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ЗБОРНИК О СРБИМА У ХРВАТСКОЈ

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УРЕДНИК ВАСИЛИЈЕ Ђ. КРЕСТИЋ

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ДИНКО ДАВИДОВ
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МИРОСЛАВ ЈОВАНОВИЋ

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BREAKING CLICHÉ ON THE KILLING OF YUGOSLAVIA: A ROLE OF CROATIA¹

VLADISLAV B. SOTIROVIĆ

A HDZ'S ORDER IN CROATIA

The HDZ took power in Croatia after the spring parliamentary and presidential elections in 1990 according to the majoritarian electoral principle. Therefore, the party (established in 1989)² had an absolute majority in Croatia's Parliament (*Sabor*) with Franjo Tudjman as both Croatia's President and the party leader – a fact which, according to the German political analyst, H. Hoppe, allows the HDZ to establish a full scale of the party's dictatorship in Croatia for a decade (till 2000).³ A direct consequence of such electoral results in Croatia, inspired by the electoral results in Bosnia-Herzegovina too, there was election in Serbia of Slobodan Miloshevic and his Socialist Party of Serbia (the SPS) in December 1990 according to the same majoritarian electoral principle as in Croatia. In other words, election of Miloshevic and his SPS in Serbia was in fact Serbia's answer to the electoral results in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina – two Yugoslav republics in which the ultraright political parties won power at the eve of the new civil war. It was clear for majority of the Serbs in ex-Yugoslavia that a neo-Nazi Croat Ustashi regime was established in Croatia followed by a regime of the Islamic fundamentalist Party of Democratic Action (the SDA) of Alija Izetbegovic in Bosnia-Herzegovina. That became the main reason for Serbia's electorate to vote for its own strongman and nationalist who can above all protect their brethren Serbs in other Yugoslav republics (Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) from the new Croat-Muslim-led holocaust as a continuation of the WWII *Magnum*

¹ This article is critical contribution to the book: L. Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2003.

² The HDZ was officially established on June 17th, 1989. Its founder and leader, Dr. Franjo Tudjman, strongly supported by all kinds of the Croat nationalists and neo-Ustashi groups, stated that the party was founded as a consequence of the new political conditions in the world and Yugoslavia and as a counterbalance to the “neo-expansionistic” policy of the regime of Slobodan Miloshevic in Serbia [J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 1, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje “M”, 2003, 114]. However, the basic authentic party's principles were: 1. A creation of the independent Croatia within her historical borders; 2. Croatia has to be a state only of the Croat people; and 3. Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to the ethnic, territorial and economic criteria, has to be a part of Croatia [J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 2, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje “M”, 2003, 419].

³ J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 2, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje “M”, 2003, 418.

Crimen against the Serbs.⁴ For Croatia's Serbs (the "Survivors" of the WWII Ustashi-led holocaust), especially in the Krajina region with the town of Knin as its capital, Franjo Tudjman was nothing else than a new Ante Pavelic (the WWII Nazi Croat leader) and the HDZ as democratically redressed WWII Nazi Croat Ustashi movement.⁵

New HDZ's authorities succeeded very soon to introduce a state-building construction by using a propaganda pattern of creation of a Greater Serbia by Miloshevic's regime which was in absolute odds to the idea of (the western) political liberal democracy and a society of multicultural and multiethnic coexistence. A state-building party's policy was mainly based on traditional Croat clerical right-wing nationalism that can be probably seen as the best in appropriation of the extreme Croat national movement's insignia and rhetoric from the time of the 1941–1945 Independent State of Croatia (the NDH). A German Nazi NSDAP salutation, for instance, was used even in the Parliament in Zagreb by the HDZ's members during the official parliamentary sessions.⁶

In the HDZ's Croatia a new political elite was lesser interested in introducing of the western liberal model of political democracy based on the rights and role of the Parliament in the national political system and free media and speech than in continuation of the WWII policy of the final solution of the "Serb Question" in a Greater post-WWII Croatia with attempts to annex a greater part of Bosnia-Herzegovina as this Yugoslav republic was an integral part of Pavelic's NDH. At such political atmosphere that was based on traditional Croat Roman Catholic clericalism, the ultraright and even Nazi ideologies found very proper ground in the post-Socialist Croatia – a country directly supported by Vatican and the western democracies but primarily by Germany. Among all ex-Socialism East European countries, Croatia was the best example of transition from state Socialism to quasi-democracy by brutal nationalism and ethnic exclusivism.

It is known that creation of a new ideological foundation is essential in the process of making a new state. In the 1990s, the new political leadership of the HDZ in Croatia drew an extreme nationalistic and ultraright political-national ideology, fundamentally based on Serbophobia, in order to get a massive public support for their political goals and projects. An ideological framework of anti-Serbism was the main ground on which the HDZ's Government was building a new independent state of Croatia by creating a new army, security forces, institutional framework and normative order

4 On the holocaust of Serbs (*Magnum Crimen*) in the Independent State of Croatia, 1941–1945, see [V. Dedijer, *The Yugoslav Auschwitz and the Vatican*, Prometheus Books, 1992; B. M. Lituchy (ed.), *Jasenovac and the Holocaust in Yugoslavia: Analyses and Survivor Testimonies*, New York: Jasenovac Research Institute, 2006; V. Novak, *Magnum Crimen: Half a Century of Clericalism in Croatia*, I–II, Jagodina: Gambit, 2011; E. Paris, L. Perkins, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia, 1941–1945: A Record of Racial and Religious Persecutions and Massacres*, Literary Licencing, LLC, 2011].

5 On the WWII Nazi Croatia, see [S. Trifkovic, *Ustaša: Croatian Fascism and European Politics, 1929–1945*, The Lord Byron Foundation, 2011; R. McCormick, *Croatia under Ante Pavelic: America, The Ustaše and Croatian Genocide*, London–New York, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2014].

6 See the USA documentary movie [*Truth is the Victim in Bosnia*, 1992 at <https://youtu.be/fNqHflgmaU>].

of a “democratic and pro-European Croatia”. It is of extreme importance to stress that an establishing of a new normative order was essential in the time of chaotic atmosphere during the process of final collapse of previous state-Socialism system with its own norms and values, Croatia’s declaration of state independence on June 25th, 1991⁷ and the outbreak of the conflict against both the central authorities in Belgrade and Croatia’s Serb population who decisively opposed to live in any kind of a neo-Nazi independent Croatia taking primarily into account their extremely bloody experience from the time of the WWII NDH. Furthermore, an establishing of a new normative order was important to legitimize political actions of the new authorities and to mobilize the ethnic Croats for the state-building process and above all for the final solution of the “Serb Question” in Croatia and parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. At such a way, a new Government succeeded to direct mass actions of the ethnic Croats in regime-approved ways: a war against the Yugoslav army and Croatia’s Serbs in the mid-1991 and finally the ethnic cleansing of majority of Croatia’s Serbs in the mid-1995. The fact was that the ultraright nationalistic ideology provided the biggest part of the content of the new Croatia’s normative order and values, with profound ethno-political consequences.

It has to be explained why exactly ultranationalistic, rather than any form of a liberal democratic, ideas and ideology became predominated in the HDZ’s Croatia in 1991–1995. There are five main reasons for such development of Croatia’s politics and society at that period of time:

1. The Government’s emphasizes on Croatia’s state-building and solving the “Serb Question” in Croatia over all other political concerns helped propel an ultranationalistic ideology, with its exclusive aim on creating a new independent state of a Greater Croatia without the ethnolinguistic Serbs who has to disappear from this state on that or another way.
2. The ultraright and extremely nationalistic (even Nazi) ideology, based primarily on the 19th century self-proclaimed and self-interpreted Croatian “state rights”, had a well-articulated state-building and ethnic cleansing agenda and an acknowledged place in Croatian history.⁸
3. As the old Socialism political establishment and normative order and values became after the spring elections in 1990 delegitimized while new ideologies and political-normative order and values are not firmly established, the traditional conservative-clerical ideology of the so-called Croatian “historical rights” provided the basic and functioning framework for public discourse and regime policy.
4. A popular receptivity to such ultranationalistic ideology and propaganda was possible in the political atmosphere in which the Croats still claimed that the territory of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (which borders were fixed by the Yugoslav Communists led by half Slovene and half Croat, Josip Broz Tito) was legitimate and based on (self-understood) ethnic and historical rights of the Croats.

