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MAJOR CAUSES OF THE HATRED BETWEEN SERBS AND
CROATS

*If man does find a solution for
world peace it will be the most
revolutionary reversal of his
record we have ever known.*

General George Catlett Marshall

The current war which is raging unabated in former Yugoslavia has caught the attention of the entire world. Each day graphic depictions of atrocities, ethnic cleansing, and death crisscross the airwaves and dominate the media. Unfortunately these tragedies seem to have no end in sight.

Because of misinterpretations and an often distorted view regarding this conflict, a need has arisen to present the historical facts which have been brewing hatred between Serbs and Croats for centuries. Based on the available sources, this work will unveil information which may eliminate much of the misunderstanding that is currently circulating within the hearts and minds of concerned people the world over.

It must be emphasized that this work is only the beginning of our research into this issue. Hopefully it will encourage other scholars to continue their research, while focusing world attention on the true causes which have led to the hatred that exists today between Balkan Serbs and Croats, for only through a thorough understanding, can a remedy to the crisis be found, and future conflict be prevented.

To understand the problem between the combating ethnic groups, we need to examine their diverse histories. Both of them were under foreign rule for centuries, Serbia under the Ottoman Empire, and Croatia under the Austrian Empire. In addition, Serbs are Orthodox Christians, whereas Croats are Roman Catholic.

The beginning of the hostility between the Serbs and the Croats started during the Military Border or *Vojna Krajina*. According to Šišić, a respected Croatian historian, the Border was officially created on February 25, 1578

when King Rudolph II (1576-1608) gave it to his uncle Carl who was Archduke of the province of Steiermark in Austria. On July 15, the Croatian Sabor reluctantly recognized Carl as its ruler¹. At this time the Ottoman Turks were gaining strength, and each step taken brought them closer to Austrian territory and the once mighty Hungarian-Croatian kingdoms. Turkish pressure soon found its way into the Inner Austrian duchies of Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria. This bred fear, which in turn led the nobles of Inner Austria to persuade their leader, Archduke Ferdinand, to establish a frontier zone of defense against the Turkish threat. Ferdinand responded, and in 1522 he took the first step toward the creation of what would soon become the Croatian Military Border when he began moving mercenary troops into strategic areas of Croatia to prevent further penetration by the Turks².

Shortly after this move, Hungary united with Austria. The year was 1526, and by this time Hungarian kings had already discovered that the rugged Serbs (Vlachs) were extremely efficient soldiers. The Serbs, who were of the Orthodox faith, were encouraged to immigrate into the border regions of the Turks. They were more than happy to comply, for they had already been migrating into northern Croatia *en masse* to escape the Turkish advance³.

At this time the diet of the Holy Roman Empire had promised financial aid to the Croatian nobility. Unfortunately, these promises resulted in next to nothing. Equally discouraging was the lack of aid coming out of the Empire itself. Orthodox Serbs would provide a cheap and easy solution, and in 1527 Ferdinand not only encouraged Serbian immigration into the border regions, but Roman Catholics were targeted as well⁴.

Serfdom was common throughout the Habsburg lands, and to entice settlers to the border and further colonize the region, the Habsburgs used this feudal institution to their advantage. By offering special privileges to the border soldiers, who were known as *Grenzer*, colonization flourished and

1. Ferdo Šišić, *Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda* (Zagreb, 1962), p. 285.

2. Gunther E. Rothenburg, *The Military Border in Croatia 1740-1881* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 7-8.

3. *Ibid.*, The Vlachs is the collective name for a European people living mostly in Rumania and other states of the Balkan peninsula - from the Adriatic coast to the Bug River. They are of the Latin origin, but heavily slavicized and hellenized (Tzintzars) throughout centuries. Since they practice the Orthodox religion like the Serbs, the Serbs in the Vojna Krajina were called Vlachs. Even today the Orthodox people in Croatia, particularly in villages, are called Vlaji (Vlachs).

4. *Ibid.*

loyalty was enhanced, for these fighting men were more than happy to find themselves relieved of their peasant status⁵.

The Monarchy offered many favorable economic and social conditions to the colonists, and a large population of Serbian refugees from Ottoman occupied Serbian lands took advantage of these opportunities. By granting such concessions as land grants, freedom of religious worship, the right to elect their own local captains (vojvode) and magistrates (knezovi), and immunity from the customary monetary obligations, the population of Orthodox *Grenzer* on the Border multiplied rapidly. By 1550, border security was enhanced by numerous fortifications and manned by approximately five thousand *Grenzer*⁶. These soldiers were settled on lands which had been abandoned by Croats and other Slavs in their efforts to escape border conflicts⁷.

In 1597, Archduke Ferdinand issued a "Protective Letter" to insure Serbian privileges in the Slavonian areas of the Border. This letter freed them from all tributes, work, and corresponding burdens⁸. The border was becoming a powerful institution that would be used not only to defend Austrian frontiers against Turks, but in any military action that the Habsburgs became engaged in.

Expansion of the border and its increased importance for Habsburg security caught the attention of emperor Ferdinand II, who sought to officially establish its military character, along with all of its statutes. On October 5, 1630 he issued the *Statuta Valachorum* which became the charter for a new centralized government with an absolute monarchy. This document solidified all of the privileges and regulations which pertained to the *Grenzer*⁹. Among other things, the document established the Border as a territory separate and free from the rule of the Croatian ban and savor, and allowed all border settlers the right to buy or sell such things as livestock, wine, and all kinds of food¹⁰. This document increased morale on the border by supporting Serbs and other border settlers against attempts of the Croatian

5. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

7. Alex N. Dragnich, *Serbs and Croats* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company 1992), p. XV.

8. Dragutin Pavličević, ed., *Vojna Krajina: Povjesni pregled - historiografija - rasprave* (Zagreb, 1984), p. 35.

9. The original document is without title and is kept in the Historical Museum of Croatia in Zagreb. It is known in historiography as the *Statuta Valachorum*.

10. Jaroslav Šidak, ed., *Historijska čitanka za hrvatsku povijest*, Vol. I (Zagreb, 1953), pp. 134-7. Pavličević, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-8. Šišić, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-7.

nobility to reduce their special conditions and elevated status¹¹.

The favorable conditions granted to those willing to fight Turks caused the border to expand radically between the 16th and 18th centuries, and with this growth, increasing numbers of Serbs began to settle their families on Croatian lands. Towards the end of the 17th century massive Serbian migration took place toward the northwest, and in 1690 they were led by Patriarch Arsenije III Crnojević and 1737 by Arsenije IV Joanović Šakabenta¹².

It must be emphasized that the primary reason for expansion of the Military Border was socio-economic, for Austria lived in a constant state of financial crisis. The functions of the Border provided the Austrians with a cheap and ready source of military support, while making it possible for *Grenzer* to rise above the conditions common to the average peasant.

