nor the sources he was citing. Nor did Kaplan say that the “dense and inflated prose” he had mistaken for Tuđman’s writing was a poor translation of a few sections of Tuđman’s massive study, probably done in Serbia and certainly calculated to create a negative impression of the Croatian leader and his work. Anto Knežević wrote a more detailed rebuttal to Kaplan, but it was printed in Zagreb and ignored in the West.⁷⁴ Nor was Ivo Banac’s observation that Kaplan, like Ivo Andrić, purveyed “banal half-truths” widely cited.⁷⁵ Bill Clinton and American policy makers, like the American public, read Kaplan, not Knežević or Banac.⁷⁶

⁷³ “Defending Croatia,” letters by Malick W. Ghachem and Katarina Mijatović, *The New Republic*, January 20, 1992. Banac, *Protiv straha*, pp. 232–3, singled out Kaplan’s piece as an example of the media’s penchant for resurrecting hoary (*prastare*) legends and creating new ones.

⁷⁴ Anto Knežević, *An Analysis of Serbian Propaganda* (Zagreb: Domovina TT, 1992), pp. 27–75, and Vida Janković and Svetlana Raivcević, “The Master Mind of Today’s Croatia’s Democracy. Franjo Tuđman’s Main [sic] Kampf,” posted December 21, 1996.

⁷⁵ Banac, in *Why Bosnia?*, pp. 153, 163, notes that Misha Glenny is “not a very reliable reporter” because he “sticks to the appearance and never delves deeper.”

⁷⁶ That Kaplan’s book influenced Clinton’s foreign policy had already become a cliché by 1995. Even the website for the Simon Wiesenthal Centre was inaccurate, as Ton Zwaan, a leader of Amsterdam’s Jewish Community noted. Like Kaplan, Zwaan condemned *Bespuća* without having read the book. See Ton Zwaan, Milošević Trial, pp. 31201–3.

They also read other journalists who echoed Kaplan because they had also read the unauthorized ten-page translation of Tuđman's 400-page book.⁷⁷ And it was clear to them that Croats as a whole, and Tuđman in particular, tended to embrace a dangerous neofascist form of nationalism which understandably terrified Croatia's Serbs. Indeed, Kaplan seems to imply that Catholics as a group, and Croats in particular, tended to despise Serbs and Jews.⁷⁸ Histories of the early 1990s, by definition, could not influence opinions or the course of events which they described; they appeared too late in the game. But it is worth noting that the German journalist Viktor Meier, who did read *Bespuća*, does not believe that it endorses or advocates genocide; it merely highlights the evil associated with genocide.⁷⁹ Tuđman's revisionism consists largely in showing that humans have had a penchant for killing one another en masse throughout their history. It is an almost banal observation. Yet in 2003, the Canadian journalist Paul Hockenos, whose journalistic account of émigré politics was published by Cornell University Press, painted Tuđman as "an apologist for the Ustaše's World War II quisling state" and condemned his books as "ideologically driven tracts intent on exonerating the Croat nation from World War II atrocities." He also, of course, considers Tuđman to have been Milošević's "counterpart."⁸⁰ He does not say whether he read *Bespuća*, Mijatović's translation, or the abridged, ten-page Serbian edition. However, neither Daniel Ivin, who worked with Tuđman during the 1960s, nor Slavko Letica, who was close to him in the 1990s, considers Tuđman to have been anti-Semitic. Although Ivin faults Tuđman for his manipulation of history, anti-Semitism, and errors of judgment, he concludes that Tuđman himself was not anti-Semitic.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Distortions frequently occur because of poor or tendentious translations, e.g., Mesić rejected Milošević's citations from a speech by Tuđman delivered at Jelačić Square on May 24, 1992 as a Serbian version, and so inaccurate; see ICTY, Milošević Trial, October 2, 2002, pp. 10637–8. Even without deliberate distortions, news agencies tended to a national bias; see Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19/International Centre against Censorship, May 1994), and Jasmina Kuzmanović, "Media: The Extension of Politics by other Means," in Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubiš S. Adamovich, *Beyond Yugoslavia. Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community* (Boulder: Westview, 1995).

⁷⁸ In *Balkan Ghosts. A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993), Kaplan's devotes most of his section on Croatia to Alojzije Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb during the early 1940s, whom he portrays as a supporter of Pavelić's regime.

⁷⁹ Viktor Meier, *Yugoslavia: A History of Its Demise* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 134. For some, that Meier is German would disqualify his opinion and perhaps even reinforce the conspiracy theory that Germany supported Croatian independence to destroy Yugoslavia.

⁸⁰ Paul Hockenos, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 19, 21, 26, 42, 127, displays a poor grasp of history and accuses the Catholic Church of supporting the Ustaša. Hockenos was a journalist and a member of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁸¹ Daniel Ivin, Interview, Zagreb, September 29, 2005, sees *Bespuća* as a "stupidity" intended to defend Croatia by manipulating history and believes Tuđman needed to jettison his policy of "reconciliation" in favor of a sincere apology to the victims of the NDH, both Jews and Serbs. Slaven Letica, Interview, Zagreb, June 16, 2005, insists that Tuđman was not an anti-Semite. He wanted to rebuild Zagreb's Synagogue, supported Israeli policy, and sought good relations with both Croatia's Jews and the Israeli state.

Nor was Tuđman a rabid Catholic, but the association of the Vatican with Croatian nationalism is an old ploy in Yugoslavia. The Serbian press used it during the 1920s and 1930s to discredit Stjepan Radić, and the Serbian media employed it during the 1990s to discredit Tuđman. In expanded form, it included both the Vatican and Catholic countries, whether postwar Austria or Fascist Italy.⁸² Kaplan appears to have merely repackaged what he had gleaned from Serbian sources, as, apparently, did Christopher Hitchens, a journalist whose “Minority Report” column appeared in *The Nation* and who wrote for *The New Statesman and Society*. Neither man read Croatian nor Serbian, and neither was an expert on Yugoslavia, but both wrote for publications which helped to shape the opinions of those on the Left during the 1990s. Hitchens conjured up images of Hitler by dubbing Tuđman a “Gauleiter,” and he associated him with Milošević by accusing him of cutting a deal with the Serbian leader to partition Bosnia-Herzegovina. He paired the Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban and the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić by labeling them heirs to the Ustaša and Chetnik traditions, both vicious minions of Tuđman and Milošević.⁸³ If not the truth, at least Hitchens had achieved symmetry, something highly valued in literary endeavors and conspiracy theories.