7 The countries of the European Community recognized independent Croatia (under the German pressure) on January 15th 1992 Croatia became a member of the U.N. on May 22nd 1992 [J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 2, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje “M”, 2003, 414].

8 D. Pavličević, *Povijest Hrvatske. Drugo, izmijenjeno i prošireno izdanje*, Zagreb: Naklada P. I. P. Pavičić, 2000, 245.

5. The HDZ co-opted the message and organization of the extreme right with appropriation of basic symbolic and ideological elements of the WWII Croat ultranationalism in order to create a new legitimizing narrative of the state and national policy that became very quickly and effectively appreciated by the *demos* of ethnic Croat origin as the Croats were traditionally educated to such direction of viewpoint. Nevertheless, as a direct consequence, a development of a real political democracy and a civic society building process in Croatia became ruined and at least postponed.

THE IDEOLOGICAL COMPONENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS OF THE CROAT ULTRARIGHT NATIONALISM

The Croat ultraright nationalism and nationalistic ideologies are mainly based on the 19th century ideology of the Croat “state rights” favored and maintained by the *pravashi* (the rightists). They and their groups and political parties espouse the same ethno-political goals as the leader of the 19th century extremist and racist strand of the same Croat national movement and Croatian Party of Rights (the HSP, established in 1861), Ante Starčević. They appropriated two very essential elements of the HSP national ideology:

1. A creation of a Greater Croatia with Bosnia-Herzegovina and some other South Slavic territories.
2. An extermination of all Orthodox Serbs from a Greater Croatia or their Croatization.⁹

Ante Starčević urged the creation of a Greater Croatia and not recognizing the existence of any other South Slavs except the Croats and Bulgarians.¹⁰ His ideology and the HSP party’s program and narrative were markedly colored by anti-Serb tone. Consequently, both of them became the main ideological framework for the extermination of the Serbs on the territory of the NDH, 1941–1945 and for the ethnic cleansing of the Serbs by Tuđman’s regime in 1995 (the “Flash” and “Storm” military-police operations in May and August). In 1895 an even more radical and nationalistic party was established, headed by Josip Frank and named the Pure Party of Rights (the ČSP) (of the Jewish origin) whose members and ideological followers took active participations in the pogroms against the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina during the WWI.¹¹

9 For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see [B. Ђ. Крстић, *Геноцидом до Велике Хрватске. Дрugo допуњено издање*, Јагодина: Гамбит, 2002].

10 On Croatian national identity, see [A. J. Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream*, Manchester – New York: Manchester University Press, 2003].

11 On the ideology of the Croatian Party of Rights, see [M. Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije*, Zagreb: Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1973; M. S. Spalatin, “The Croatian Nationalism of Ante Starčević, 1845–1871”, *Journal of Croatian Studies*, 15, 1975, 19–146; G. G. Gilbert, “Pravaštvo and the Croatian National Issue”, *East European Quarterly*, 1, 1978, 57–68; M. Gross. A. Szabo, *Prema hrvatskome građanskom društvu: Društveni razvoj u civilnoj Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina 19. stoljeća*, Zagreb: Globus nakladni zavod, 1992, 257–265]. On historical account of the political parties’ ideologies in Croatia, see [J. Хорват, *Странке код Хрваџа и њихова идеологија*, Београд: Политика, 1939]. On pogroms of the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Great War, see [B. Ђоровић, *Црна књига: Паиње Срба Босне и Херцеговине за време Свјетској Рајна 1914–1918*, Удружење ратних

The post-Yugoslav HSP, as the largest and most influential extreme Croat neo-Nazi Ustashi party, was re-established in February 1990 by domestic and émigré Croat neo-Nazi Ustashi fellows. The party soon became relatively popular and had a membership of approximately 100.000 by 1992 when the party received 7 percent of the vote for the national Parliament. However, the HSP became a “favorable opposition party” of the HDZ in the 1990s and as such, in fact, unofficial spokesman of the ruling HDZ. A coalition between these two ultraright nationalistic parties is visible at least from the very fact that the HDZ violated the Croatian electoral law in 1995 in order to permit the HSP to cross the famous 5 percent threshold (5.1). After 1993 when the party leadership was changed, the HSP obviously became a tool of the ruling HDZ on political scene of Croatia. In February 1996 the HSP became cleansed from all party leadership who opposed informal HDZ-HSP coalition and cooperation.

Different factional struggles within the *pravashi* bloc led to the creation of several new ultraright political parties in Croatia like the HSP-1861, the Croatian Pure Party of Rights, the National Democratic League or the Independent Party of Rights. All of them, including those unofficial groups and movements of the Croat extremists, have been trying to propagate their nationalistic messages through almost totally controlled mass-media by the governmental HDZ. In these media efforts, only those groups who had been “approved” by the HDZ (firstly the HSP) succeeded to send their messages to the audience.

One of the most important features of Croatia’s political scene in the early 1990s was the fact that the HDZ itself was gradually passing to the hands of a “Herzegovinian lobby” (like Vladimir Sheks, Vice Vukojevic, Gojko Shushak) within the party leadership which meant that the WWII Ustashi ideology and practice ultimately won against all other options in both the Central Board of the HDZ and the Government of Croatia.¹² However, the crucial point of such HDZ’s course was that in fact the party and state leadership became crucially dependent on and even governed by the Croat (Ustashi) émigré groups with whom the HDZ’s “Herzegovinian lobby” had extremely close relations – especially Gojko Shushak, a Minister of Defense, who was a manager and owner of several firms in Canada before returning to Croatia in 1990 to become a member of the Central Board of the HDZ. Franjo Tudjman favored Gojko Shushak exactly for the reason that he was a key figure in maintaining contacts with the Croat diaspora which was giving substantial financial support for the HDZ’s policy.

This “Herzegovinian lobby” succeeded to strengthen its own position within the HDZ primarily by using regional identity as a basis for establishing necessary networks of power, influence, and favors (for instance, a Herzegovinian extremist Ivic Pashalic). The HDZ’s “Herzegovinians” are

добровољаца, 1996]. On nationalistic ideologies and violence, see [S. Malešević, *Nation-States and Nationalisms*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013].

12 The Herzegovinians are traditionally considered as the most belligerent and confrontational mental group within the territory of ex-Yugoslavia. On mental and cultural characteristics of the Yugoslavs, see [B. Дворниковић, *Карактерологија Југословена*, Београд: Просвета, 2000].

usually seen as the cardinal factor which firmed Tudjman as a dictatorial strongman in the party and the state. Tudjman's sympathy and support to the "Herzegovinian" extremists is for sure unquestionable, especially when it comes to authoritarianism on the domestic front and dealing with Croatia's Serbs. He became firstly convinced of his own personal and his party's "historic mission" to bring state independence for (a Greater) Croatia and finally to solve the "Serb Question" within her borders and in parts of a "Croat" Bosnia-Herzegovina. He shared the same standpoint of the traditional Croat nationalists that all aspects of the transition from state socialism to (quasi)liberal democracy and market economy have to be subordinated to the state-building process. Nonetheless, Tudjman was smart enough to project a positive "democratic" image abroad, and this has prevented many of foreign observers and politicians from getting the right picture of his ultraright views and politics especially in dealing with Croatia's Serbs.

THE BASIC CORNERSTONES OF THE CROAT ULTRARIGHT NATIONALISTIC IDEOLOGY

From the point of ideology of the extreme Croat nationalism, the cardinal goal of ultraright nationalistic parties, groups, ideologists and politicians was to create an independent and as much as a Greater, and finally "Serben-frei" Croatia, for the first time since 1102. In the 1990s it was exactly ultraright nationalistic ideology that provided the main background for creation of a new normative order and values in the HDZ's Croatia. This ideology had five cardinal cornerstones which gave the framework for building a new institutional order, political values and means to achieve ultimate ethno-political goals:

1. Legitimization of the Nazi Ustashi NDH from the WWII.
2. Establishing strong authoritarian governmental system in the state and society for the sake to get state independence by the "international community" by provoking a war against the local Serbs.
3. Territorial annexation of all "historical and ethnic" territories of Croatia and the Croats.
4. Solving the "Serbian Question" within a Greater Croatia by military means.
5. Protecting the ideological-clerical conservative stands against the western liberal views.