After the fall of Napoleon, yet before the Revolutions of 1848, the *Grenzer* became ever more important within the Austrian plan of defense¹³. The Border was divided into eight regiments which had a total population of 572,752, of this total 246,687 were considered to be Serbs¹⁴. The large number of Orthodox Serbs occupying Croatian lands, along with the special status afforded them, created endless hostility between border settlers and Croats.

The Croatian nobility became increasingly contentious toward the border and its inhabitants. They protested constantly against the social and religious privileges enjoyed by the Orthodox *Grenzer*. By the middle of the 18th century, the Austrian dynasty and the Hungarian-Croatian magnates were at a standoff. To appease their protests, Vienna strove to convert the Serbs (Vlachs) to the Catholic faith, or at the very least to become a member of the Uniate church¹⁵. In 1609, Orthodox bishop (vladika) Vratanja became a Uniate and accepted the Zagreb bishop (biskup) as metropolitan (metropolit). On November 21, 1611 he himself was confirmed a Uniate bishop by Pope Paul V. Archduke Ferdinand seized this opportunity to bring the Serbs closer to Catholicism by declaring Vratanja bishop of all Orthodox believers within the Border frontier. This maneuver backfired, for most Serbs would not accept him and maintained their affiliations with the Serbian Patriarchate

11. Rothenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

12. Šišić, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

13. Rothenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

15. Gunther E. Rothenburg, "The Croatian Military Border and the Rise of Yugoslav Nationalism", *Slavonic and East European Review*, (No. 43, December, 1964), p. 35. In 1596 the Uniate church was established following the Union of Brest. Uniates accepted the Pope as head of the church, but retained the Eastern ritual along with Slavonic language, practices and customs in their services. Sometimes they are called Greek Catholics.

in Peć¹⁶. Also within this century, Croatian representatives in the Hungarian Parliament sought to have laws passed which would prevent the organization of Serbian high schools, prevent the building of Orthodox churches, take away all property of Serbian monasteries, etc.¹⁷. Ultimately, the Croats continuously pushed for an increased role of the ban and savor into the military zone, which was governed by the Viennese administration¹⁸.

Hostility and antagonism had also found its way into the Roman Catholic church which made repeated attempts to erase the rights and privileges of the Orthodox. For instance, the bishops of Zagreb and Srem teamed up with the Jesuits to convert the Orthodox to Catholicism, and if not, to becoming Uniates. This was not done in the spirit of Christian love, for on many occasions, these efforts were carried out with violent, military force¹⁹. In 1704, Orthodox soldiers of the Banal regiment faced discrimination by Catholic officers, and this became the root of more disharmony and bitter conflict²⁰. The 18th century was a most troublesome time to be Orthodox and live on the Military Border, for Austrian Empress Maria Theresa, a devout Catholic, habitually opposed border laws and privileges²¹. Serbian priests were often imprisoned or tortured for refusing to accept Catholicism or the Uniate faith, and these persecutions have been documented by German and Croatian historians²².

After roughly three-hundred and fifty years of turmoil in the *Vojna Krajina* between the Austrian hierarchy and the Croatian estates, Emperor Francis Joseph issued a series of decrees in June of 1871 to put an end to this legendary military institution²³. It reached its official end in 1881²⁴. The Military Border was a classic case of two book ends where one outweighs the other, the book-ends being Vienna and the Croats, but caught in the middle were the Orthodox Serbs. The circumstances on the Military Border created a tragic setting for Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats to meet.

16. Šišić, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

17. Edmond Paris, *Convert or Die*, trans. Lois Perkins (California: Chick), p. 11.

18. Rothenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 9. The word "ban" means governor and "savor" means parliament.

19. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

20. Rothenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

22. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

23. *Slavonic and East European Review*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

24. Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (London: Cornell, 1984), p. 93.

As turbulence raged within the Croatian Military Border, other winds of change were taking place with the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte. He reached the Balkans in 1809, and following the Battle of Wagram of July 5-6, the Austrian government sued for peace. In the Treaty of Schonbrunn, signed on October 14, Napoleon received Croatian lands on the right bank of the Sava, including the six Karlstadt and Banal regiments of the Military Border. These areas, along with Dalmatia and the three Slovene provinces of Istria, Carniola, and Carinthia became known as the Illyrian Provinces. He made its capitol Ljubljana, which is today the capitol of Slovenia²⁵.

Napoleon not only established the Illyrian provinces, but he also brought with him the liberalism of the French Revolution. This helped shape a new mentality which began to flourish in the hearts and minds of Balkan people. Ideas of freedom from foreign rule, watered by the concept of liberalism, produced the most forceful sense of national inspiration that many south Slavs had ever before experienced. Numerous Serb and Croat intellectuals were given a new direction. Perhaps the strongest impression was felt by members of the Croatian educated elite. At the time of Napoleon's arrival, the people of the Balkans were essentially a primitive Slavic society. However, this would soon change, even though the French respite in the Balkans was short lived, ending with the emperor's abdication in 1814²⁶. Once again, the Illyrian Provinces were ceded back to Austria in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna²⁷.

With the advent of Napoleon, liberalism soon found its way into middle-class Croatia. One man in particular was overtaken by the concept, and he was determined to spread it throughout his native land. His name was Ljudevit Gaj, who in 1835 began a powerful series of cultural changes known collectively as the Illyrian Movement.

Prior to 1102, Croatia was independent, but following the death of her king, Croatia agreed to annexation by Hungary. This union ended its independence, and over the course of years, Croatia's traditional territory was reduced.

In 1526, Hungarian nobles elected Ferdinand of Austria as their king, and Croatia soon did the same²⁸. Disappointment with Austrian dominion

25. Rothenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 109. The name "Illyrian" refers to a group of ethnically related tribes that inhabited the Balkan peninsula before the Slavs arrived.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

27. Elinor Murray Despatalovic, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1975), p. 22.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

caused the Croatian nobles to join the Hungarians in an effort to counter Habsburg oppression; this ended Croatian autonomy. Little did they know that this decision would prove to be a neverending thorn in their side.

By the end of the 18th century, Hungary was feeling the birth pangs of a cultural renaissance, and as the Hungarian movement gained momentum, the Croats began to feel threatened. This threat, lit by the spark of the French Revolution, served to ignite the fire within young Ljudevit Gaj, who decided to defend his cherished homeland. The idea of an Illyrian Movement would become the vehicle for the new Croatian nationalism.

Gaj was born in 1809, into Croatia's middle class. From his early youth, he had referred to himself as Illyrian²⁹. He became increasingly fascinated with Croatian history and this generated in him an intense desire to change and improve conditions in Croatia.

Gaj met Ivan Kukuljević in 1837. By this time Gaj had already established the goals and laid the groundwork for his movement. Kukuljević was the son of the Director of Education for Croatia, and was a lieutenant in the Hungarian guards. He was twenty-one years old when he met Gaj, and instantly the two men became friends and collaborators in the Movement³⁰. Kukuljević would later become one of the most important forces in the drive towards Gaj's idea of Illyrianism.