Journalists, Scholars, and Diplomats

If Tuđman conspired with Milošević to destroy Yugoslavia, then Serb nationalists were born-again Chetniks and Croatian nationalists must be resuscitated Ustaše. “Many Croats,” a Canadian publication noted in 1994, “point out with pride that the Ustashe period (1941–1945) was the only one in modern history when Croatia was independent.” Such people, the article explained, saw no problem with Croatian symbols like the *kuna*, a coin depicting a marten, or the *šahovnica*, Croatia’s coat-of-arms, but Jewish refugees from Bosnia, like Dunja Srajc, found the symbols “disgusting” because the NDH had used them.⁸⁴ Evidently, Ms. Srajc was unaware that the *kuna* had been a medium of exchange in Croatia since the middle ages and that the communist regime,

⁸² James J. Sadkovich, *Italian Support for Croatian Separatism, 1927-1937* (New York: Garland, 1987), *passim*. For a recent effort to link the HDZ and the Catholic hierarchy, see Paul Mojzes, ed., *Religion and War in Bosnia* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998) pp. 89–91, who argues, with minimum documentation, that Cardinal Kuharić supported both Tuđman and the HDZ, that “some” Catholic clergy were extremists, that “Ustashes” dominated in Mostar, and that the structural identity of “Croatdom” and the Catholic Church coincide. In fact, Kuharić and Catholic prelates were generally critical of Croatian policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina; see Fra Velimir Blažević, ed., *Katolička crkva i rat u Bosni i Hercegovini. Dokumenti o stavovima i zauzimanju katoličke crkve za mir i poštivanje ljudskih prava i građanskih sloboda i za očuvanje države Bosne i Hercegovine (1989-1996)* (Sarajevo: Svjetlo Riječi, 1998).

⁸³ Christopher Hitchens, “Minority Report,” *The Nation*, August 21, 1995, and “Letter from America,” *New Statesman and Society*, August 11, 1995. Drakulić, “A Tuđman Fantasy,” criticized Tuđman as a “commissar,” and Charles Lane and Tom Post, “Bosnia: An Unholy Alliance,” *Newsweek*, July 12, 1993, reported rumors that Tuđman and Milošević had met “in the summer of 1991. . . to decide how to carve up Bosnia between them.” Also see Knežević, *An Analysis of Serbian Propaganda*, pp. 75–85, and *passim*, and Sadkovich, *U.S. Media*, p. 226.

⁸⁴ “Memories of Ustashe,” *Canada & World Backgrounder* (1994) 60 (1): 13.

like the Ustaše, had used the *šahovnica*, but with a red star rather than the letter “U,” because it had been the symbol of Croatia for centuries. The Republic of Croatia kept the crest, but dropped both the star and the letter.⁸⁵ Yet none of this seemed to matter. When constructing parallels, evolving conspiracy theories, and validating gut feelings, historical fact is trumped by speculation, allegation, myth, and legend, especially if seasoned with moral outrage and hung on the right news peg.

Even those who believed that the wars in the former Yugoslavia were the result of Serbian aggression saw Tuđman as tending to imitate Milošević, owing to the influence of a powerful “Bosnian (or Hezegovinan) Croat lobby” led by Gojko Šušak, Croatia’s defense minister. In the autumn of 1993, Chandler Rosenberger found Zagreb looking “more like Belgrade” and Croatia’s economy being taken over by a “war mafia,” just as in Serbia. Yet Rosenberger discerned at least one distinction between Tuđman and Milošević--while Tuđman viewed ethnic differences as a historically determined reality that needed to be considered to achieve a “historic settlement,” Milošević saw them as pliable historical grievances he could exploit to increase his own power.⁸⁶

If Western journalists tended to pair Tuđman and Milošević, they also picked up the themes of Serbian propaganda, not only because the Serbs were well-organized, but also because they reflected dominant themes in Yugoslavia historiography, which tended to view Croatian politicians, from Radić to Tuđman, as separatists opposed to the Yugoslav state, to stress the role of Serbs as allies of the West in the world wars, and to highlight Serbian suffering and to depict Croats as enemy combatants in both conflicts.⁸⁷ Prestigious organizations like the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences repeated these themes, myths, and legends, as did respected Serbian journalists and publications, like the editor of *Politika* and the Serbian media in general. Ethnic Serbs who taught in American universities, like Alex Dragnich, professor emeritus at Vanderbilt and a fellow at the Stanford Research Institute, also repeated and elaborated these themes,⁸⁸ as did Gale Stokes, John Lampe, and Joseph

⁸⁵ Mate Granić, *Vanjski poslovi. Iza kulisa politike* (Zagreb: Algoritam, 2005), pp. 105–106, defends the coin as a traditional symbol for Croatian money.

⁸⁶ Chandler Rosenberger, “The Next Balkan War,” *National Review*, September 6, 1993, and “The Tempting of Tudjman,” Report #10, Institute of Current World Affairs, August 1, 1993, for concerns in Croatia that Tuđman had given in to the temptation to cooperate with Milošević and was consequently turning Croatia into a one-party state.

⁸⁷ For criticisms of the West for pretending innocence while committing sins of omission, see Pavličić, *Lament over Europe, passim*, and Stjepan Meštrović, ed., *The Conceit of Innocence. Losing the Conscience of the West in the War against Bosnia* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), esp. pp. 5–34.

⁸⁸ Dragnich’s work focused on Serbian themes, and his history of the “first” Yugoslavia was constructed almost entirely from Serbian sources. His work became less scholarly and more argumentative during the 1980s and 1990s, with his *Serbs and Croats* and his 1991 article in *Slavic Review* effectively defenses of Serbian control of Yugoslavia during most of its history. Dimitrije Djordjević, editor of *The Creation of Yugoslavia, 1914-1918* (Santa Barbara: Clio, 1980), and author of an article on the Ustaša, and Michael B. Petrovich, who translated Milovan Djilas’s *Conversations with Stalin* and wrote the two-volume *A History of Modern Serbia, 1804-1918*

Rothschild, all well-known and influential academics.⁸⁹ In his history of post-1945 East-Central Europe, Joseph Rothschild distinguished the “Croatian Spring” from the “Prague Spring” when he portrayed the forces working for reform in Croatia during the late 1960s as “emphatically centrifugal, ethnnonationalistic, explicitly anti-Serb, and implicitly anti-Yugoslav crypto-separatist nonparty forces.”⁹⁰ Until Tito’s regime began to crumble, even most Croatian historians, unlike Franjo Tuđman, followed Belgrade’s lead and accepted an interpretation of Croatian history that was highly critical of Croatian nationalism and stressed the role played by the Ustaša.⁹¹ So it was no surprise that Western journalists and politicians, few of whom could read Croatian and most of whom had more contacts in Belgrade than in Zagreb, embraced stereotypes hostile to Croatia as reliable portrayals of the country and its president. One reporter even recommended that foreigners visit the “Genocide Museum” in Belgrade to fully understand how Serbs saw the Croatian threat.⁹²

(New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1976), were also ethnic Serbs who also made careers in American universities and influenced generations of graduate students. Also influential were Stevan K. Pavlowitch, author of various works, including *The Improbable Survivor. Yugoslavia and its Problems, 1918-1988* (Columbus OH: Ohio State UP, 1988), and Aleksa Djilas, son of Milovan Djilas, who wrote *The Contested Country. Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919-1953* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991) and contributed a piece on Yugoslavia to *The New Republic*, “The Nation That Wasn’t,” *op. cit.* See Alex N. Dragnich, *The First Yugoslavia. Search for a Viable Political System* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Pr., 1983), *Serbia, Nikola Pašić and Yugoslavia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1974), *Serbs and Croats. The Struggle in Yugoslavia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992); and “The Anatomy of a Myth: Serbian Hegemony,” *Slavic Review* (1991). For critical reviews of Dragnich and Djilas, see James J. Sadkovich, “The Contested Country. Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919-1953, by Aleksa Djilas,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* (1993); “Objectivity and Bias: The First Yugoslavia, by Alex Dragnich,” *Journal of Croatian Studies* (1986); and “Serbian Hegemony Revisited, or Blaming the Perpetrator, not the Victim,” *Association of Croatian Studies Bulletin* (Oct. 1992) and *Journal of Croatian Studies* (1993–1994).