Legitimization of the Nazi Ustashi NDH from the WWII

For all Croat ultranationalists the crucial political reference in regard with the state-building process is the 1941–1945 NDH. They finally succeeded with a great support by Tudjman and his HDZ to rehabilitate the NDH and even to recognize its historical contribution to the Croat state-building efforts. It was done chiefly by a brutal falsification of historical facts and self-interpretation of historical events and the role and deeds of the Croat Ustashi personalities. For the HDZ's Croatia there were at least four reasons for praising the Ustashi WWII state:

- a. The NDH gave a political-historical foundation for the post-Yugoslav Croatia's statehood.
- b. It annexed majority of Croat claimed South-East European territories and as such became a kind of historical realization of a Greater Croatia projected by Pavao Ritter Vitezovic in 1700.¹³
- c. The Ustashi regime showed a way of solving the "Serb Question" and therefore became a blueprint for the coming generations of the Croat "patriots" who had to deal with the Serbs.
- d. The existence of the NDH provided a necessary link of a self-imagined "proof" of the so-called "Thousand-year-old" legal continuity of the Croatian *de facto* statehood.

All political parties and organizations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina of the "Croatian rights" profiles openly propagated their direct connections with the NDH and its führer (poglavnik) Ante Pavelic who himself was a member of the "Croatian rights" party.¹⁴ It is worth noticing that Franjo Tudjman was fighting in the Ustashi uniform for several months during the WWII – a fact which gave a huge credibility to him in the eyes of any Croat extremist despite of Tudjman's Communist past. It is obvious that the ultimate ethno-political goals of both the pre- and WWII Ustashi movement post-Yugoslav "Croat rights" fellows are absolutely identical including the idea how to solve the "Serb Question" in a Greater Croatia. It was mostly the case with the re-established HSP in 1990 as originally this party defined its program exclusively in relation to the NDH and the WWII Ustashi movement using all kinds of the NDH symbols and iconography. Nevertheless, an original 1990 HSP's leader, Dobroslav Paraga, never accepted any fascist or Nazi face of the NDH even claiming that this state was anti-fascist.¹⁵ For all Croat extremists, including Tudjman himself, the NDH represented democratic wishes of overwhelming majority of the ethnic Croats for their own independent state (from Yugoslavia as a "Greater Serbia") and was legitimate continuation of the independent Kingdom of Croatia which became *de facto* incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary in 1102. Furthermore, all of them negate any engagement of the NDH's regime in any systematic and organized persecutions or genocide committed on the racial, confessionnal or ethnic grounds. Moreover, the HSP insists that the Ustashi terror against the Serbs in 1941–1945 was provoked by the Serbs themselves, i.e. by the Partisan uprising in July 1941 against the legitimate and internationally recognized NDH,¹⁶ neglecting the fact that the Ustashi genocide against the Serbs started three months before the outbreak of the Serb-(Partisan and non-Partisan) revolt in the NDH. The HSP's political cynicism went to such absurd claims that many of these massacred Serb civilians in fact have been killed by the

13 P. R. Vitezović, *Croatia rediviva: Regnante Leopoldo Magno Caesare*, Zagreb, 1700.

14 On Pavelic's biography, see [B. J. Fischer (ed.), *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd, 2006, 228–271].

15 For instance, see, interview with Paraga, *Danas*, Zagreb, 1991-03-5.

16 The NDH was recognized by Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Japan, Spain, National China, Finland, Denmark and Manchuria. It existed from April 10th, 1941 to May 15th, 1945 [S. Srkulj, J. Lučić, *Hrvatska Povijest u dvadeset pet karata*. Prošireno i dopunjeno izdanje, Zagreb: Hrvatski informativni centar, 1996, 105].

Serb-Chetniks or Partisans dressed in the Ustashi uniforms. Nevertheless, a common issue among all Croat extremists regarding the “Serb Question” is the WWII practice of creation of an Autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church as a bridge toward the final Catholicization and Croatization of Croatia’s Serbs.

The excuse of the Ustashi regime violence in the NDH usually is followed by the claim that the Nazi-Fascist feature and iconography of the NDH were forced upon the Ustashi authorities by Germany and Italy, that the Ustashi Government did as much as possible to protect the Jews within the NDH, and finally, and what is of the crucial importance, that the real number of murdered NDH’s Serbs is very much overestimated by the pro-Serb Yugoslav authorities after the WWII. For instance, instead of 700.000 killed people in the death camp of Jasenovac (“Yugoslav Auschwitz”, of whom 500.000 were the Serbs) today official Croatia recognizes only 86.000. In other words, Jasenovac is a great Serbian falsification and political propaganda: a myth projected by the supporters of an idea of a Greater Serbia.¹⁷ For the Croat extremists, among the victims of Jasenovac the largest number have been the ethnic Croats but not the ethnic Serbs.¹⁸ The Croat rightists as apologists for the Ustashi movement and their Nazi racist regime claim that the NDH is falsely represented for pure political reasons and therefore the picture of the NDH has to be repainted. However, such repainting or rewriting of the NDH’s history is in a pure odd to historical sources and scientific account of non-partisan historiography. Finally, Dr. Franjo Tuđman himself, as a professional historian, in his most important book (*Wastelands of Historical Reality*) sought to minimize the crimes of the Ustashi regime in the WWII against both the Serbs and the Jews.¹⁹

A rehabilitation of the legacy of the NDH and Ustashi ideology with the NDH’s iconography was, however, only a formal problem for Franjo Tuđman and his HDZ who have been officially ambivalent toward it. Tuđman knew very well that any close association with the NDH and Ustashi ideology and iconography will cause many problems for Croatia’s image abroad especially among the Jewish communities and their political lobbies. However, on the other hand, for Tuđman the NDH was giving the state-building example as Croatia for the centuries did not have any experience of a real and internationally recognized statehood. For that reason, for the HDZ’s ideologists the NDH became a crucial element for completing the main party’s task – to unify all Croats within the umbrella of the HDZ. In addition, the NDH was giving a link to Vatican as the main supporter of both the Ustashi and the HDZ regimes and ideology.²⁰ Subsequently, the HDZ’s authorities did

17 On Tuđman’s Croatia’s dealing with the population losses in the NDH and the rest of Yugoslavia, see [V. Žerjavić, *Population Losses in Yugoslavia 1941–1945*, Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1997]. Compare with [C. Аврамов, *Геноцид у Југославији у светлостии међународној права*, Београд, 1992].

18 See, for instance, Election Declaration of the Croatian Party of Rights in 1992 [*Izborna deklaracija Hrvatske stranke prava*, Zagreb, 1992, 3].

19 F. Tuđman, *Bespuća povijesne zbiljosti*, Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1989.

20 On direct links between the NDH and Vatican, see [*Tajni dokumenti o odnosima između Vatikana i ustaške NDH*, Zagreb, 1948; V. Dedijer, *Vatikan i Jasenovac. Dokumenti*, Beograd, 1987; D. Živojinović, D. Lučić, *Varvarstvo u ime Hristovo. Prilozi za Magnum Crimen*, Beograd,

not and do not openly endorse the Ustashi movement and the NDH, as it is the case with the “Croat rightists”, but on the other hand both Tudjman and his HDZ avoided any clear denunciation of the NDH’ Nazi, totalitarian, genocidal and above all Serbocidal aspects. Moreover, the HDZ’s Croatia adopted all important symbolic and iconographic aspects of the WWII NDH (like *kuna* currency, state insignias, etc.) and dedicated streets, squares and monuments in Croatia to the Ustashi WWII officials. Tudjman himself as a President of Croatia nominated, for instance, two ex-WWII Ustashi officials to high state posts: Ivo Rojnic – Ustashi commander in Dubrovnik who became Croatia’s ambassador in Argentina and Vinko Nikolic – an official in the Ministry of Education of the NDH who got a seat in the Parliament. Alongside the rehabilitation of the Nazi NDH, in Tudjman’s Croatia there came to rehabilitation of the WWII Croatian Roman Catholic Church with its head Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac who directly collaborated with the Ustashi regime and headed the practice of Catholicization of the Orthodox Serbs.²¹