Initially the goal of the Movement was to oppose Austrian centralism and Hungarian nationalism. This was to be achieved by uniting Croats under the Illyrian name. Gaj and the Illyrians felt it imperative that Croats stand up to the threat of Magyarization, for these nationalists wanted to replace the Latin language with Hungarian throughout Croatian lands³¹.

The Illyrians wanted to awaken Croatia to its own sense of national identity and resist Hungarian aggression. However, leaders in the movement soon realized that because of Croatia's economic and political weakness in the Austrian Empire, a larger, south Slavic dimension had to be added to the agenda³². It wasn't long before Illyrians began reaching out to all other south Slavs, including the Serbs.

By 1825, the political and educated elite of Croatia were aware that their very culture was in danger. At this time, the Croats had no literary

29. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

32. Ante Cuvalo, *The Croatian National Movement 1966-1972* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1990), p. 9.

language. What they did have were three dialects: štokavski, kajkavski, and čakavski³³. To counter the Magyars, they realized that the creation of a modern, literary language would prove to be a valuable defense, and they would call the language Illyrian³⁴. In 1827, while a student at the University of Graz, Gaj met Mojsije Baltić, a Serb from the Military Border. Baltić taught Gaj to read the Cyrillic alphabet and to speak and write in the štokavski dialect, which was the dialect used by the Serbs³⁵. Eventually, Gaj realized that a modern, literary language based on the štokavski dialect would be the most effective way to attract South Slavs into the fold³⁶. The concept of Pan-Slavism was about to be put to the test.

Gaj began developing his reformed Croatian orthography in 1829, and by 1835 it had been adopted by writers in the Movement³⁷. His next step was to print newspapers written in the new language. At this time he had full support of the Austrian government who had become equally fearful of the growing threat of Magyar nationalism, and viewed the Illyrian Movement as the lesser of two evils³⁸. The Illyrians came to rely on Austrian support. Through the newspapers, which were called *Novine Horvatzke* (Newspaper of Croatia) and *Danicza Horvatzka, Slavonzka y Dalmatinzka* (Morning Star of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia), the reformed language began to penetrate the Croatian populace³⁹.

Realizing that the printed word could be a powerful tool for promoting Illyrian propaganda, articles were used to advance the idea that all South Slavs had previously shared a common cultural and political past, and that they were descendents of the ancient Illyrians⁴⁰.

The truth of the matter is that the leaders in the Movement wanted to retain and solidify ancient Croatian privileges within the Hungarian realm. They reached out in all directions for other South Slavs to join hands with them; however, none of them responded. They made valiant attempts to attract the Serbs, but the Serbs were vastly uninterested, and they were ada-

33. Despatalovic, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

34. Robert Lee Wolff, *The Balkans in Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1967), p. 76.

35. Despatalovic, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

38. Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1977), p. 250.

39. Despatalovic, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 90. The idea that the South Slavs were descendents of the Illyrians was revived by the Croats in the 15th century. However it is not true.

manly opposed to Illyrianism, believing that it was an attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to obliterate Orthodoxy and the Serbian national identity⁴¹. This probably was not true, but it should be pointed out that to improve their own status in the Balkans, Croats wanted to unite with Serbs, whereas the Serbs, who were in the midst of their own national awakening, and powerful enough to carry it out independently, wanted nothing to do with Illyrianism⁴². Nevertheless, by 1840 the Croatian Sabor had sanctioned the Illyrian language to be taught in the elementary schools of the Triune Kingdom as the primary language of instruction and as an elective course in high schools⁴³. Croats were now experiencing for the first time the beauty of using their own language, and trying to be their own master.

Although much progress had been made, the Movement attracted no support outside of Croatia, so in 1841 the Croats formed two political parties—one was the Magyarones who opposed the movement, and the other was the Illyrian party, which wanted to preserve the Hungarian constitution, the Croatian Kingdom, and the Illyrian nationality⁴⁴. Eventually, the Illyrian party changed its name to the National Party, yet the platform remained the same—the unification of Slavic people.

The Croats wanted desperately to attract the Serbs to Illyrianism, but the struggle continued to prove fruitless. By 1848, revolutions had broken out in Paris and spread to Vienna and Hungary. These revolutions had an influence within the Croatian Parliament which chose to take revolutionary action, and elect a new ban. Most importantly, the influence of the Revolutions prompted the Croats to take things a step further and demand independence from Hungary⁴⁵. Josip Jelačić was chosen to be the new ban. By May, Croatia was in dire straits financially and militarily, and in desperation Jelačić contacted Serbia's Prince Alexander Karadjordjević for help. He told the prince that he was in desperate need of military and financial assistance, and he requested a loan of 30,000 *dukats*⁴⁶. Knowing that without Serbian aid Croatia would not survive the Revolution, Jelačić promised the Serbian government that it would become the center of the new Southern Slav Kingdom. The Serbs

41. Cuvalo, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

42. The Serbs had achieved autonomy within the Ottoman Empire in 1830, and full independence in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin.

43. Despatalovic, *op. cit.*, p. 125. The Triune Kingdom consists of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-7.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 194-5.

decided to extend their hand to the weakened Croats, promising military aid if needed; they also gave the Croatian representative to the Prince (Stefan Herkalović) 1,000 *dukats* in June, but shortly thereafter the Revolutions had finally run out of steam⁴⁷.

Fortunately for Croatia, the Hungarian nationalist plan was never put into effect. As Croatia shook off the dust of the revolution, it found its territory intact, although the dream of South Slav unity remained just that, a dream. Nevertheless, Croatian nationalism was there to stay, for although the Illyrian Movement died with the Revolution, within a decade of its end, nationalism had found a new proponent in Ante Starčević.

Starčević was a politician who emerged on the scene in 1861 along with Eugen Kvaternik. Kvaternik is described as a "sensitive wanderer steeped in Croat historicist theory"; together they founded the Party of Right⁴⁸. A part of the platform of the Party was the development of an independent Croatia. Unlike their Illyrianist predecessors, they wanted nothing to do with Serbs, whom they looked upon with contempt. They believed that Serbs were actually Croats who had denounced Catholicism to become Orthodox⁴⁹. Also, unlike the Illyrianists, they were vehemently opposed to the idea of receiving help from Austria.

Starčević and his party often resorted to violence in their bid for national independence, and they believed that all other non-Catholic South Slavs were inferior. Starčević quickly became a most successful native Croatian politician, but what hindered the Starčević party was the lack of representatives in the Parliament or Sabor, for Croatian rules permitted only about 2 percent of the population to vote. The vote was dominated by the pro-Magyar "Unionist" party, together with the Magyar-appointed ban⁵⁰.