⁸⁹ Gale Stokes teaches at Rice University; John Lampe, a former Foreign Service officer, teaches at Maryland. Both men helped to create the Eastern European program at the Wilson Center, and Lampe headed it for a number of years. In his *From Stalinism to Pluralism, op. cit.*, Stokes includes a section on Serb nationalism, but does not mention Croat nationalism, which he specifically condemns in *The Walls Came Tumbling Down. The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), pp. 212-213, 218, 227. In *Yugoslavia as History*, John Lampe tends to a view of Yugoslavia’s history which is sympathetic toward Serbs, e.g., by interpreting King Alexander as well-intentioned, a view not held by those who the Serbian monarch repressed during his dictatorship.

⁹⁰ Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity. A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 186. Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 174, notes the tendency to define Croatian nationalism as quasi-fascist.

⁹¹ Ivo Banac, “Yugoslavia,” *American Historical Review* (October 1992), p. 1088; Banac, *Protiv straha*, pp. 245–9, for efforts by Serb propagandists to depict Croats as a “genocidal” people.

⁹² Everyone, of course, had *their* sources, and they differed on just about everything, including Tuđman, as an American scholar reminded me when she noted that *her* sources in Zagreb did not agree with the impression I had from *my* sources. For Serbian propaganda, see Knežević, *An Analysis*, and Brad K. Blitz, “Serbia’s War Lobby: Diaspora Groups and Western Elites,” in Stipe Meštrović and Thomas Cushman, eds., *This Time We Knew. Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia* (New York UP, 1996). For a Croatian response to the 1986 memorandum by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, see Matthew Meštrović and Radovan Latković, *The Croatian Response to the Serbian National Program* (Saddle River, NJ: The Croatian National Congress, 1988).

The Serbian strategy of claiming to be the victim while occupying the territory of their immediate neighbors was unwittingly aided and abetted by those Western journalists who implied that the Serbs were both victims and proud warriors preempting a very real threat of genocide from Tuđman and his government. The Western media, prompted by Serbian spokesmen, repeatedly linked the new Croatian government to the prewar Ustaša movement and the World War II state of Croatia. When journalists implied that HOS—a small movement of extreme nationalists led by one of Tuđman's most vehement opponents who never polled more than five percent of the vote—was in the tradition of the Ustaša, linked to Tuđman and the HDZ, and representative of a majority of Croats, they committed a series of factual errors, but they also reinforced the idea that Croatia's Serbs had to defend themselves against a potential Croatian threat that involved not just Tuđman and the HDZ but Croatian nationalism in the abstract, whose "essentially fascist" character made Croats in the concrete a dangerous group.⁹³ Consequently, reasonable Croatian refusals to meet extreme Serbian demands, including their claim to a third of Croatia even though they were barely an eighth of its population—and the actual rebels a third of that eighth—were represented as Croatian "insensitivity towards legitimate Serb anxieties."⁹⁴

When Laura Silber and Allan Little exaggerated the military force available to the Croats and Slovenes in 1991, they made it appear that the two Yugoslav republics posed a military threat to their neighbors.⁹⁵ Similarly, Sefer

⁹³ Sadkovich, *The U.S. Media and Yugoslavia*, pp.127-33, for the media's treatment of Croatia and Croats. Gale Stokes and Dennison Rusinow both stressed the difference between the "democratic" nature of Serbian and the "fascist" character of Croatian nationalism, a notion picked up by Susan Woodward and others, who blurred the differences between HOS and the HDZ. See Gale Stokes, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, pp. 212-213, 218, 227.

⁹⁴ Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 92-5, 98, and 27, 102, see Milošević, Tuđman, and their governments as similar and equally to blame for the conflict. Duncan and Holman, *Ethnic Nationalism and Regional Conflict*, pp. 25-33, equate Tuđman with Milošević, and consider both Croats and Bosnians as insufficiently sensitive to Serbian fears of neo-Ustaša and Muslim fundamentalism. Woodward, Stokes, and Rusinow adopted similar positions. ICTY, Milošević Trial, October 2, 2002, pp. 10648-51, for Milošević's use of Woodward to argue that Tuđman's government had created a climate of fear, and Mesić's rejection of his argument. While Mesić believed Croatia needed more "rule of law," he noted that Serbs enjoyed the same civil rights as Croats. In 1998, Croatia's rating by Freedom House was above that for Serbia, if its image was not. See Adrian Karatnycky, et al., eds., *Nations in Transit. Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Nearby Independent States* (Freedom House, 1999). In 1998, only one of ten states in this region had a combined rating under two—the Czech Republic. Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia were above 3.0 and Bulgaria just under. Slovenia was rated at 2.0, Croatia at 4.25, and Albania at 4.5; both Serbia-Montenegro (Yugoslavia) and Bosnia-Herzegovina lagged behind, each with a rating of 5.0.

⁹⁵ Silber and Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 114-117, hint that the Croats are threatening the Serbs, not the other way round, when they write that the JNA was "ready to take on the recently-acquired might of the Slovene TO and the Croatian police." (Emphasis added.) It is unlikely that a police force would stand much of a chance against one of Europe's largest and best equipped armies, nor did it. For a more realistic assessment of the opposing forces, see Norman Cigar, "The Serbo-Croatian War," *Journal of Strategic Studies* (1991-92) and "War Termination and Croatia's War of Independence: Deciding When to Stop," *Journal of Croatian studies* (1991-92).

Halilović, leader of the Muslim Patriotic League, inflated the strength of the HVO and sought to depict Bosnia's Croats as neofascists during the conflict in Central Bosnia in 1993, an effort aided by Robert Stewart, commander of the Britbat component of UNPROFOR.⁹⁶ So the West saw Tuđman—who had called for a liberal society and had opposed both HOS and the reformed communist party—as a neofascist, the leader of a garrison state intent on dismembering its Bosnian neighbor and eliminating its own Serbian population. HOS militants, the armed wing of Dobroslav Paraga's ultra-nationalist HSP, were marginalized as neo-Ustaša in Croatia, but they were reborn in Bosnia-Herzegovina as paladins loyal to Izetbegović who protected Muslims from Tuđman's vicious Croat proteges in the Croatian Defense Council (HVO) after having helped the HVO to fend off Serb attacks on both Croat and Muslim areas.