A linguistic nationalism or purification of the official standardized Croat language in the public usage, but mainly from the Serb language based lexemes, was on the very agenda of the Croatization of Croatia by Tudjman’s regime.²² However, a lexical purification of the Croatian language in Tudjman’s Croatia was done basically according to the NDH’s pattern. One of the first steps in the process of Croatization and purification of the Croat language by the new HDZ’s authorities was to make a clear difference between the Croat and Serb languages from lexical, orthographic and grammatical points of view. It was done by a set of scientific editions by the linguists and philologists who, at the same time, have been trying to present and a “proper” history of the Croat language with the cardinal political goal to show that the Croat and the Serb always have been two different ethno-national languages and what is of the most importance that the Shtokavian dialect was always also a Croat national language but not only the Serb.²³ As a final ethno-political consequence of the HDZ’s policy of linguistic nationalism was that the Serb ethnic name was expelled from the official name of the standardized language

1988; M. Bulajić, *Misija Vatikana u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*, I–II, Beograd, 1992; M. A. Ривели, *Бої је с нама: Црква Пија XII саучесника нацифашизма*, Никшић: Јасен, 2003; Д. Р. Живојиновић, *Вајшикан, Католичка црква и југословенска власи 1941–1958*, Београд: Просвета–Терсит, 1994, 11–127].

21 On Stepinac’s case, see [A. Benigar, *Alojzije Stepinac hrvatski kardinal*, Rim, 1974; S. Alexander, *The Triple Myth: A Life of Archbishop Stepinac*, New York, 1987; M. A. Ривели, *Надбискуп јеноцида: Монсињор Сјепинац, Вајшикан и усташка диктатура у Хрватској 1941–1945*, Никшић–Јасен, 1999].

22 A linguistic nationalism was a common issue in all former East European countries after 1990 as the language was and still is understood as the main identifier of the (ethno)nation. On the linguistic nationalism in ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s, see [S. Barbour, C. Carmichael (eds.), *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 221–239].

23 On this issue, as examples, see [V. Brodnjak, *Razlikovni rječnik srpskog i hrvatskog jezika*, Zagreb, 1991; M. Moguš, *Povijest hrvatskoga književnoga jezika*, Zagreb: Globus nakladni zavod, 1993; M. Kačić, *Hrvatski i srpski: Zablude i krivotvorine*; Zagreb: Zavod za lingvistiku Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1995; M. Lončarić, *Hrvatski jezik*, Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski–Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 1998]. Compare with [П. Милосављевић, *Срби и њихов језик. Хрестомајица*, Приштина: Народна и универзитетска библиотека, 1997].

and its orthography in Croatia likewise everything what was in connection with the Serbs in regard to the *Croat language*.²⁴

As the best mean to hide its *de facto* support for the Nazi Ustashi ideology and the WWII NDH's legacy, Tadjman's regime officially and rhetorically supported the "anti-fascist" Josip Broz Tito's Partisans from the WWII²⁵ with the manifestation of political option that the post-Yugoslav Croatia is building her own statehood on the "anti-fascist" People's/Socialist Republic of Croatia legitimacy after 1945. However, at the same time, the HDZ created a clear atmosphere in Croatia in which the victims of the Ustashi terror (primarily the Serbs) are regarded as the national enemies. For the matter of illustration, up to January 1996 around 3.000 "Partisan" monuments were destroyed or removed in Croatia.²⁶ Tadjman launched an initiative to transform a death camp of Jasenovac's memorial center (on the left bank of Sava River that is on Croatia's side) from the "victims of fascism" to the "victims of the civil war" – an initiative that was in fact just camouflaged association with the NDH which pleased all Croat extremists. The Croat security forces even before the beginning of the civil war in Croatia in 1991 heavily structurally damaged the museum building of Jasenovac when a bigger part of documentation and torture evidence simply disappeared but the monument itself was not destroyed or damaged for the very reason as the monument is in fact composed by four Ustashi "U" letter-symbols.

Franjo Tadjman, a Ph.D. in history, ran in conflict with the Yugoslav Communist authorities in the mid-1960s when he started to refute the official number of murdered ethnic Serbs in Jasenovac as too high, accusing at the same time the Yugoslav Communists for deliberately falsifying the truth on Jasenovac. It cost him dismissal from the post of the head of the Institute for the History of the Workers Movement in Croatia (in Zagreb) but this action marked the beginning of the process of Tadjman's transformation from a Partisan General to the Croat nationalist and extremist. Nonetheless,

24 M. Okuka, *O osamostaljivanju hrvatskog književnog jezika*, A. Кюннапа, В. Лефельдта, С. Н. Кузнецова (ред.), *Микројазыки, јазыки, интерјазыки. Сборник в честь ординарногo професора Александра Дмитриевича Дуличенко*, Тарту, 2006, 231. On the Serbian point on the Croat, Serb and Bosnian languages, see [B. Tošović, A. Wonisch, (eds.), *Die serbische Sichtweise des Verhältnisses zwischen dem Serbischen, Kroatischen und Bosniakischen*, I/4, Novi Sad: Institut für Slawistik der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz–Beogradska knjiga, 2012].

25 For the matter of historical accuracy, the Partisans of Josip Broz Tito (half Slovene and half Croat) during the WWII have not been fighting against the Germans, Italians and Ustashi forces if they are not attacked by them. Moreover, during the whole war the Partisans collaborated primarily with the NDH regime and its armed forces but with the Germans as well. Therefore, the "anti-fascist" aspect of Tito's Partisans and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (the KPJ) is false and invented by the Yugoslav Communists themselves. On this issue, see [М. Самарџић, *Сарадња партизана са Немцима, усташама и Албанцима*, Крагујевац: Погледи, 2006; В. Б. Сотировић, *Кривојворине о Јосипу Броз Титиу, Брозовим партизанима и Равнојорском покрећу, 1941. i.–1945. i.*, Вилнус: Југославологија – Независни истраживачки центар за југословенске студије, 2014]. About Josip Broz Tito, see [В. Адамовић, *Три диктаторска: Стаљин, Хитлер, Тито. Психопатолошка паралела*, Београд: Информатика, 2008, 445–610; П. Симић, З. Деспот, *Тито: Ситројо поверљиво. Архивски документи*, Београд–Службени гласник, 2010; П. Симић, *Тито: Феномен 20. века*. Треће допуњено издање, Београд: Службени гласник, 2011; J. Pirjevec, *Tito in tovariši*, Ljubljana: Sankarjeva založba, 2011; V. Dinić, *Tito (ni)je Tito. Konačna istina*, Beograd: Novmark doo, 2013].

26 *Vreme*, Beograd, 1996-01-15.

his cosmetic political moves like removing a prominent Ustashi extremist Tomislav Merchep from the HDZ's Executive Committee at the Third General Convention of the HDZ in October 1995, could not hide the HDZ's infatuation with the Ustashi iconography, ideology, legacy and ethno-political goals.

Tudjman's and HDZ's preoccupation with Croatia's state-building and solving the "Serb Question" rather than establishing liberal-democratic political system and institutions, meant that the NDH's legacy continued to play very important role in the HDZ's strategy and policy of creation of the new normative order and values. In the other words, the political-ideological mainstream of the HDZ's Croatia was and is grounded on appropriation of the NDH's legacy.

Today, as a result of the HDZ's policy of extreme ethno-confessional nationalism, Croatia has been, since mid-1995, "more ethnically homogeneous than ever was in the historic past".²⁷ The Serb population on the present-day territory of Croatia fell from 24 percent in 1940 to 12 percent in 1990 and 4 percent in 1996 with the practice of its everyday assimilation (Croatization) and emigration from Croatia.