Among other things, Starčević believed that the nobility had lost its privileged rights which now belonged to the populace, for beginning in the 18th century, the nobility, unable to defend the homeland, transferred the responsibility to the popularly based standing armies. What this meant to the "Rightists" was that the lower classes were the true political people in Croatia, and nobody but the political people belonged on Croatian soil⁵¹. The party seemed to hold the most disdain for the Serbs, who in the opinion of Starčević

47. *Ibid.*

48. Banac, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

49. Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

50. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

51. Banac, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

were "unclean". Besides, he held a firm conviction that no Slovene or Serb should be allowed in Great Croatia⁵². He became known as the father of his country, and he coined the phrase: "The Serbs are a breed fit only for the slaughter house"⁵³.

Although Starčević picked up where the Illyrians left off, he was the antithesis of that movement. He wanted anything but unity for South Slavs, and he wanted nothing to do with Austrian aid or other ethnic groups, especially Serbs. There is no telling why Starčević adopted a policy of Serb hatred, but there is also little doubt that he did everything in his power to offend them and show them as inferior. Starčević, a powerful Croatian politician, deserves the recognition that he has earned as the first Croatian racist, and many of his policies have survived to the present.

While nationalist movements were in full swing within the Balkans, Austria, in 1867, acknowledged Hungary as a full and equal partner. This alliance was determined to gain control of abandoned Ottoman lands, while dominating the affairs of its occupants. Meanwhile, Germany, which had become a unified nation in 1871, envisioned the Dual Monarchy as the pioneer that would open the way for its own expansion to the East (*Drang Nach Osten*)⁵⁴. Indeed, both Austria and Germany were shrewd, and to secure a foothold within the Balkans, these two powerbases became involved in many treaties. Perhaps the most important of these took place at the Congress of Berlin (1878), and it was here that Austria-Hungary gained the right to occupy and administer Bosnia-Herzegovina⁵⁵.

These two areas had long been governed by the Turks, and were largely populated by Serbs who felt this to be a terrible set-back. From the time of the Berlin Congress, Austria-Hungary did everything in its power to foment hostility between Balkan Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims⁵⁶. This was done out of fear that Belgrade would become the main attraction for South Slav unity, and this would create a change in the power balance to the detriment of the Dual Monarchy.

The first two decades of the 20th century brought further strife to the

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-8.

53. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

54. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. XVII.

55. Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908 to weaken Serbia and reduce its attraction to the South Slavs.

56. R. G. D. Laffan, *The Serbs* (New York: Dorset Press, 1989), p. 97. The Muslim population are Slavs of Serbian and Croatian origin, who, to escape Ottoman oppression and receive benefits, converted to the Muslim faith.

Balkans. Austria-Hungary was more than ever feeling the threat of Serbia's attraction to its South Slavs. In June 1903, King Alexander Obrenović was assassinated by a group of army officers; his replacement was Petar Karadjordjević, a constitutional monarch who immediately established a parliamentary democracy. This alarmed Vienna because relations with Obrenović were reasonably agreeable, but with the change in government, Serbia took on increased appeal in the eyes of the South Slavs within the Empire⁵⁷. In addition, after witnessing Serbian victories in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, Vienna's leaders were determined to thwart any further Serbian advances⁵⁸.

In a desperate attempt to crush Serbia, Vienna's leaders persuaded their allies in Berlin that a preventive war against Serbia was essential if the lifeline of Austro-Hungary was to survive. Berlin consented, but what is most interesting is that this took place before the assassination in Sarajevo of Archduke Ferdinand (Austria's heir to the throne) on June 28, 1914, the revered Serbian holiday of Vidovdan (St. Vitus' Day)⁵⁹.

The murder could have been prevented, for Serbia's Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, had warned the Austrian government on June 21, that there was a possible conspiracy to kill the Archduke, yet the warning went unheeded⁶⁰. He was killed by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian high school student. Evidence was never found to prove that Serbia was involved, despite that, the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy with Germany, sent Serbia an unacceptable forty-eight hour ultimatum, then declared war on Serbia⁶¹. As of July 28, 1914 Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey were fighting Russia, France, Great Britain, and eventually Italy and the United States.

Initially, Italy was on the side of the Triple Alliance, but to persuade the Italians to join with them, the Entente powers drafted the Treaty of London, which became official on April 26, 1915. This secret treaty granted Italy extensive territories, including Gorz (Gorica), a portion of Carniola, Trieste, Istria, and northern Dalmatia with most of the offshore islands. In essence, this treaty would place much Croatian and Slovene land, and its Slavic in-

57. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

58. The War of 1812 saw the Balkan states victorious against Turkey. It ended on May 30, 1913 with the Treaty of London. The 1913 war saw Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Montenegro defeat Bulgaria.

59. Alex N. Dragnich, *Serbia, Nicola Pasic, and Yugoslavia* (New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1974), p. 106.

60. Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815-1918* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 255.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

habitants, under Italian jurisdiction⁶².

When word of the Treaty of London reached the Croats, they quickly realized that unity with the Serbs was their only hope for liberation. Meanwhile, in December 1914, Pašić declared in the Niš Declaration that Serbia's main war aim was to liberate and unify all Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes⁶³. Realizing that without Serbian help their homeland would be overtaken by the Italians, the Croats formed the Yugoslav Committee, whose chairman was Ante Trumbić. Although the Yugoslav Committee often had disagreements with Pašić, in the interest of survival and possible independence, it worked with him to form a Yugoslav state, for the Committee realized without question that Croat liberation was totally dependent on Serbian leadership⁶⁴. Serbia, the most powerful of the south Slavs, appeared to be the Piedmont for south Slav unification, although the role was never really assumed.

By 1917, the powerful German army had forced the Serbian army to retreat across the Albanian mountains to the Greek island of Corfu. It was here that negotiations took place between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee. Although the Yugoslav Committee was concerned about the possibility of "Great Serbianism" on the part of Pašić, Trumbić believed that this struggle would have to take a back seat until the Croat and Slovene lands were safe from Italian and Hungarian encroachments. The term "Great Serbia" has never been used by Serbs, but it was originally employed in 1919 by Nikola Pašić when he opposed the idea of unification between Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Pašić believed that unification with Croats would not work, and wanted instead a state comprised of Serbs with minimal minority involvement⁶⁵. He was overruled, for already, Italian troops were flooding the Adriatic, anxious to fulfill the promises of the Treaty of London. To prohibit this move, the National Council had asked Serbian authorities to dispatch armed forces to the area⁶⁶, and, according to Dragnich, Serbian assistance was welcomed because it was needed, yet it was resented because it was not native. The Yugoslav Committee leaders were at the mercy of the Serbian government, and they knew it⁶⁷. The result of the negotiations was a document

62. Banac, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

63. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

65. Alfred Sherman, "Germany's *Drang Nach Osten*", *Bulletin of the Jerusalem Institute for Western Defence*, Vol. 5, Bulletin No. 3 (Jerusalem, Sept., 1992), pp. 3-4.

66. The creation of the National Council was announced from Zagreb on October 29, 1918. It was to be the governing body for a new state of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs.

67. Banac, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

known as the Declaration of Corfu which was executed on July 20, 1917.