The British journalist, Edward Vulliamy, provides textbook examples of propaganda techniques, applied to blacken Tuđman, Croatia, and Croats in general.⁹⁷ Even though he noted that “. . . reporters tended to move around in their own armoured cars [British Warriors and Scimitars], changing completely the nature of our coverage of the war,” he was quite certain that Croats were “louts,” “rowdy churls,” and “thugs” (name-calling) who embodied “the brusque bully-boy culture of Herzegovina” (glittering generalities) and sought to create a Greater Croatia by extirpating Muslims from Western Herzegovina and Central Bosnia, aided by “Gunter, Manfred and Eberhardt,” anti-Semitic recruits for the HVO from Germany, and other “mercenaries rallying to Mate Boban's squalid cause” (association, name-calling, transfer). Vulliamy reported that “Portraits of Ustasha dictator Ante Pavelić” hung everywhere in Grude, the capital of the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna, which was “a nasty sort of place” and “the mirror-image of the Bosnia-Serb state” (transfer). He considered Herzegovina's Croats “clodhoppers,” but in the Croatian town of Široki Brijeg, he saw “pouting girls eyeing up loutish soldiers and men dressed in flashy Italian styles.” He reported that Croatian soldiers “grunted” and used foul language and “some” Croatian children preferred to “offer a Nazi salute.”

Even the Catholic shrine at Međugorje came under fire from Vulliamy, as “a base for the imminent ethnic cleansing of the Mostar region,” with “statuettes of the Madonna . . . on sale in trays next to others full of Swastikas,

⁹⁶ Sefer Halilović, *The Shrewd Strategy* (English translation) (Sarajevo: Masal, 1997), *passim*, repeatedly refers to the Croats as “Ustaša,” but the documents he cites use that term only after the ABH attacked the HVO in 1993. Also Robert Stewart, *Broken Lives*. (London: Harper Collins, 1993).

⁹⁷ For this and the following paragraph, see Ed Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia's War*. New York: St. Martin's, 1994), pp. 55–63, 209–63, esp. 209, 212, 222–3, 225–6, 232–3, 237–8, 243, 249, 253, 259, 260, 265. The categories are from E. B. and A. M. Lee, *The Fine Art of Propaganda* (Institute for Propaganda Analysis, 1939), cited by Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Jr., *Communications Theories: Origins, Methods, Uses* (New York: Longman, 1988), pp. 103–117.

Maltese Crosses and other Nazi regalia.” According to the British journalist, the HVO absorbed “the fascist HOS” and wore “the uniforms of the official Zagreb-sponsored army. . .often adorned by the heraldry of the Third Reich” (transfer). But Vulliamy believed most Muslims neither understood nor practiced Islam; they were simply the victims of Croat and Serb aggression their soldiers “boyish” (plain folk), their religious leaders bemused that Croats and Serbs were “obsessed” by Muslims and driven to “exterminate” them and their culture, their civilians consumed by a “quiet rage” over Croatian aggression, which hurt “far more than what the Serbs are doing” (testimonial). Franjo Tuđman, of course, conspired with Slobodan Milošević to dismember Bosnia-Herzegovina and recreate a Croatian Banovina, with the help of Cyrus Vance and David Owen, whose peace plan, “for reasons best known to its architects, played fairy godmother to the Croats, whom it treated with illogical and gratuitous magnanimity” (card stacking or slanting; one-sided histories and purposeful selection of data).

Like Kaplan and Vulliamy, Laura Silber and Allan Little, reporters for London’s *Financial Times* and authors of *The Death of Yugoslavia*, helped to create negative images of Tuđman and Croatia. The BBC produced a documentary of Yugoslavia’s dissolution based on their book, and both book and documentary became standard works on Yugoslavia’s dissolution, much as Donia and Fine’s short work did with regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁹⁸ The language of Silber and Little’s book and the images of the BBC documentary betray a sometimes subtle, but discernable bias. When discussing the airing of a KOS film in January 1991 that showed General Martin Špegelj, Croatia’s Minister of Defense, purportedly discussing hostile acts against the JNA, the British reporters portray the Croat as a peasant with the “face of a hardened drinker.”⁹⁹ Discussing the same incident, Branka Magaš notes that Špegelj had joined the Partisans as a teenager, then made a career in the Army, rising to command the Fifth Army District, which roughly coincided with Croatia and Slovenia. Hardly a Tuđman crony, Špegelj was a member of the reformed Croatian Communist Party, and his published work is highly

⁹⁸ Silber and Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 25, 54–5, 92–8, absolved the international community of any blame for events in Yugoslavia and appear to admire and commiserate with the Serbs; they depict Colonel Vasiljević as a “crack KOS [JNA Counter-Intelligence] agent” and the Serbs of the Krajina as proud warriors. Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), *passim*, portray Tuđman and the HDZ as “committed Croatian nationalists” who “abandoned” efforts to deal with the Serbs. They see the JNA as having a “proud revolutionary heritage,” think Šušak and the “Hercegovinian lobby” influenced Tuđman, accuse the HVO of ethnic cleansing in the summer of 1992, claim that only Izetbegović wanted peace, and appear to put the destruction of the bridge in Mostar “on a par” with repeated shelling of civilians in Dubrovnik.

⁹⁹ Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 83, 108-9, 114, seem not to have been bothered by the fact that KOS had used a double agent to entrap Špegelj, nor that the quality of the film made the subtitles suspect. They consider Milošević “the master tactician” and Tuđman “a genuine nationalist.”

critical of the HDZ leader.¹⁰⁰ In person, he is charming and while critical of Tuđman, not condemnatory.¹⁰¹

Silber and Little also use charged language to give the impression that Franjo Tuđman was to blame for the breakup of Yugoslavia. On 28 February 1989, they write, “. . . Tuđman gave the *seething crowds* what they wanted: *a strong dose of nationalism . . .*”¹⁰² (Emphasis added.) The image is clear; Tuđman was a demagogue, Croatian voters were rabid nationalists. But Tuđman himself had been anxious to show that independence was the choice of the Croatian people, not something forced on them by the HDZ. That was why, he told the journalist Hloverka Novak Srzić, he had called the referendum in 1991.¹⁰³ His party had not won a majority in the elections in 1990, and he had become president thanks to a miscalculation by the Croatian communists, who had rigged the system to give a majority to whichever party won a plurality, expecting that they would be the ones to do so. Instead, the HDZ had swept the boards. Tuđman, as Magaš noted, immediately “made conciliatory gestures towards Croatia’s Serbs,” including the offer of a vice-presidency for Jovan Rašković, leader of the SDS (Serbian Democratic Party – *Srpska demokratska stranka*). But in vain. Letica recalls that during a meeting in 1990, the Croatian President repeatedly sought to reassure Rašković, who persisted in raising fears regarding “Ustaša” and refused to work with Tuđman’s government, in part because Croatia’s Serbs were certain of support from Belgrade and protection from the JNA.¹⁰⁴