Authoritarian militarization of the ethnic Croats

The Croat ultranationalists (i.e., the followers of the Ustashi movement) called in the 1990s for the full scale of Croatia's militarization in order to achieve their chauvinistic and racist political goals of the Croat-based ethnically pure independent (a Greater) Croatia. In their opinion, a full or complete political independence of the ethnically pure Croatia within the borders of the Socialist Republic of (a Greater) Croatia could be reached only by the open war against Croatia's Serbs and the Yugoslav authorities, but not negotiating with them. In this respect, the leader of the most ultranationalistic political party in Croatia – the HSP, Ante Djapic, was clear in his statements to abandon the political activity if a single part of the territory of Croatia is going to be lost by the negotiations with the Serbs.²⁸ The WWII Ustashi movement followers openly advocated in the 1990s a full scale of the war against "the Serb aggressors" for the sake of gaining Croatia's independence and cleaning Croatia from the ethnic Serbs. That was done at least for two crucial reasons:

1. They believe that struggling for the Croat nation's ethno-political goals was a legitimate framework of both beating the Serb nationalism and fulfilling the Croat historical task of creating a Greater Roman Catholic Croatia without the Orthodox infidels.
2. They sponsored the attitude that the Serbs cannot be trusted as a nation to negotiate with them about the peaceful agreement on the disputed issues with the Croatia's Government and therefore the war was the only

27 S. Barbour, C. Carmichael (eds.), *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 228.

28 Interview with Ante Djapic (July 13th, 1994), J. A. Irvine, "Ultranationalist Ideology and State-Building in Croatia, 1990–1996", *Problems of Post-Communism*, July/August 1997, pp. 36, 42; „Glas Slavonije”, Osijek, 1995-08-18.

way to pacify the Serbs from Croatia – according to the pattern of the pacification (i.e., the ethnic cleansing) of the Palestinians in Israel.²⁹

Henceforth, the “Israelization” of a Greater Croatia became the ultimate goal of the Croat ultranationalists in their policy to Croatia’s Serbs. In order to achieve their “Israelization” political goals, the Ustashi followers in the HDZ’s governed Croatia followed exactly the militarization pattern of the ethnic Croat society in the WWII NDH. Therefore, the most ultranationalistic Ustashi political party in the 1990s Croatia – the HSP, established its own ruthless paramilitary party’s militia in 1991 under the name of the Croat Defense Forces (the HOS) with using all kinds of the WWII Ustashi regime insignia followed by several similar militia detachments by the other Croat ultranationalistic organizations. During the 1990s the Croatian state army (the HV) was under direct influence and control by the most extremist wing of the ruling HDZ that successfully cooperated with the HOS and the other Croat paramilitaries in the West Herzegovina and the North and Central Bosnia in the military actions of ethnic cleansing of the Orthodox Serbs and the Muslim Bosniaks.³⁰

The eminent militarization of the ethnic Croat society in the 1990s was in direct coordination with the fundamental task of all Croatia’s Croat ultranationalists that all other rights and duties of the society have to be put in the service of the state interests. As all ultranationalistic segments of the ethnic Croat society in Croatia fought for an independent and pure ethnic Croatia, the ultimate ethno-political goal of them was to mobilize all ethnic Croats for the execution of the final solution of the “Serb Question” in a Greater Tito-Tudjman’s Croatia. Therefore, the authoritarian political system and government based on the absolute HDZ’s majority in the Parliament were necessary in order to achieve this goal. As an example, the experience of the Latin American dictatorships in the 1970s and the 1980s of a centralized political system, strong military-police forces, oppressed freedom of the mass-media, and above all a silent opposition was activated. A parliamentary multi-party democracy became just a façade of a classical Latin American dictatorship³¹, as a western parliamentary democracy³² was understood as a harmful experiment for the realization of the Croat ethno-political goals primarily against the Serbs.

29 Interview with Ante Djapic (July 13th, 1994), J. A. Irvine, “Ultrnationalist Ideology and State-Building in Croatia, 1990–1996”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, July/August 1997, pp. 36, 42. On the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Israeli Jewish authorities, see: I. Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2011.

30 For instance, in the case of the village of Ahmici in the Lashva Valley (the Vitez municipality) on April 16th, 1993 when around 120 Bosniaks were massacred by the forces of the Croat Defense Council (Ch. R. Shrader, *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia: A Military History, 1992–1994*, College Station, Tex., 2003, 92–95).

31 On the Latin American dictatorships, see: S. Mainwaring, A. Pérez-Liñán, *Democracies and Dictatorships in Latin America: Emergence, Survival, and Fall*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; J. Dávila, *Dictatorship in South America*, Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2013; J. A. Galván, *Latin American Dictators of the 20th century: The Lives and Regimes of 15 Rulers*, Jefferson, NC–London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013.

32 On democracy, see: B. Crick, *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2002; Ch. Tilly, *Democracy*, Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007; J. B. Pilet, W. P. Cross (eds.), *The Selection of Political Party Leaders in Contemporary Parliamentary Democracies: A Comparative Study*, New York: Routledge, 2014.

The alternative to the parliamentary democracy was only a one-party's dictatorship that could save Croat national interests from the destructive nature of the parliamentarianism. Subsequently in Croatia, with strong cult of leadership of President Dr. Franjo Tudjman, who in the eyes of the right-wing political structures was seen as a political reincarnation of the WWII NDH's fuhrer Ante Pavelic, a HDZ's one-party political system was established.³³ Tudjman, as an inviolable dictator of Croatia, was even proclaimed by some of the HDZ's members and other right-wing followers as the "Father of the Homeland" like by Hrvoje Šošić who was the leader of the Croat Party (the HS) and a MP.³⁴ In essence, the Croat extremists only declaratively supported liberal democratic institutions while in practice they rejected them as the political framework within which the national goals are going to be achieved. However, a formal support of the liberal democracy and its political institutions were of the very practical nature to present a newly independent Croatia as a western-type democratic political system in contrast to Milošević's Serbia as an expression of the Balkan/Oriental political autocracy and cultural barbarism. Hence, the HDZ's Croatia pretended to present herself as a last bulwark of the European civilization and values in the South-East Europe. Nevertheless, in practice, the HDZ functioned in all ways that undermined a real democracy even to a greater extent than Milošević's regime in Serbia at the same time. The extremist wing within the HDZ, including Tudjman himself, openly used all kind of mechanisms of political oppression against the opposition that was proclaimed as the enemy of the Croat nation and Croatia and collaborators with the „Serbo-Chetnik aggressors“. As in many cases of personal dictatorship, Tudjman as well saw himself as a personalization of the state and state institutions. In other words, he attempted to equate his own personality with the survival of Croatia. As the opposition leaders and party's members have been constantly under the physical and psychological intimidation as the "betrayers" of Croatia a very inhospitable political atmosphere was created for any sincere democratic talks and exchange of the views. Surely, Tudjman's regime in Croatia was much more effective in silencing its own opposition than Milošević's regime in Serbia. It is visible at least from the fact that in Tudjman's Croatia there was no single mass-meeting of the opposition against the regime differently to Serbia under Milošević's strong hands. The latter finally lost power exactly after the mass-protests in Belgrade on October 5th, 2000 (the first "Colored Revolution" in Europe).

Tudjman's authoritarian dictatorship was especially hostile towards the opposition press that was considered as a fifth column in Croatia. The opposition journalists were accused for irresponsible (miss)usage of their freedom of expression. As a matter of fighting against the opposition press, a special (illegal) taxation of independent weeklies was introduced, but primarily of the most anti-regime's newspaper – the *Feral tribune* from Split.³⁵

33 It is known that Tudjman did not oppose often practice of the Nazi salutation to him as it was, for instance, in 1995 on the football stadium in Split (Poljud) [J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 2, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje "M", 2003, 418].

34 According to *Tanjug*, 1995-05-21.

35 The *Feral tribune* was the most important Croatia's newspaper that was writing about the terrible war crimes committed by the regular Croatian police forces against the Serb civilians

During the election campaigns, the opposition parties were denied equal and full access to the state-controlled press and TV, likewise in Serbia, and therefore violating one of the fundamental elements and conditions of the parliamentary democracy. Hence, the electoral results theoretically were not fair which does not mean that the majority of the ethnic Croats from Croatia would not vote for the HDZ in the case of fair electoral campaign. Similarly to all totalitarian regimes, the HDZ's controlled Parliament passed a special law (in the spring 1996) for "defamation" against the state officials. However, such or similar law did not exist in Miloshević's Serbia. Tudjman's personal efforts to make his own political (authoritarian) position in Croatia stronger at any cost of liberal democratic institutions are obvious and very similar to his counterpart in Serbia in the 1990s with one difference: Tudjman was more successful in destroying liberal democracy in Croatia in comparison to Miloshević's efforts to do the same in Serbia.