The document drafted on Corfu consisted of language pertaining to the organization of the future kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. It specified that the new kingdom would be governed by the Karadjordjević dynasty, and would function as a constitutional, parliamentary democracy. Pašić used the Corfu document to demonstrate to the Allies that unification of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was indeed a workable proposition⁶⁸.

Many politicians of the Yugoslav Committee, along with members of the National Council, were dissatisfied with the centralistic government provided for in the Corfu Declaration, wanting instead a federalistic arrangement. From November 6th to the 9th, further conferences were held in Geneva to resolve the dispute. An agreement was reached on November 9, 1918, although it was never carried out because many politicians on all sides were against it⁶⁹.

In spite of the failed Geneva conference, negotiations for the formation of a unified state continued. In November, Vojvodina, Montenegro, and forty-two of the fifty-two districts of Bosnia-Herzegovina spoke in favor of union with Serbia⁷⁰. Rather than attempt to create an independent state on their own small pieces of territory, particularly with pressure from Italian encroachment within the Adriatic, the National Council decided to unite with Serbia without further hesitation⁷¹. On December 1, 1918, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was proclaimed and, at Versailles, it received ratification. At last the dream of South Slav unity had become reality.

Almost immediately, the Kingdom had problems with the social integration of its diverse ethnic groups. With the death of King Petar I Karadjordjević, his son, Prince Regent Alexander inherited the challenge of resolving the political disequilibrium that had erupted within the new state. Alexander established a cabinet and a provisional government called the Temporary National Representation to pave the way towards a constitutional convention. This temporary parliament governed the kingdom until October 22, 1920, at which time representation of the Yugoslav provinces was passed to the Constitutional Assembly; however, real power was wielded by King Alexander

68. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

69. Milenko Karanovich, "Conditions in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes Immediately After the Unification" (Unpublished manuscript), pp. 2-3. Presently Karanovich teaches history at California State University San Marcos.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

71. *Ibid.*

and the People's Radical Party headed by Nikola Pašić⁷². On June 28, 1921, the new constitution was ratified, and because it took place on the Serbian national holiday of Vidovdan, it is known in history as the Vidovdan Constitution.

Prior to ratification of the constitution, trouble had been brewing within the ranks of the Croatian Republican Peasant Party (CRPP) which was under the leadership of Stjepan Radić. The party had overwhelming support of the Croatian peasantry, and fought for the cause of an autonomous Croatia⁷³. The CRPP had in the previous two months declared that they would not recognize the constitution because of its centralist arrangement⁷⁴. Radić was not alone, for many members of the Constitutional Assembly were equally opposed to it for want of a federalist arrangement of the state, yet it was formally adopted by a vote of 223 to 35, with 111 not taking part in the voting⁷⁵. The representatives of the Social-democratic party, the Peasant party, the Republican party, and Ante Trumbić voted against it. Representatives from the Radical party, the Democratic party, the Peasant group from Slovenija, the Yugoslav Muslim Organization and the Džemijet voted for the Constitution. The representatives who did not attend the Assembly were representatives of eight different political parties; they abstained because they were against the content of the proposed constitution⁷⁶.

The fact that ratification of the constitution took place on the Serbian holiday of Vidovdan proved to be a tragic mistake on the part of the Serbs, for this was far too coincidental for the Croats to accept⁷⁷. This factor alone inflamed the Croat representatives in parliament and caused deep resentment within the new state. The constitution also handed the Kingdom a highly centralized government, which was considered to be a continuation of the Serbian system⁷⁸, for it was structured on the Serbian constitution of 1903⁷⁹. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was now governed by a constitutional monarchy with a democratic parliamentary system. Equality was confirmed with no ethnic group ranking above any other, yet the Croats seemed to have the most misgivings for fear of losing their individuality in the new

72. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

73. Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

74. *Serbia, Nicola Pasic, and Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, p. 157.

75. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

76. Karanovich, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

77. *Serbia, Nicola Pasic, and Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, p. 161.

78. Jelavich, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

79. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

state⁸⁰. They found themselves forced to accept a centralized constitution in lieu of the desired federalist system, and to make matters worse, it appeared that the Serbs wanted to dominate the state, for why else would they have endorsed it on the day of their sacred holiday?

Meanwhile, Radić continued to fight for the creation of a Croatian Republic, but this only landed him in prison on charges of anti-state activities, for which even the French and British press criticized him⁸¹. While in prison, on March 27, 1925, his nephew made a statement that the Croats had decided to accept the constitution, and this was confirmed by Radić from prison. Some historians believe that this was in response to public talk in Belgrade of "amputation" of Croatia from the state. If Croatia were removed, it would be exposed to possible Italian occupation, for Mussolini was gaining strength within the Adriatic. Against far superior Italian forces, Croatia would be powerless⁸².

Radić was released from prison, and soon his party, which had changed its name to the "Croat Peasant Club", joined Pašić and the Serbian Radicals. Pašić died in 1926, and once again Radić resumed his anti-state activities⁸³.

By June of 1928, conflicts between radicals and oppositionists in parliament had reached its zenith; and at the June 20th parliamentary gathering, a fanatical deputy from Montenegro named Puniša Račić had reached his as well, for he shot four Croatian deputies, including Radić. Radić recovered from his wounds and recommenced his struggle for an independent Croatian republic, but he died two months later from a secondary infection associated with his diabetes⁸⁴.

Anti-centralists, under the aegis of Radić's successor Vladko Maček continued their protests. Through perseverance, they eventually convinced many centralist partisans, including King Alexander that the existing constitution was unnecessary⁸⁵. In January of 1929, the king established absolutism, thus assuming personal power within the kingdom. He then abolished the Vidovdan Constitution, dismissed parliament, and abolished political parties⁸⁶. He also renamed the kingdom Yugoslavia⁸⁷.

80. *Serbia, Nicola Pasic, and Yugoslavia, op. cit.*, p. 219.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

83. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

84. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

85. Banac, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

86. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

87. "Yug" means south. The word Yugoslavia means Land of the South Slavs.

Hostilities continued to abound. With Serbian King Alexander's proclamation of dictatorial rule, the Croats were convinced that Yugoslavia was in reality Great Serbia. Many historians have described Alexander's Yugoslavia as a police state. This point became more convincing when in 1928 the Serbs began murdering Croatian members in Parliament. In retaliation, King Alexander was assassinated in 1934. Some historians speculate that the Croatian terrorist organization called the Ustashi were responsible⁸⁸. The Ustashi had been formed by a lawyer from Zagreb, Ante Pavelić, and his sole intent was to gain Croatian independence⁸⁹.