The BBC displayed bias when it juxtaposed a film clip of Tuđman kissing a Croatian flag with another of Pavelić doing so.¹⁰⁵ Again the image is clear; only Ustaša and neo-fascists kiss flags, so Tuđman was a dangerous nationalist with neo-fascist tendencies. It was a clever piece of film-making, but hardly

¹⁰⁰ Branka Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia. Tracking the Break-up 1980-92* (New York: Verso, 1993), pp. 267-8, also discusses the JNA’s illegal confiscation of the weapons of the local Territorial Defense units, noting that the weapons were the legal property of the republics, not of the JNA. She insists that, “the difference between legal and illegal has become moot, given that republican and Federal authorities (both government and presidency) are all openly violating the country’s constitution.” Slaven Letica, *Obećana zemlja. Politički antimemoari* (Rijeka: Biblioteka Ex Ungue Leonem, 1992), p. 193-228, discusses the Špegelj incident, as does Martin Špegelj, *Sjećanje vojnika*. (Zagreb: Znanje, 2001).

¹⁰¹ Interview, Martin Špegelj, Zagreb, June, 2005.

¹⁰² Silber and Little, *Destruction of Yugoslavia*, pp. 83-4, and 86, link Tuđman and the HDZ to Ante Pavelić and the NDH (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska).

¹⁰³ Tuđman to Hloverka Novak Srzić, *Danas*, February 26, 1993.

¹⁰⁴ Magaš, *Destruction of Yugoslavia*, p. 255, wrote the account in September 1990. Letica, *Obećana zemlja*, pp. 149-62. Jovan Rašković founded the SDS on 17 February 1990. He contacted a colleague in Sarajevo, Radovan Karadžić, to create a Bosnian branch. In 1990, his party polled only half of Croatia’s Serbian vote, 6.5% of the total. Rašković was eased out in favor of the more militant Milan Babić. See Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia’s Bloody Collapse. Causes, Course and Consequences* (London: Hurst & Cpy., 1995), pp. 126-7.

¹⁰⁵ Almond, *Europe’s Backyard War*, pp. 394-5, also notes that John (Jovan) Zametica, who later served as Karadžić’s adviser in Pale, helped to bias the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and that the PEW Trust was also biased.

objective reporting. When Russian television tried something similar a decade later, juxtaposing film of the opposition candidate in Ukraine, Yushchenko, with footage of Adolf Hitler, Peter Finn promptly denounced the visual ploy in the *Washington Post*, noting that Russian media had been seeking to depict Yushchenko as a fascist for months.¹⁰⁶ Consciously or not, the BBC had effectively done the same to Tuđman, and by doing so, it had promoted a political agenda as certainly as the Russian media had done regarding the Ukraine.

Among the earliest, and therefore most influential, authors to get their views about Croatia published was the American diplomat, Warren Zimmermann, whose memoir was often cited during the early 1990s and who seems to have had a low opinion of most Croats. He criticized Martin Špegelj for associating with arms dealers and depicted Gojko Šušak as “a Darth-Vader-like individual” with links to the Ustaše. He dismissed Tuđman as an authoritarian “martinet” and “an inflexible schoolteacher” who could manage only “a nervous chuckle or a mirthless laugh.” He chided the HDZ leader for ignoring his advice to apologize to the Serbs, and he blamed the war on the Croatian President’s rejection of “any gesture that smacked of reconciliation, cooperation, or healing,” his “precipitate declaration of independence,” and his failure to “assure Croatia’s Serbian citizens that they would be safe in an independent Croatia.” For Zimmermann, Croatia was “a republic of lackluster politicians” run by the “emigrant-financed HDZ,” which “abused” its Serbian citizens and had become a “national security state” with an armed force “larger than the armies of Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria, or Sweden.”¹⁰⁷ Clearly, a major threat to its neighbors, if not to NATO.

The effort to discredit Tuđman was part of a larger campaign to portray Croatia as a neo-fascist state and its Croatian citizens as chauvinists who posed a threat to minorities within Croatia. This was relatively easy to do because, as Tuđman had noted a decade previously, the distortions of Yugoslav historiography had created a “fascist” image of Croats abroad.¹⁰⁸ Like all atrocity propaganda, images were modified and recycled, and the same themes used by Serb propagandists in 1990 and 1991 would be adopted by Muslim propagandists in 1992 and 1993.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the decade, journalists, scholars, statesmen, and pundits portrayed Tuđman’s government as neofascist, insisted medieval Croatian symbols should no longer be displayed in public, and suggested that the Croatian victims of Serbian attacks and ethnic cleansing

¹⁰⁶ Peter Finn, “Old Divisions Resurface in Ukraine,” *The Washington Post*, November 29, 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe. Yugoslavia and its Destroyers. America’s Last Ambassador Tells What Happened and Why* (New York: Time Books/Random House, 1996), pp. 15-16, 44, 71-7, 132, 139-40, 151-2, 154, 181. He thought Budimir Lončar “a canny Croatian veteran of the Tito era” with a “catlike tread” and a “feline smile,” and Glavaš a Croatian Arkan.

¹⁰⁸ Franjo Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe* (Boulder CO: East European Monographs, 1981), p. 164.

¹⁰⁹ James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919* (New Haven CT: Yale UP, 1941), *passim*, found that most atrocity stories had a single source, which might repeat the story it had originally launched in altered form weeks or months later. Pack journalism makes this easier, because a single source can appear as dozens of independently filed stories.

somehow deserved their fate because they had been insensitive to Serbian fears.¹¹⁰ For example, when describing the ambush of Croatian security forces in Borovo Selo in May 1991, Donia and Fine blame the Croats for provoking the incident and conclude that “the Serbs won handily.” This was an odd way to describe the kidnapping, torture, murder, and mutilation of twelve Croatian policemen. Yet it was congruent with a point of view that considered Croats and Croatia as essentially fascist and Croatia’s coat of arms as an Ustaša symbol, even if it had been embedded in a mosaic on the roof of St. Mark’s, an early modern church in Zagreb’s upper city, for considerably longer than fifty years.¹¹¹ So dominant is the image of Croatia as fascist that James Gow sees the mutilation of Croatian policemen by Serbian irregulars as “echoes of Ustasha practice in the Second World War,” not as echoes of Chetnik practice.¹¹²

Christopher Bennett provides a radically different description of the incident at Borovo Selo, and a corrective to superficial reporting. He notes that the village had been peopled by ethnic Germans until the Partisans expelled them after 1945 and Serbs took their place, and he saw “mutilated corpses of Croatian policemen” as “the first of a series of premeditated atrocities committed by Serb irregulars in the summer of 1991.”¹¹³ Where Donia and Fine saw a defensive reaction by Serbs against a potentially repressive Croatian regime, and Gow saw a clever trap of Croats by Serbs, Bennett perceived a pattern of Serbian violence against Croats. Which of the three was most accurate? Given recent studies by Nikica Barić and Davor Marijan, clearly Bennett.¹¹⁴ But in a 1991 report, Helsinki Watch dodged the question, chiding both sides for “abuses” against the other, an approach which would be adopted by many in the West. Yet Croatian and Serbian abuses were hardly comparable. Croatian abuses tended to be instances of workplace discrimination or police brutality by individuals, while Serbian abuses tended to be organized, systematic

¹¹⁰ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, “Lessons Learned: from Nationalism to State Building after Communism,” *EES News* (January-February 2005), has suggested that the violence in Yugoslavia was the result of “fear,” a monocausal and unconvincing explanation of war.