For the HDZ's political leadership, "without Franjo Tudjman there would be no HDZ and without the HDZ there would be no Croatia".³⁶ It is clear that Tudjman's party attempted to equate itself with the creation and survival of the post-Yugoslav Croatia while Tudjman himself attempted to personalize the institution of the presidency. Any opposition to himself or his political party was seen as the opposition to Croatia as the state and the Croats as the nation which is probably mostly visible from the fact that Tudjman as a President of Croatia refused to ratify electoral results for the Zagreb municipality's mayor in 1995 as the opposition leader won under the excuse that Croatia's capital cannot be in the hands of the enemies of Croatia.³⁷

Territorial imperialism of the HDZ's Croatia

The fact was that all ultranationalistic parties and organizations in the 1990s struggled for creation of a Greater Croatia according to the principle of the ethnographic, historical and even natural rights. In all of those concepts, Bosnia-Herzegovina was seen as an integral part of the united Croatia. There were, in principle, two concepts of the united Croatia:

1. A minimal concept of Croatia within the borders of the *Banovina Hrvatska* as it was in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1939–1941 (when a Greater Croatia as a separate and autonomous administrative territory became a state within a state).³⁸

during the bloody destruction of Yugoslavia. For instance, it published an interview with Miro Bajramovic, who was a member of the First Zagreb police detachment for the special tasks (the "Autumn Rains" detachment) in the autumn 1991. Bajramovic recognized that he personally killed at that time 72 persons including 9 women in the region around the town of Pakrac in Slavonia [*Feral tribjun*, Split, 1997-09-01]. About the Croat crimes against the Serbs Croatia's newspaper *Arkzin* was also writing which, for instance, published in July 1994 a list of 75 killed Serbs from the town of Gospić in the Krajina region [S. Kovačević, P. Dajić, *Hronologija jugoslovenske krize 1994*, Beograd: Institut za evropske studije, 1995, 127].

³⁶ *Novi list*, 1995-10-15.

³⁷ P. Арсенић, „Остварени сви циљеви“, *Политика*, Београд, 1995-12, 7.

³⁸ The *Banovina Hrvatska* had a territory of 65.456 square km. with 4.024.601 inhabitants according to the 1931 census. It was composed by 70.1 percent of the Croats, 19.1 percent of

2. A maximal concept of Croatia within the borders of the WWII NDH in 1941–1945 that included all Bosnia-Herzegovina and parts of Serbia inhabited by 6.663.157 citizens of whom 1/3 were the Orthodox Serbs.³⁹

The cardinal point of the question of Croatia's state borders involves Bosnia-Herzegovina as indivisible part of any kind of the "natural Croatia". All existed differences between the Croats and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims were considered as artificial and created by the Yugoslav authorities. The Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina were declared as the "purest Croats" according to the WWII Ustashi ideological pattern. In general, for the Croat politicians, academicians and public workers, the Drina River was a demarcation line between the civilization and the barbarism, or between Europe and the Orient. The Serbs were considered as the proponents of the Byzantine-Ottoman Oriental anti-European culture, while the Croats and Slovenes were saw as the last bulwark of the European civilization in front of the Oriental primitivism. For all Croat nationalists, the Drina River was and is the border that the Serbs must not be allowed to cross as well as the border of the "natural Croatia". In some conceptions of the ultraterritorial enlargement of Croatia, the territory of Serbia had to be restricted to the area around Belgrade only.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were considered as the same land, people and blood of the same nation. Therefore, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina had to be united into a single national state of the ethnic Croats. Croatia's unification with Bosnia-Herzegovina was explained by ethnic, historical economic and even civilizational reasons as the historic mission of the Croat nation was seen to defend Europe from the Oriental despotism, i.e. from Serbia and the Serbs.

It is known and proved that Tudjman had a set of secret negotiations with Miloshevic to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina between Serbia and Croatia. Hence, the Dayton Accords on November 21st, 1995 on the final division of Bosnia-Herzegovina according to the mathematical formula of 51/49 percent can be seen as a practical implementation of their secret agreement sponsored by the U.S. administration of Bill Clinton.⁴¹ A creation of an ethnically pure Croat portion of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a part of this Tudjman-Miloshevic's deal and in order to achieve this goal the Croats practiced in 1993–1994 the policy of ethnic cleansing of the West Herzegovina and a part of the

the Serbs, 3.6 percent of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims (today the Bosniaks) and 7.2 percent of the others (mainly the Germans and the Hungarians). It consisted the territories of Croatia proper, Slavonia, the West Srem, Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, the West Herzegovina, the parts of the Central Bosnia and the parts of the North Bosnia [S. Srkulj, J. Lučić, *Hrvatska Povijest u dvadeset pet karata*. Prošireno i dopunjeno izdanje, Zagreb: Hrvatski informativni centar, 1996, 101–103]. The *Banovina Hrvatska* was created under the British diplomatic pressure to solve the "Croat Question" in Yugoslavia before the German aggression. The final political agreement on the creation of *Banovina Hrvatska* and her borders was reached by two Yugoslav politicians – one Croat (Vlatko Machek, a leader of the Croat opposition) and one Gypsy/Roma (Dragiša Cvetković, a Yugoslav Prime Minister). The ethnic Serb politicians did not participate in the negotiations on the agreement and strongly opposed it.

39 In the eyes of some Croat ultranationalists, even the Bay of Kotor in Montenegro as well Bachka and Sanjak from Serbia were seen as the parts of the ethnohistorical Croatia.

40 *Profil*, 1992-08-03.

41 On the Dayton Accords, see: D. Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.

Central Bosnia within the territory of the Croat-proclaimed Herzeg-Bosnia with the capital in Mostar on the Neretva River.⁴² The Croat-Muslim civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was halted in the spring of 1994 just due to the U.S. ultimatum to Zagreb: in order to liquidate the Republic of Serb Krajina and to reintegrate it into Croatia the Croats had to unite their military forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina against the Serbs. Therefore, a creation of the Croat-Muslim federation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was agreed, that was advocated by Washington (the Washington Framework Agreement). In practice, even today, the Croat controlled part of Bosnia-Herzegovina is not under a virtual administration by the central authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo similar to the case of the Republic of Srpska. Nevertheless, Tudjman's policy of the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina with the Serbs was opposed by all kinds of the Ustashi groups either in Croatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina as for them the whole territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina was indivisible part of a Greater Croatia as a national state of all and only ethnic Croats including the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims who were ideologically considered as the ethnohistorical Croats as well. The Ustashi organizations and parties advocated a common Croat-Muslim combat against the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina but only after the creation of ethnically pure Croat Herzeg-Bosnia. In principle, they opposed the Dayton Accords as this agreement gave Serbia a real possibility to cross the Drina River.

The "Serb Question" and its final solution

Undoubtedly, the question of the Serb existence on the "ethnohistorical" lands of the Croat nation was at least during the last hundred years a very fundamental element of any ultraright Croat ideology, party, organization or movement, but above all of the Ustashi, as the Orthodox Serb were seen and declared as the most dangerous "natural enemy" to both Croatia and the Croat people. The Anti-Serbism became, however, the main cornerstone of making the Croat national unity and gathering all Croats around a common focus of ethno-political coherence.⁴³ The Serbs were accused for the territorial expansionism, occupation of the Croat land and its exploitation at the time of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918–1929), the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1941) and the Socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991) as all of these three multiethnic states were proclaimed as a Greater Serbia. The Serbs and Serbia were seen as the main cause of all Croatia's misfortunes and above all as the only obstacle for Croatia's independence.⁴⁴ The Croatia's

42 The "Croat Community of Herzeg-Bosnia" (the HZHB) was proclaimed on July 3rd, 1992 that is three months after the outbreak of the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Herzeg-Bosnia became in fact a "South Croatia" and just formally part of Bosnia-Herzegovina [J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 1, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje "M", 2003, 368–369]. However, the HZHB was on August 28th, 1993 proclaimed as the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia (the HRBH) with political aim to be united with the Republic of Croatia.

43 The same ethno-political role of national coherence played anti-Semitism in the ideology of the Nazi Germany. In the Croat case, the anti-Semitism was not important factor in the ultranationalist ideology, at least up to the WWII.