Croat-Serb relations remained strained, for as of 1938, Serbs dominated the country both politically and militarily. For example, in 1938 there were 165 generals in Yugoslavia, 161 were Serbs, 2 were Slovene, and 2 were Croats. These unequal proportions were reflected throughout the government, resulting in political and economic oppression of the "newly acquired territories"⁹⁰. As a possible solution, in 1939 Prince Paul Karadjordjević, who had succeeded Alexander, signed the *Sporazum* (Agreement), and by its terms, Croatia had at last achieved autonomy within Yugoslavia. The autonomous region was known as the Croatian Banovina⁹¹. Although, the *Sporazum* was intended to ease hostilities, it had backfired, for now the Serbs felt slighted and began denouncing Croats and demanding a Banovina of their own⁹². This provoked further enmity for which there seemed to be no solution; yet the issue would remain moot, for in April of 1941, Hitler's troops invaded Belgrade.

With the invasion, Germany ordered the Yugoslav government to sign the Axis Pact, but this was undermined by a *coup d'état* conducted by officers of the Serb-led army which overthrew the Regency government. Serbian resistance caused the Germans to set out on a mission of destruction in what became known as operation "Punishment". From April 6th to the 8th, Belgrade was showered by bombs which left approximately 25,000 Serbs dead⁹³.

88. David Lawday, "Doomed by an Ancient Disease", *U.S. News and World Report*, Vol. 114, No. 19, May 17, 1993, p. 35. The Croatian Ustashi movement based its ideology on that of Ante Starčević. It had strong leanings with the Roman Catholic church, and gained strength because of Serbian domination in the first Yugoslavia.

89. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

90. Ante Cuvalo, *The Croatian National Movement 1966-1972* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press., 1990), p. 79.

91. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

93. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

While Germany was destroying Belgrade, Ante Pavelić and his Ustashi extremists were busy planning to use the German occupation to their advantage. This was the opportunity that they had been seeking, for on April 6th, Pavelić made the following pronouncement: "Croatian soldiers, take up arms against the Serbian officers and soldiers! From now on we shall fight side by side with our new allies, the Germans and the Italians". On April 10th, while the German army marched into Zagreb, Colonel Slavko Kvaternik, himself a Ustasha, announced over the radio the newly-formed "Independent State of Croatia"⁹⁴.

The Independent State of Croatia was nothing more than a puppet in the hands of Germany. It was created to keep Yugoslavia divided. Yet, the Croat leaders were so overwhelmed by their independence that they were blinded to Germany's motives. With the power of Germany to sustain them, Pavelić, the Ustashi, and the Roman Catholic church proceeded to embark on a road that would lead Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies into a most horrible fate and shape their thoughts, perhaps forever.

Almost immediately, a crusade against non-Catholics was enacted. The term "crusade" is appropriate, for on July 22, 1941, the Minister of Education and Cults in Croatia, Dr. Mile Budak announced:

The Ustashe movement is based on religion. For the minorities—Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies, we have three million bullets. We shall kill one part of the Serbs. We shall transport another, and the rest of them will be forced to embrace the Roman Catholic religion. Thus, our new Croatia will get rid of all Serbs in our midst in order to become one hundred percent Catholic within ten years⁹⁵.

Pavelić became the *Poglavnik* (leader), who's sole function was chief subordinate to Germany and Italy. He visited Rome in May 1941 where he was cheerfully received by Pope Pius XII⁹⁶.

Following Pavelić's visit, the Catholic church became an active force in the conversion of Orthodox Serbs. Many Catholic newspapers praised the Ustashi regime. In 1941, the April 27th edition of *Nedjelja* (Sunday), published in Zagreb, printed an article that read:

94. *Ibid.*, p. 47. Pavelić had already in previous years acquainted himself with Mussolini, who together plotted the overthrow of the Serbian Yugoslav government.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

96. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

God, who directs the destiny of nations and controls the hearts of Kings, has given us Ante Pavelić and moved the leader of friendly and allied people, Adolf Hitler, to use his victorious troops to disperse our oppressors and enable us to create an Independent State of Croatia, Glory be to God, our gratitude to Adolf Hitler, and infinite loyalty to our Poglavnik, Ante Pavelić⁹⁷.

The "Sworn Ustashi" also emanated from the Catholic church. This title was given to people who were sworn in illegally at Catholic churches and had made a pledge to overthrow Yugoslavia, Orthodoxy, and Serbianism. The newspaper *Nova Hrvatska* (New Croatia), printed the following in its May 4, 1941 edition: "The Mass was conducted in the municipal church of the holy Nikola Tavelić in Kustošija, by Rev. Ceselja, a sworn Ustasha"⁹⁸. Priests told the faithful followers that Hitler was a crusader of the Lord and that Pavelić and the Ustashi had been sent by God to the Croatian people⁹⁹.

It is evident that Nazi occupation in the Balkans opened the door for the Ustashi to pursue Croatian independence, along with revenge for Serbian domination in the inter-war period, and it is equally clear that it also provided the Roman Catholic church with a vehicle for its own expansion. According to Kurt Zentner, in his *Illustrated History of the Resistance in Germany and Europe*, "Pavelić and his Ustashi organization had already in the years past been supported by the Italian government and the Vatican, for the Ustashi were an emphatically Roman Catholic movement"¹⁰⁰.

There are many similarities between the ideas of Ante Starčević and those of the Roman Catholic clergy, for the priest Dionis Jurićev, Head of the Religious Department said:

Thenceforward only Croats will be allowed to live in this country because the country belongs to the Croats, and we shall have to take action against those who refuse to be converted. I have succeeded in cleansing other regions and have rid them of everyone, from infants to old men, and if necessary I shall do the same thing here. It is no longer considered a sin to kill a child of seven if he interferes with the Ustashi law and order. Although I wear the robes of a priest, I am often obliged to resort to the machine gun, and the minute

97. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-2.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

100. Lazo M. Kostich, *The Holocaust* (Liberty: Chicago, 1981), p. 56.

anyone is against the state or the Ustashi who are in power, I make good use of it right down to the cradle¹⁰¹.

Croatia had become the state of Starčević's dreams, a state in which no room was left for Serbs, Jews, or Gypsies.

As already indicated, one-third of non-Catholics were to be converted to the faith, yet this didn't apply to the Jews. The Ustashi government issued a circular No, 46468/1941 on July 30, 1941, which pertained to the conversion of Orthodox people to Catholicism, but a special clause forbade the conversion of Jews to the faith because they were considered unworthy due to their status relating to laws against non-Arians¹⁰².

To achieve better efficiency in killing non-Catholics, the Ustashi followed the German example, and concentration camps were set up at Jasenovac, Jadovno, Pag, Ogulin, Jastrebarsko, Koprivnica, Krapje, Zenica, Stara Gradiška, Djakovo, Lobograd, Tenje, Danica, at Osijek, etc.¹⁰³. The most notorious was Camp Jasenovac.

Jasenovac was a compound of wooden buildings that were built on piles because of the moist ground near the Sava River. Conditions there were deplorable. It is estimated that a total of about 200,000 people were killed in Jasenovac between 1941-2. Many of them were burned alive in the old brick ovens which had been converted into crematories. When we speak of people, that means all people, including children, for according to Paris, countless Jewish children were burned right along with the rest¹⁰⁴.