¹¹¹ Donia and Fine, *A Tradition Betrayed*, pp. 223-5. The Croatian coat of arms, a checkered board or *sahovnica*, dated from 1582. It was appropriated by the Ustasa, who placed a “U” above it. The symbol was then used by Tito’s regime, which put a red star above the checkerboard and surrounded it with sheaves of wheat. See John Kraljic, et al., *Croatia and Croats in The New York Times* (New York: Croatian Anti-Calumny Project, June 1994), p. 24, and Stan Granić, “Representations of the Other: The Ustaše and the Demonization of the Croats,” *Journal of Croatian Studies* (1998), pp. 3–56.

¹¹² James Gow, *The Serbian Project and Its Adversaries: A Strategy of War Crimes* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003), p. 159, 226–9, argues that the Serbs did not commit aggression in Croatia because Tudman wanted to create a Greater Croatia, making him and the Croatian government the aggressors.

¹¹³ See Bennett, *Yugoslavia’s Bloody Collapse*, pp. 164, 62, 161. The expulsion of some 500,000 ethnic Germans from Yugoslavia after 1945 was generally ignored. But while they lived throughout Vojvodina and Slavonia, it is not clear whether ethnic Germans lived in Borovo Selo.

¹¹⁴ Nikica Barić, *Srpska pobuna u Hrvatskoj 1990.–1995*. (Zagreb: Golden marketing-Tehnička knjiga, 2005), and Davor Marijan, *Bitka za Vukovar* (Zagreb: Hrvatski Institut za Povijest, 2004).

aggression against villages and towns with the support of the JNA, including the murder and expulsion of their occupants.¹¹⁵ Helsinki Watch's balanced approach was misleading in a qualitative sense, and it eroded essential differences between Croatian and Serbian nationalists and helped to establish the pairing of Tuđman and Milošević as similar in their actions and responsibilities.¹¹⁶

There were also efforts to pair Tuđman with Milan Kučan, Slovenia's President, and blame them for Yugoslavia's collapse. In this scenario, Tuđman is an epiphenomenon, an accomplice, not a perpetrator.¹¹⁷ However, the evidence suggests that it was Slobodan Milošević and the leadership of Serbia and the JNA, not Tuđman and Kučan, who destroyed Yugoslavia. By 1990, they had shredded the country's constitution, staged coups in the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina, annexed them to Serbia, and armed Croatia's Serbs. By 1991, they had effectively paralyzed Yugoslavia's collective leadership and were beginning to arm Bosnia's Serbs.¹¹⁸ As Milošević sought to consolidate his control of the federal Presidency, Tuđman joined Kučan to propose restructuring Yugoslavia as a confederation. Warning that politicizing the JNA and Serbia's "economic" war against the other republics could "lead us to catastrophe," Tuđman urged Yugoslavia's republic to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By doing so, they would guarantee the equality of citizens and an autonomous media in each republic and take a step toward confederation. If Serbs in Knin wanted independence, he suggested Albanians in Kosovo should be given it as well. He urged the "revocation of all political authority for the JNA," and he rejected the use of force in favor of incremental change.¹¹⁹ Strange declarations and proposals for an authoritarian martinet conspiring with Milošević and Kučan to destroy Yugoslavia.

As late as June 1991, the Croatian Sabor insisted on "the inalienable and non-expendable right of the Croatian nation to self-determination," but the Croatian deputies were prepared to join a confederation of states if certain

¹¹⁵ Helsinki Watch, *Yugoslavia: Human Rights Abuses in the Croatian Conflict*, September 1991, Vol. 3, Issue 14.

¹¹⁶ Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, pp. 18–19, notes that the Serbs had destroyed Serbia well before Slovenia and Croatia delivered the coup de grâce in 1991, but the Croatians were blamed for the country's breakup. Ironically, while Slovenia was quickly redefined as Central European, Croatia was classified as Balkan, an indication, perhaps, that the Slovenes were more adept at using a "Balkan discourse" to distance themselves from South-Eastern Europe, or perhaps a quirk in the theory of the Balkan "other" propounded by Maria Todorova and others. See Patrick Hyder Patterson, "On the Edge of Reason: The Boundaries of Balkanism in Slovenian, Austrian, and Italian Discourse," *Slavic Review* 62 (Spring 2003) 1: 110–41, and Maria Todorova, "The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention," *Slavic Review* 53 (Summer 1994) 2: 453–82.

¹¹⁷ For a relatively recent apologia for Milošević and a blanket condemnation of Tuđman, Kučan, Mirjana Marković, Milošević's wife, see Slavoljub Djukić, *Milošević and Marković. A Lust for Power* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 33, 42–3, 76–79, and Mihail Crnobrnja's Forward.

¹¹⁸ Almond, *Europe's Backyard War*, p. 185.

¹¹⁹ "A Proposal by Dr. Tuđman on Establishing Sovereign States," May, 1991 (facsimile), included a vision of a "Europe of regions."

conditions were met. Among these were that each state be sovereign and have its territorial integrity guaranteed; that minorities be protected; and that security be collective. The Croats also wanted the rights of labor guaranteed, property protected according to international law, and attention paid to ecological concerns.¹²⁰ Those were hardly the demands of a neofascist government. Yet throughout the 1990s, Western media continued to depict Tuđman and his government as “Ustaša,” even though from August 1991 to August 1992, Tuđman led a coalition government that included the major opposition parties.¹²¹ As Serbian forces were occupying Croatian villages and murdering their inhabitants, Gale Stokes, a history professor at Rice, suggested that Tuđman and the Croats needed to “atone” for World War II and “apologize” to the Serbs.¹²²

Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum

When Cardinal Kuharić offered reconciliation at the shrine of Marija Bistrica, the Croatian prelate observed that, “The winner is the one who does not answer evil with evil.”¹²³ But to turn the other cheek in the former Yugoslavia in 1991 was to invite disaster, and Tuđman was a political leader, not a religious leader. Shaped by his experiences as a Partisan, a Communist, a scholar, and a dissident, the middle-aged Tuđman was a patriot who still reflected the theories, ideals, and the prejudices of a young man from a small town in the Croatian Zagorje. So while he condemned violence, looting, and destruction, he warned that the number of dead would multiply if there was no peace—a realistic admonition, not a moral injunction by a man who viewed reality in geopolitical terms and shaped his policy according to what he perceived as the political, military, and diplomatic realities of the real world, not the spiritual realm.