44 For instance, see: J. Jareb, *Pola stoljeća hrvatske politike: Povodom Mačekove autobiografije*, Zagreb: Institut za suvremenu povijest, 1995, V–X.

Government together with other right-wing nationalistic structures tried from the very beginning of the preparations for the proclamation of the new independence of Croatia in 1991 (the second Independent State of Croatia) formally, but unsuccessfully, to convince the Serbs and Serbia that there was no real “Serb Question” in Croatia and that the Serbs had nothing to fear in independent and democratic post-Yugoslav Croatia. However, for the majority of Serbs from both sides of the Drina River it was completely clear that a new independent Croatia will be just a replica of the WWII Nazi-Ustashi Independent State of Croatia in regard to the “Serb Question” just covered by declarative and formal democracy. It was visible for them either from the practical rehabilitation of the NDH in Tudjman’s Croatia and the harsh anti-Serb rhetoric by the officials or from the very fact that no political party or official in Croatia wanted to discuss with the Serbs about their cultural and/or political autonomy.

A policy of opposing and hating the Serbs in the HDZ’s Croatia had political, confessional and moral connotation. To fight “natural enemies” was all the time one of the fundamental requirements of any nationalistic ideology. Hence, the national education system had to be rearranged on this way to teach the nation who, and why, is the national enemy and how the nation has to struggle against the enemy. In the case of Tudjman’s Croatia, the main national enemy were proclaimed to be the Serbs. Subsequently, the Serb traces in Croatia had to be erased by different techniques including the ban of Cyrillic alphabet or cleansing Croatia’s libraries from the Serb authors. Nevertheless, a public vilification of the Serbs as a nation in Croatia had its own racial dimension as it was exactly during the existence of the WWII NDH. Probably the most racist MP from the HDZ – Shime Djodan, made a very abusing remark on the Serb physiognomy during his speech in the Parliament. Usually, the Serbs were considered as a racially inferior having the “Byzantine” or/and “Turkish” blood as it was noticed, for instance in 1995, by the HDZ’s member Anton Vrdoljak, head of Croatia’s Radio Television (the HRT).⁴⁵ The political consequences of a Croat nationalistic picturing of the Serbs as the root of all evil in Croatia lead the nationalists to require the maximal restriction of political rights of the Serbs in Croatia including the right to citizenship and therefore to vote. Such calling for political discrimination on the ethnic basis was, however, formally not presented in the official party’s statutes in which there was a proclamation of no discrimination on the basis on the national identity, as it was the case, for instance, with the HSP.⁴⁶ The leader of this party, Ante Djapic was quite clear about the position of the Serbs in the post-Yugoslav Croatia: “[the Serbs should] either bow down or get out of the way”.⁴⁷ Subsequently, all Croat nationalists firmly opposed any kind of political negotiations with Croatia’s (Krajina) Serbs, rejected their representation in the Parliament and argued that the Serb Orthodox Church in Croatia had to be abolished and instead of it the Orthodox Church of Croatia should be established (like in the WWII NDH). Since the Croat military-police operation “Oluja” (Storm) of ethnic

45 Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report*: Eastern Europe, 1995-08-10.

46 *Temeljna načela i statut*, Hrvatska stranka prava, 1991-02-24.

47 Interview with Ante Djapic, *Glas Slavonije*, 1995-08-19.

cleansing of the Krajina Serbs in August 1995, all Croat nationalistic parties, including above all the ruling HDZ, did everything in order to prevent the return of the Serb refugees (about 250,000)⁴⁸ to their homes. In order to achieve this goal, usually three methods were used: 1. Demolition of the Serb houses; 2. Publicly announcing the Serb names as wanted war criminals; and 3. Physical attacking, or even killing, the Serb refugees.

Nevertheless, either the HDZ or other right-wing Croat parties never recognized the mass exodus of Krajina Serbs from Croatia in August 1995 as the ethnic cleansing as for them it was rather a free choice of homeland as it was officially stated by the President Franjo Tuđman. The official Croatia as well never recognized the existence of the concentration camps for the Serbs in the 1990s on the territory of Croatia like it was in the Pakrac poljana, around Gospić, and in Sisak.⁴⁹ According to the Croat nationalists, the problem of depopulated parts of Croatia (once inhabited by the Serbs) after August 1995, should be solved by housing the ethnic Croat diaspora and the Croat refugees. That was exactly the best option of the final solution of the “Serb Question” in Croatia which mostly satisfied Franjo Tuđman who, when he took his “freedom train” on August 26th, 1995 from Zagreb to Split via depopulated Krajina region, said that the Serbs: “had disappeared ignominiously, as if they had never populated this land. We urged them to stay, but they didn’t listen to us and, well bon voyage”.⁵⁰ Regardless that the HSP urged the Government to introduce a special legislation on restricting the return of the Serb refugees, a law was, nevertheless, activated according to which the refugees had right to reclaim their property during the three-month period. That was a legal mechanism used in order to prevent creating real conditions for the Serb refugees to return back. Therefore, the “Serb Question” in Tuđman’s Croatia was solved on the way that today there are only 4 percent of the Serbs out of total Croatia’s population in comparison to 12 percent according to the 1991 census.⁵¹ The task from 1991, when Croatia’s governmental forces started the war against their own citizens of the Serb origin,⁵² was finally realized in August 1995: the Serbs who remained in Croatia stop being politically dangerous and under complete governmental control and served as a proof to the international community that Croatia is formally multiethnic society.

48 В. Ђ. Мишина (уредник), *Република Српска Крајина: Десет година послје*, Београд: Добра воља, 2005, 48.

49 J. Guskova, *Istorija jugoslovenske krize (1990–2000)*, 1, Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje “M”, 2003, 223.

50 J. A. Irvine, “Ultranationalist Ideology and State-Building in Croatia, 1990–1996”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, July/August 1997, 40. It is clear from the transcripts of the meeting between Croatia’s Government and military officials at Brioni just before the operation “Storm” started that Tuđman’s requirement were that the Serbs had to disappear from Croatia [<http://www.nspm.rs/dokumenti/tudjmanovi-brionski-transkripti-udariti-srbe-da-nestanu.html>].

51 On the present-day territory of Croatia there were 24 percent of the Serbs before the WWII.

52 The fact that Croatia’s Government launched the war against the Serbs in 1991 in order to provoke them was confirmed by Tuđman’s first minister of police, Josip Boljkovac in his interview in 2014 [<http://www.jugoslavologija.eu/2014/12/24/tudmanov-ministar-priznao-prvi-smo-napali-srbe-da-bi-poceo-rat/>].

Against the western liberalism for conservative order

The Croat ultranational parties and other organizations expressed a visible form of anomaly in their ideological and programmatic concepts as on the one hand promoted an idea of protection of the West European culture and civilization but at the same time, on the other hand, expressed a great extent of suspicion and even hostility towards the western liberalism.⁵³ The western liberalism, in their opinion, was speaking in the favor of an individual, his/her freedom, rights and prosperity but not in the favor of a nation and national interest. As for all ultranationalists, a nation was *über alles* and therefore any ideology that was not speaking primarily in the favor of a nation was not acceptable and even seen as destructive since only the particularity of the nation is giving a real meaning to the life of the individual. A destructive nature of the western liberalism was primarily seen in regard to the liberal approach toward the family question as the ultranationalists reject the liberal emphasis on individual freedom of choice and rights and on personal benefits from such choice. What they support instead of liberal ideology of personal free choice is an ideology which is advocating the promotion of welfare of the nation and realization of the national state policy. As for the Croat ultranationalists the main problem and obstacle for prosperity of Croatia and Croats were the Serbs, their requirement for demographic renewal of the Croat nation was politically pointed against the Serbs. Basically they adopted a demographic (boom) policy of Kosovo Albanians after the WWII in their fight against the local Serbs. For the Croat ultraright parties, a family structure has to be framed within the conservative-patriarchal order as the best way to biologically increase the population of the ethnic Croats as, for instance, Franjo Tuđman stated in one of his speeches in the Parliament.⁵⁴ Subsequently, in order to ensure a higher rate of the ethnic Croat population growth, the abortion was seen as a national suicide. Such clear calling for national duties instead of individual right of free choice was a direct rejection of the West European liberal political foundation of the society and state.