There is voluminous documentation about atrocities committed in the independent state. For example, children were found impaled on spits¹⁰⁵, those refusing to convert were often locked in abandoned churches, which were then set on fire¹⁰⁶, red-hot needles were inserted under the fingernails and salt poured into wounds, and often ears and noses were cut off while the victims were still alive, and not only were these members cut off, but any and all others were as well¹⁰⁷. There is evidence that women and young girls were raped, and then had their breasts cut off. Nursing babies were impaled, and

101. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 117. Legal clause on Origin of Peace of April 30, 1941.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

105. Kostich, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

old men were blinded and their feet and arms hacked off¹⁰⁸.

It must be stated that these widespread atrocities offended even the Nazis¹⁰⁹. Members of the Catholic church, and others flooded the Vatican with letters about what was taking place, but Rome remained quiet¹¹⁰.

As the war continued, a group called Chetniks, who were under the command of Colonel Draža Mihailović, were busy taking revenge into their own hands by killing massive numbers of Croats¹¹¹. More importantly, the Germans, Italians, and the Ustashi were being defeated by Marshall Josip Broz Tito, who, along with his communist partisans, were supported by the French, Americans, and British¹¹². Tito was an emissary of the Soviets, so, in 1944 when the Red army finally drove the Germans out of Belgrade, the capitol was placed in his hands. This was the end of the Independent State of Croatia, and the beginning of Yugoslav communism.

By the time of the German defeat in 1945, some 289 Orthodox churches and monasteries had been destroyed and burnt to the ground with women and children inside, 3 bishops, and 182 priests were killed¹¹³. The journal *Serbian Studies* gives evidence that approximately 700,000 people were massacred at Camp Jasenovac alone, the majority of which were Serbs. This figure is currently being disputed by the Croats¹¹⁴. According to Neubacher, one of Hitler's most esteemed Balkan troubleshooters, estimates of the number of Serbs killed could approach the level of three quarters of a million. He also estimates that approximately 60,000 Jews, and 26,000 Gypsies also perished¹¹⁵.

In spite of these figures, the Roman Catholic church supported Pavelić to the very end, for when he died in Madrid, he received the Papal blessing¹¹⁶.

The holocaust in Croatia gives another powerful example of the causes which have lead to the present war in Yugoslavia.

With the war ended, Tito began ruling the country with a hard-line communist hand. He wanted to unite the different ethnic groups under the idea

108. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

109. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

110. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

111. Lawday, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

112. Charles Lane and Theodore Stanger in Belgrade with Tom Post in New York, "The Ghosts of Serbia", *Newsweek*, April 19, 1993, p. 31.

113. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

114. Nicola Pasić, "In Search of the True Number of World War II Victims in Yugoslavia", *Serbian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1989, p. 70.

115. Paris, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

116. Kostich, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

of Yugoslavism¹¹⁷. Again, the old argument about government organization had arisen. The Slovenes and Croats wanted decentralization of federal powers, economic independence of federal units, and a market economy, while Serbs and Montenegrins advocated centralized economic policies¹¹⁸. Tito proclaimed that Yugoslavia would be provided with a federated state, but it was controlled by a strongly centralized communist party that demonstrated no concern for the proclaimed national republican rights¹¹⁹. To the dismay of Croats, Belgrade (the capitol of the first Yugoslavia, and the republic of Serbia became the center of power. After 1945, bureaucratic command was dominated by the Serbs¹²⁰. By the 1960's, Croats had reached their breaking point and nationalism was again on the rise. As stated earlier, Tito ruled the country with an iron fist, yet the hidden hostilities between Serbs and Croats were beginning to surface. With Serbs in control of the government and economy of Yugoslavia, discriminatory policies were implemented. In 1979 the secret police was comprised of 61 Serbs, 16 Croats, 9 Slovenes, 9 Montenegrins, 1 Yugoslav, and 4 others¹²¹. Economically, Croatian funds were being appropriated to the benefit of Serbian occupied areas. An example of this is seen in the Table of Contributions to and Receipts from the Federal Budget in Percentages:

<i>Republic</i>	<i>Contributions</i>	<i>Receipts</i>
B. and H.	13.91%	3.8%
Montenegro	1.34	2.39
Croatia	31.11	18.89
Slovenia	20.11	7.18
Macedonia	4.28	3.02
Serbia	29.17	68.13 ¹²²

Dissatisfaction with economic policies were expressed by Croatian party liberals at the 8th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) in 1964. By the early 1970's, Croatia wanted national statehood and sovereignty in a confederated Yugoslavia¹²³.

117. Cuvalo, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

120. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

122. Source: *Statisticki bilten Narodne Banke FNRJ*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1963, pp. 26, 79 as in Sime Djodan, "Gdje dr. Stipe Suvar 'pronalzi' nacionalizam, a gdje ga ne vide", *Kolo*, Vol. 7, No. 7, 1969, p. 706. For further information see Cuvalo, p. 84.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

One of the leading nationalist figures was Dr. Franjo Tudjman, who is currently President of Croatia¹²⁴. It was not long before he and the liberals had gained a majority over the conservatives in the Croatian Communist Party. The liberals fought hard and soon the centralist stranglehold was loosened. Unfortunately, the liberals went too far when they began demanding personal, group, and national rights which challenged the LCY, so to protect the party and state socialism, Tito sided with the conservatives¹²⁵. In November 1971, he purged the Republican party in Croatia and restored democratic centralism¹²⁶. The Croatian national movement had been stopped, but hostile intra-national relations within the country were only repressed.

A new constitution was drafted in 1974 which established an eight man collective presidency consisting of one man from each of the six republics and the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. As long as Tito was alive, this system was somewhat operative, but with his death in 1980, the political apparatus became dysfunctional.

During the 1970's, the economy of Yugoslavia was relatively healthy, yet following Tito's death, it fell into disarray. Now the Serbs were complaining of economic exploitation, and in 1986 the Serbian Academy of Sciences was asserting that they were facing economic and political bias by the Slovene/Croat led anti-Serb coalition¹²⁷. Meanwhile, Slovenes and Croats complained that their sons were being drafted to fight Serbia's battles in the province of Kosovo (where the Albanians opposed the Serbian Yugoslav government), and were contributing proportionately much more to the central treasury than the others¹²⁸. This is questionable considering that in 1990 the average per-capita income in Slovenia was \$12,618, \$7,179 in Croatia, and \$4,870 in Serbia¹²⁹.

Everything came to a head when, in 1990, non-communist governments were elected in Croatia and Slovenia. Croatia's president Franjo Tudjman's¹³⁰

124. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

127. Ivo Banac, "Political Change and National Diversity", *Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Europe* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), p. 159.

128. Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Spring 1992, p. 6. Kosovo is considered by Serbs to be their ancient spiritual home. It is here that the majority of their shrines are located.