Yet if Tuđman saw himself as the hard-headed father of the contemporary Croatian state, he was also the idealistic, and disappointed, child of the former Yugoslav state.¹²⁴ Born four years after the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, he died eight years after Yugoslavia’s dissolution. He embodied the ideals and faults of many members of the first gen-

¹²⁰ Croatian Sabor, “The Resolution on the Procedure of Dissociation,” June, 1991 (facsimile).

¹²¹ Franjo Gregurić, *Vlada demokratsog jedinstva Hrvatske 1991.–1992*. Milovan Baletić, ed. (Zagreb: Naklada Zadro, 1998), *passim*.

¹²² Gale Stokes, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, pp. 212–213, 218, 227. Almond, *Europe’s Backyard War*, p. 230, was one of the few to consider Croatia as democratic.

¹²³ Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 386. Not all idealists are even-handed. The human rights activist, Aryeh Neier, *The Nation*, January 9–16, 1995, warned that Croats did not deserve too much sympathy because they were fascists, an ideologue’s point of view.

¹²⁴ Letica, *Strašni sud*, p. 359, notes that Tuđman believed there would have been no Croatian state without him. The role of the individual in shaping events remains debatable. Sidney Hook, *The Hero in History* (Boston, 1954), believed individuals could shape history or be swept along on its waves, and Dušan Pavlović, *Akteri i modeli. Ogledi o politici u Srbiji pod Miloševićem* (Belgrade: Samizdat B92, 2001), pp. 7–8, 74–6, 79, 156–7, argues that the 1990s had demonstrated that structural models are wrong; political actors, not institutions and external conditions,

eration of Croats born and raised in the former Yugoslavia, and he shared the ideologies of Croatia's ruling elite and its dissident intelligentsia. Like many Croats, he fought in the NOP (*Narodni oslobodilački pokret*, National Liberation Movement) and served in the JNA (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija*, Yugoslav People's Army). He was a committed communist and an ardent nationalist who sought to rewrite Croatian history from a Croatian point of view. But he was neither a fascist nor a radical nationalist. He professed admiration for both the liberal politician Stjepan Radić and the communist literati August Cesarec and Miroslav Krleža, and during the late 1960s, he was an important member of the progressive, socialist reform movement in Croatia. Like many Croats in 1972, he paid a high price for believing in Tito, and like most Croats, he was kept out of public life well into the 1980s.¹²⁵

Because they have been paired so regularly, Tuđman and Milošević seem to be opposite faces of the same authoritarian coin. But Tuđman was as different from Milošević as bourgeois nationalism was from bureaucratic socialism.¹²⁶ When asked whether he was a Croatian Milošević, Tuđman responded that the Serbian leader was an imperialist, and he was defending Croatia from him.¹²⁷ He could as easily have answered that he was a dissident intellectual fascinated by political power, while Milošević was a technocrat obsessed with money and power who had made his career in the League of Communists and state-run businesses. Even a brief comparison of the two men suggests that conspiracy theories which pair them are at best tenuous.

Tuđman was born in 1922 in the Croatian Zagorje, to a father active in the left wing of the Peasant Party. Milošević was born in 1941 in Požarevac, to a father who was an Orthodox priest. They belonged to different cultures and different generations. With the exception that both lost their parents in tragic circumstances, the events that shaped them, their careers, and their beliefs were as different as those of Martin Luther and John Calvin. Tuđman was the rare post-communist leader who had actually fought fascism.¹²⁸ He experienced the German occupation and the repression of Ante Pavelić's Independent

establish the direction and course of transitions, making actors like Tuđman and Milošević critical factors in shaping the events of the 1990s. He also cautions that not all transitions are toward democracy. Milošević was able to create a personal regime, whose political philosophy Pavlović defines as "sultanism," because Serbs see the leader as the guarantor of the state, and Milošević showed power, the *čvrsta ruka*, "strong hand."

¹²⁵ For a review of biographies on Tuđman, see James J. Sadkovich, "Who Was Franjo Tuđman?" *East European Politics and Studies* 20 (November 2006): 729–39.

¹²⁶ The difference extended to taste. Lenard J. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom. The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 2002), pp. 155–6, ridicules Šarinić as a snob who seems to have preferred "the more elaborate, if rather kitschy, presidential trappings favored by his boss in Zagreb" to the plain decor of Milošević's office.

¹²⁷ Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, pp. 81–2.

¹²⁸ Letica, *Strašni sud*, pp. 363–4, lists Tuđman's anti-fascism as one of his virtues, along with his scholarship, his willingness to suffer for his convictions, and his success in leading to victory a state which the "free world" had disarmed. He sees Tuđman as a study in contradiction, a nationalist and an internationalist, a communist and an anti-communist, an atheist and a Roman Catholic, an elitist and a populist, and a politician who opposed but negotiated with the Serbs.

State of Croatia (NDH, *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*). Milošević grew up in Tito's Yugoslavia under a communist regime which enforced brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*). Tuđman was a dissident harassed and jailed by the communist regime; Milošević was the protégée of Ivan Stambolić, head of the Serbian communist party and one of the most powerful men in Serbia. Milošević made a career in the Serbian communist party. Tuđman believed in the power of communism, and then of nationalism, to transform Yugoslavia. Tuđman was an intellectual and a theorist, Milošević was a technocrat and a pragmatist.¹²⁹ Tuđman wrote books and gathered honors; Milošević made money and amassed power.¹³⁰ Tuđman was a micro-manager; Milošević was a CEO.¹³¹

If Tuđman was old-fashioned and formal,¹³² Milošević was postmodern and casual. Tuđman could be petulant; Milošević was always amiable. Tuđman was paternalistic; Milošević was one of the guys. Milošević was open and easy-going; Tuđman's nicknames were Gazda and Čaća (Boss or Father), Dida (Grandpa), and Stari (Old fellow).¹³³ Tuđman was elected President of Croatia in a free election; Milošević engineered populist coups in Kosovo, Vojvodina, Montenegro, and Serbia. Tuđman trusted General Veljko Kadijević to do the right thing; Milošević manipulated the Yugoslav Minister of Defense to create a Greater Serbia.¹³⁴

The litany of differences could go on. Tuđman was a man with a vision, Milošević was a tactician. Tuđman was a revolutionary nationalist; Milošević sought to preserve and strengthen the status quo. Tuđman sought to seize the historical moment; Milošević to exploit it. Tuđman believed in history; Milošević believed in power. Tuđman spent years in prison or under house arrest; Milošević spent years in the front office and traveling abroad. Tuđman was stubborn, proud, and impatient with those who refused to see the truth as he saw it; Milošević schmoozed, cajoled, and insinuated. Tuđman saw politics