The HDZ's economic policy was as well framed for the sake of subordinating state economy to state-building task. For that reason, the members of HDZ supported an idea and practice of significant state ownership that was also in odd to the western liberalism. However, in the HDZ's Croatia a process of corruption and taycoonization of economic resources and infrastructure by well-placed HDZ's political leaders was well-known practice which led to their personal and family enrichment.

As a part of anti-liberal policy, the liberal-democratic notion of the citizenship was crucially challenged by the HDZ's ruling authority as the voting rights for the state and the other public officials became based on the ethnic (Croat) background rather than on the residence criteria. Therefore, twelve seats were practically reserved in Croatia's Parliament for the ethnic Croat diaspora for the very reason that the HDZ was and is traditionally supported by the Croat diaspora especially from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The citizenship law was also

53 On the western liberalism, see [L. Mises, *Liberalism in the Classical Tradition*, San Francisco, California: Cobden Press, 1985; E. Fawcett, *Liberalism: The Life of an Idea*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014; M. Freeden, *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015].

54 F. Tuđman, *S vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku*, Zagreb: Narodne novine, 1995, 79–90.

changed in the favor of the ethnic Croat diaspora as Croatia was proclaimed as the motherland of all ethnic Croats.⁵⁵ However, a similar ethno-citizenship/voting law in Miloshević's Serbia was never introduced at least for the very political reason that the Serb diaspora in the West opposed his policy as anti-Serbian. In other words, Miloshević's Serbia was seen, by the Constitution, as a homeland of all her inhabitants, rather than only of all ethnic Serbs wherever they live.

Probably, the HDZ's denial of any kind of the regional autonomy in Croatia was the expression of the policy of anti-liberal democracy concept of minority rights. Therefore, the regional parties of Istria, (the Serb populated) Krajina and Dalmatia suffered mostly from such policy of brutal centralization of Croatia. However, in Miloshević's Serbia, two regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metochia enjoyed at least ethno-cultural regional autonomy if not political one as it was fixed at the time of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia according to the 1974 Constitution (up to 1989).

In general, the Croat ultranationalists were against the basic values of the western liberalism but also and against many segments of the western culture especially of the U.S. as they perceived such culture as an attempt to destroy the authentic values of the Croat nation. The West became accused also for the attempts to undermine the independence of Croatia and even to recreate some form of the Yugoslav (or Balkan) confederation with the Serbs and Serbia. Therefore, the U.N.'s UNPROFOR's detachments, deployed on the territory of the Republic of Serb Krajina (as the U.N.' protection zone) were called to be removed from the territory of Croatia as the main obstacle for her territorial reunification. Nevertheless, Croatia became finally reunited within the borders of a Greater Croatia of Josip Broz Tito after the WWII when Croatia's military and police reoccupied the territory of Krajina in August 1995 under the blessing of both the U.S.'s administration and the UNPROFOR's command. Therefore, for the Croat ultranationalists the suspicions of possible Western designs to recreate a form of Yugoslavia disappeared after the operation "Storm" but their suspicions to the Western political liberalism and cultural and social values of the liberal ideology are present up to today.

CONCLUSION

The internal and external destruction of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015. . However, this historical event still needs a satisfactory research approach in regard to the true geopolitical reasons and political-military course of the destruction of this South Slavic and Balkan state. During the last quarter of century, the (western) global mainstream media and academia unanimously accused Serbia and the Serbs for the national chauvinism as the main cause of the bloody wars on the

55 On the concept of citizenship, see: W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1995; R. Bellamy, *Citizenship: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2008; É. Balibar, *Citizenship*, Cambridge, UK – Malden, USA: Polity Press, 2015. The same citizenship concept, for example, was accepted by all three Baltic States after the collapse of the Soviet Union: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

territory of ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s.⁵⁶ However, the role and direct impact of the other Yugoslav republics and nations in the process of killing the common state was not taken (purposely) into consideration; especially of the Croats and Croatia as the biggest nation and republic after the Serbs and Serbia. This article is an attempt to contribute to the full-scale of understanding of the process of destruction of the former Yugoslavia taking into account the role of the Croats and Croatia.

Franjo Tudjman's authoritarian regime in Croatia and the territorial expansionist policy of his HDZ's ruling party during the bloody destruction of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s were not noticed at all by the western politicians, academicians and the global mass-media who, in contrast, accused "dictator"-President of Serbia Slobodan Milosevic (a "Balkan butcher") for the policy of creation of a Greater Serbia, Serbia's aggression on Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and later for the practice of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo-Metochia. However, the main causer of the destruction of ex-Yugoslavia was not Slobodan Milosevic but rather Dr. Franjo Tudjman in Croatia who introduced tougher dictatorship than Milosevic in Serbia with the fundamental political goal to establish ethnically pure a Greater Croatia within the ethnohistorical borders of the Croat nation as proclaimed by the ultranationalist Croat ideologists in the 19th and the 20th century. His efforts in the process of state-building of Croatia in the 1990s were aimed to nationalize the state in which the political and cultural dominant position of the ethnic Croats has been reserved. In essence, after the 1990 elections in Croatia a new political leadership adopted a state-building form and methods which have been crucially against the process of real democratization of political life and society in this ex-Yugoslav republic. Their ideology and implementation strategy was derived from the 19th and 20th century Croat ultranationalism and legitimized by appropriating the symbols and iconography of the most extremist and even Nazi-Fascist (the Ustashi) Croat nationalistic movements.

The ultraright-wing ideology on which the state-building process was executed in Croatia in the 1990s was fundamentally anti-liberal and above all anti-Serb. In order to solve, as proclaimed, the most important problem in Croatia – the "Serb Question", Croatia's authorities privileged national (ethnic Croat) rights over the individual rights, ethnic (Croat) state over the civic multicultural society and political authoritarianism instead of institutional democracy. As the Croat ultranationalistic ideology was and is based on the both ethnic and historic rights of the Croats for the sake of creating a united Greater Croatia, a direct involvement of the regular Croatia's military forces alongside with the ethnic Croat paramilitary militia in the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina against the Serbs and Muslim Bosniaks was inevitable. The ethnic cleansing of certain Bosnian-Herzegovinian territories (a Croat proclaimed the "Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia") by the Croat forces, directly or indirectly sponsored by the Government in Zagreb, was done for the very purpose to finally include those territories into ethnically pure Greater Croatia.

56 For instance [L. Silber, A. Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, London: Penguin Books, 1997; L. Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2003].

Поводом двадесетогодишњице завршетка грађанског рата на простори-ма бивше Југославије (1991. г.–1995. г.) потребно је преиспитати стварне узроке и главне кривце за крваво унутрашње и спољашње разарање ове државе. У западној историографији и политологији (као и у новинар-ству и у политичким круговима) тзв. „либерано-демократске“ прове-нијенције већ четврт столећа чврсто влада стандардни клише да су за разбијање и коначни нестанак Југославије као државе превасходно, ако не и једино, криви Срби као нација док је од политичара и државни-ка Слободан Милошевић виђен као једини гробар Југославије па му је стога наденут и надимак “балканског касапина”. Међутим, исти ти академици, новинари, политичари и државници не обраћају нимало пажње на друге како унутрашње тако и спољашње факторе и личности који су сигурно умногоме допринели процесу разбијања Југославије ако нису били и главни узрочници и кривци за њен крвави нестанак. То се, сигурно је, првенствено односи на улогу Хрватске и њеног аутори-тарног неонацистичког (ушашког) режима др Фрање Туђмана и његове Хрватске демократске заједнице (ХДЗ) који су у ствари били и алфа и омега убијања заједничке државе у првој половини 1990-их година. Као илустративни пример, можемо навести чињеницу да др Фрањо Туђман није укључен у антологију највећих диктатора на Балкану у XX столећу али Слободан Милошевић јесте [B. J. Fischer (ed.), *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, London: C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd, 2006]. Сходно горе изложеном, овај научно-ис-траживачки рад је замишљен као допринос што тачнијем осветљавању проблема узрока и узрочника смрти бивше Југославије 1991. г.–1995. г. узимајући као истраживачки објекат ауторитарни и ушашоидни режим др Фрање Туђмана у Хрватској. Конкретније, овај чланак је критички осврт и допринос научној публикацији L. Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Durham–London: Duke University Press, 2003.