129. Dragnich, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

130. Tudjman is a historian turned ultra-nationalist. During the reign of Tito he spent several years in jail for his radical nationalist activities.

ruling right-wing Croatian Democratic Union and Slovenia's centre-right political coalition began demanding sovereignty in a loose confederation of states. This was unacceptable to Serbia's president Slobodan Milošević and his communist government, who, along with Montenegro desired to preserve the federal state. Croatia and Slovenia withheld funds from the central government and formed their own military forces, and in retaliation, Sarbia began taxing imports from these two republics¹³¹.

The spring 1990 elections caused tensions to escalate; both Slovenia and Croatia adopted democratic constitutions in internationally free elections. At this time, 12 percent of Croatia's population was Serb, but this fact was ignored¹³². The elections were highly nationalistic, and while traveling in Serb regions of Croatia in 1990, Helsinki Watch executive director Jeri Laber said she encountered "genuine fear" among the Serbs who had visions of a repeat of World War II¹³³. The Serb's fears are justifiable, for the Tudjman regime shares its ideology with that of Hitler and the Ustashi, thus denying that genocide had ever taken place. Tudjman himself claims that the murder of the Jews "is retroactively justified by the Israeli's treatment of the Palestinian Arabs"¹³⁴.

The period immediately following the election was most critical. The sound of alarm went off in the United States and most of Europe for fear of war; however, Germany, standing alone decided to recognize the newly-independent Slovenia and Croatia. It was not long before the European Economic Community—dependent on the Bundesbank—and the United States followed suit¹³⁵. Initially, eleven of the twelve European Community states were opposed to the decision, but with German pressure, the E.C. was *gleichgeschaltet* (unified) into the recognition that would soon prove deadly. According to Sir Alfred Sherman, political advisor to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, Germany did everything in its power to encourage the Croats along lines that would incite armed Serbian resistance, supporting the new pseudo-states with supplies of arms and diplomatic assistance¹³⁶.

131. Rae Corelli, "Europe's Nightmare". *Maclean's*, Vol. 105, No. 28, July 13, 1992, pp. 33-4.

132. Patrick Glynn, "Yugoblunder", *The New Republic*, Vol. 206, No. 8, February 24, 1992, p. 15.

133. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

134. Sherman, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

135. Ronald Steel, "Let Them Sink", *The New Republic*, Vol. 207, No. 6, November 2, 1992, p. 16.

136. Sherman, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

The situation erupted into the savage war which is still howling within former Yugoslavia between Croats and Serbs, two ethnic groups who had lived without fighting for the previous forty-five years.

According to Raju G. C. Thomas, just prior to a meeting scheduled for September 1992 to be held in London, Germany's Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Gensher, stated that the Serbs were the root of all evil in the Balkans. This statement completely undermined any hopes for reaching an accord¹³⁷. Sir Alfred Sherman concurs that by breaking up Yugoslavia, the ensuing conflict "would generate a situation binding the new statelets to them as *Reichsprotektorate*" (states protected by Germany)¹³⁸.

It is unfortunate that from the time Serbs and Croats were united in 1918, the Serbian leaders failed to realize that psychologically, Croats were insecure. This was understandable considering that throughout their history, Croats had been dominated and liberated by foreign governments. So, when the Serbs provided them with liberation from the Dual Monarchy, they became distrustful of the Serbian leadership. During the time of the provisional parliament, Croats refused to join the proceedings because they felt politically inferior. The National Council was against the future centralized state and openly expressed "their fear about the future more powerful position of the Serbs and the possibility that the Croats may lose their individuality"¹³⁹. Without a history of autonomy or independence in their own nation, it was understandable that Croats would reject the dominant position of the Serbs. Although many historians ignore the idea of an inferiority complex, it must not be disregarded, for it provides valuable insight into the Croat mindset.

By analyzing the histories of the two groups, we find that Serbia had been autonomous since 1830, and independent since 1878. This was achieved because of Serbia's ability to militarily force the Ottoman Empire to grant them concessions. On the other hand, the Croat nation had not been able to shed the yoke of outside influences, and has been dominated by foreign governments for the past one-thousand years. Because there is no heroism in the history of the Croats, they began to emphasize their "thousand years culture", while rebelling against the far-more successful Serbs.

137. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Balkan Conflict and International Reaction: American and Serbian Options" (Unpublished manuscript), p. 2. Thomas is currently professor of political science at Marquette University, and senior research fellow at the Center for International Relations at the University of California Los Angeles.

138. Sherman, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

139. Banac, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

In an attempt to diminish the feeling of inferiority, Croats tried to portray the Serbs as second-rate citizens. The Croats began to promote the idea that the Serbs were part of the inferior "eastern race", while they themselves were European. They tried to politically align themselves with western powers, while placing Serbs in the category of what they considered to be the inferior east. As has been shown throughout this work, Croats rejected the Orthodox religion and used it as a means for fighting the Serbs. This was exhibited as far back as the Military Border and magnified during World War II. The journal of the Croatian Democratic Union, a right-wing nationalist party that won the elections of 1990, demonstrates how Croats feel today towards the eastern, Orthodox Serbs:

The inclusion [of Croatia] in the states of central Europe, the region to which it has always belonged, except for the recent past when balkanisms and the forcibly self-proclaimed national representatives have constantly subordinated the Croatian state territory to an *asiatic form of government*, while the justified anger and protests of certain Croatians have been qualified as terrorism and even fascism¹⁴⁰.

As history shows, Croats and Serbs are miles apart. Unfortunately, entirely too much emphasis is being placed on demonstrating their differences while overlooking the fact that they are both Slavic people, and they both speak the same language of Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian, with only a slight dialectical difference. Both sides are guilty of nurturing hostility by negative propaganda, and the media seems to be happy to do the same.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic church is not helping matters. Historically, this major world religion has proven its own sense of inferiority by its fear that Orthodoxy would spread at the expense of Rome. The church has often encouraged Croatian nationalism and inadvertently supported the use of violence by its policy of remaining silent. We have found no documentation to demonstrate any efforts on the part of Rome to speak out against bloodshed, yet there is ample evidence showing the church's intolerance for other religions, especially the Orthodox. To the contrary, we have found no evidence of Serbian religious intolerance toward any different religion. This is probably because of Serbia's exposure to the influence of religious tolerance within the Ottoman Empire, the same "eastern" influence that the Croats disdain.

140. Hayden and Hayden, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

The twentieth century has witnessed Serb/Croat hostility develop exponentially, and it will continue to grow as long as super-powers like Germany continue to show favoritism towards Croatia. The first bomb in the present war was not dropped by either of these ethnic groups, rather it was dropped when Germany hastily recognized Croatia's independence in the drive toward "*Drang Nach Osten*", without regard for the twelve percent Serb minority and the consequences the decision would produce. Serbs will never forget the terrible holocaust of World War II anymore than Croats can forget the wrongs done to them in the inter-war period. As long as Serbs and Croats are reminded of their pasts, the present hatred between them will remain.

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