¹²⁹ For Milošević, see Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom*, *op. cit.*; Norman Cigar and Paul Williams, *War Crimes and Individual Responsibility: A Prima Facie Case for the Indictment of Slobodan Milošević* (Washington DC: The Balkan Institute, 1996); Sabrina P. Ramet, "Serbia's Slobodan Milošević: A Profile," *Orbis* (1991); and Duško Doder and Louis Branson, *Milošević. Portrait of a Tyrant* (New York: The Free Press, 1999). Doder's bias is clear in "Yugoslavia: New Wars, Old Hatreds," *Foreign Affairs* 91 (Summer 1993): 3–23, in which he argued that Tuđman "refused to disown the fascist Croatia" [sic] and "instead revived its symbols," denied Serbs any kind of political autonomy," replaced the Cyrillic with the Latin alphabet, and "purged" Serbs from Croatia's police force. Doder insisted "both sides engaged in 'ethnic cleansing,'" and he suggested the way to end the crisis in 1994 was to give the Serbs 'a way out with a modicum of dignity."

¹³⁰ Letica, *Strašni sud*, 357, for the awarding of 9 decorations on May 30, 1995, including the Supreme Order of King Tomislav for obtaining Croatia's sovereignty, and the orders of King Petar Krešimir IV, Prince Domagoj, Ante Starčević, Stjepan Radić, and Ruđer Bošković.

¹³¹ Letica, *Strašni sud*, 360, and Ivanković, p. 66.

¹³² Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 108.

¹³³ Ivanković, *Predsjedniče, što je ostalo?*, p. 11, and *passim* for Tuđman's personality.

¹³⁴ Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 109

as a play of particular interests and put his faith in history; Milošević saw politics as a Machiavellian game and trusted himself.¹³⁵

In short, Tuđman and Milošević were very different people, and it is difficult to imagine them conspiring to reconfigure Yugoslavia over the course of five turbulent years. Yet many believed, and continue to believe, that they did exactly that. Anything seemed possible as Yugoslavia disintegrated, and the conspiracy theories and propaganda of the early 1990s have become the basis for our current histories of the period. Yet it is hazardous to read too much into Tuđman's efforts to maintain his lines of communications to Milošević during the conflicts of the early 1990s. The Croatian leader did so only because his study of Yugoslavia's history, and his personal experiences, convinced him that the key to peace and stability on the territories of the former Yugoslavia was an agreement between their Croats and Serbs, a conviction shared by an international community which repeatedly urged them to collaborate, compromise, and strike deals.¹³⁶ The problem was how to reach such an agreement, and at whose cost.

Not only were both men distinct, they espoused ideologies based on conflicting premises. As Ivo Banac notes, there were "structural" similarities between the Croatian-Serbian clash of the early 1990s and earlier confrontations, because while Serbian nationalists excluded other South Slavs (hence their tendency to assert their hegemony) and based their claims on language, religion, and the "anti-historical" concept that Serbia existed wherever Serbs had settled, Croatian nationalists tended to be inclusive (hence their promotion of Illyrianism and Yugoslavism and Fran Supilo's distress at Serbian exclusivity) and to ground their claims on historical and "state" rights. So Serbs insisted Knin should be part of Serbia because Serbs were a majority there, while Croats countered that it must be Croatian because it had been part of Croatia since the reign of King Zvonimir. The struggle, therefore, was not between Tuđman and Milošević, but between two competing world views which were even more intractable than the long-standing disputes between Serbs and Croats.¹³⁷ Tuđman and Milošević simply gave them a contemporary form, as do the main characters in any good morality play.

But the characters in a morality play are ideal types created to teach moral lessons. They are not real people engaged in the messy business of politics and

¹³⁵ Ivanković, *Predsjedniče, što je ostalo?* pp. 29–32; Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks*, p. 54, notes that Tuđman was overconfident but also quick to bow to pressure.

¹³⁶ This is the conclusion drawn by Šarinić, *Svi moji tajni pregovori, passim*, and confirmed in the documents of Ramcharan, ed., *The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Official Papers*, op. cit., *passim*.

¹³⁷ Banac, *Protiv straha*, pp. 118, 123–4; and Michel Roux, *Minorité nationale, territoire et développement: les Albanais en Yougoslavie* (Toulouse: COREP, 1990), p. 404. In Croatia, Serbs appealed to their right to self-determination and secession based on demography; in Kosovo, they appealed to a variant of historical state right, as Croats had done in Croatia. Serbians saw their occupation of Kosovo in 1912 as a reconquest because they had a historical claim on the region. Albanians considered it a conquest and claimed it as theirs because they were the majority in the province and the original Illyrian settler, thereby trumping Serbia's historical claim.

diplomacy, and they do not belong in historical analysis, except as metaphors. To understand Tuđman historically, it is first necessary to understand the realities of the 1990s, not simply cite and repeat the stereotypes, propaganda, and moral injunctions of the period. What emerges when we do so is a Tuđman whose insistence on the rights of small peoples to create their own states made him a villain to some, a patriot to others, and an enigma to most.¹³⁸

Patrioten, Kriegsverbrecher und Franjo Tuđman

Zusammenfassung

Der Autor geht von den Klischeevorstellungen aus, die Journalisten, ausländische Beobachter, Analytiker, Parteichefs, manche Biografen und andere Interessierten als Ausgangspunkt benutzen. Er untersucht kritisch diese Stereotypen, um zu substantiellen Informationen zu gelangen, die ermöglichen würden, Franjo Tuđman, den ersten Präsidenten der Republik Kroatien als Person, Wissenschaftler und Politiker mit mehr Glaubwürdigkeit vorzustellen. Obwohl Tuđman etwa tausend Seiten an wissenschaftlichen Texten und anderen Textsorten hinterlassen hat, nehmen das die Historiker, insbesondere jugoslawische, aber auch seine Biographen, in erster Linie ausländische, nicht ernst. Franjo Tuđman wird fast einseitig als verbissener Nationalist dargestellt und seine Politik als ein gefährliches Abenteuer, das jenem von Slobodan Milošević gleichzusetzen ist.

Der Verfasser stellt sich nicht mit den Schlussfolgerungen zufrieden, die diese Beobachter und Forscher ziehen, sondern er unterwirft sie den kritischen Untersuchungen. Er zeigt wie sich ihre Urteile oft auf Klischeevorstellungen gründen, die die komplexe Realität auf Koordinaten reduzieren, die einem breiten Lesepublikum verständlich sind, das zu diesen Stereotypen neigt. Es ist interessant, dass im kommunistischen Jugoslawien Tuđman Dissident war, wobei das eine Charakteristik ist, die bei anderen Leuten als positiv angenommen wird.

¹³⁸ Also see Sadkovich, "Who Was Franjo Tuđman?" and "Franjo Tuđman : An Intellectual in Politics," in Sabrina Ramet, Konrad Clewing, and Reneo Lukić, eds., *Croatia during the 1990s* (on press).