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DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

The last decade of the twentieth century shook the foundations of the then world order. The eroded communist bloc collapsed, and new states appeared on the map of Europe. Against the background of momentous events which changed the shape of the Old Continent, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was buried by peoples inhabiting it. Within five years, in Yugoslavia, thousands of people lost their lives in the name of ethnic-nationalist ideas fed to them by political engineers. In 1995, in result of negotiations led by representatives of the international security system, the Dayton Agreement was reached. It endorsed the disintegration of Yugoslavia and subsequent emergence of new independent states.

To understand and identify the reasons which caused the collapse or disintegration of Yugoslavia[1], one should consider historical conditionalities which had shaped the SFRY and induced erosive steps taken in the early 1990s which, eventually, led to the outbreak of bloody conflicts.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS FOR THE SFRY DISINTEGRATION

The Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia adopted on 31 January 1946, contained a passage stating that the Federal Republic was a voluntary community of equal and sovereign nations and their national republics. In essence, peoples of Yugoslavia lived in their national republics, i.e. Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians, Slovenes and Serbs; in addition the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the autonomous Kosovo-Metohijan region were established. Later, a supra-ethnic designation of nationality of Slavic Muslims was recognised. Ethnic groups included those with a "national" minority status: Albanians, Hungarians, Italians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Slovaks, Turks, etc.,

[1] The term "disintegration" seems more appropriate. Relentless actions of the parties to the conflict, aimed at dividing the country into independent entities. At the same time, the international community was not committed to prevent the escalation of tensions leading to inevitable military actions.

and "ethnic groups": Vlachs and Roma. Other inhabitants were representatives of various European nations: Greeks, Russians, Czechs, Poles and others.[2]

After World War II, a new state, which was a unique ethnic collage, appeared on the map of Europe. At first glance, Yugoslavia seemed to be held together by the communist system, but if scrutinised, it had clearly visible cracks between various elements constituting the national sphere. Having regarded disputes between particular nations during the wartime struggle, Josip Broz Tito[3], who took control of the state, found that normalisation of relations between the citizens of Yugoslavia had to be one of the main objectives of the ruling party's policy. First of all, one had to offset the opinion voiced mainly by Croats and Slovenes that Serbs - since the beginning of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes - had a dominant position in the state due to the size of the territory occupied by the Serbian people, the location of the state capital in Belgrade and the control of the country by the Serbian Karadjordjević dynasty. Marek Waldenberg[4] consistently contradicts this opinion, rightly arguing that, paradoxically, the Serbs' position was devaluated after WW II to a disproportionate extent in comparison to other nations. In his opinion, Tito crippled Serbs to ensure peace and stability of the state and thus to meet demands of other nations. He points out that Serbia was the only republic to have been divided by giving the autonomous status to Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija provinces of which the first was the cradle of Serbia and the second region was long dominated by people of Serbian origin who cultivated their traditions amicably along the Hungarian nation. He rightly underlines the lack of political will to separate, in the Republic of Croatia, the Krajina region, i.e. the so-called Military Frontier where, since the 17th century, Serbian population dominated.[5] The potential of the Serbian people was to be reduced further by the separation of the Republic of Montenegro and the Republic of Macedonia and artificial construing of identities of the peoples of those republics. Likewise argued Maciej Kuczyński writing that Tito sought to undermine the Serbs by granting their historical lands to other nations and establishing the Republic of

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[2] S. Wojciechowski (2002), *Integracja i dezintegracja Jugosławii na przełomie XX i XXI wieku,* Poznań, p. 35.

[3] Josip Broz Tito was a child of a Croat and a Slovenian, both farmers. He used his multicultural background for propaganda purposes, creating himself as a spokesman for the idea of eliminating ethnically motivated conflicts in the future SFRY. He made a career starting from a regular member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia to gaining the highest position in the newly created state. His nickname *Tito*, which became an inherent part of his surname, supposedly comes from a saying which he would often address to his subordinates: *Ti češ uciniti to, a ti to.* Cf. M. J. Zacharias (2004), *Komunizm, federacja, nacjonalizmy. System władzy w Jugosławii 1943-1991. Powstanie, przekształcenia, rozpad,* Warszawa, pp. 36-37.

[4] M. Waldenberg (2003), *Rozbicie Jugosławii: od separacji Słowenii do wojny kosowskiej,* Warszawa, pp. 38-39.

[5] Consequences of the abandonment of creating an autonomous region became clear in 1991, when Serbs, in the course of operations which were a prelude to the war, decided in favour of their separation from independent Croatia and the creation of an independent Republic of Serbian Krajina (*Srpska Krajina*).

Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was to warrant the end of the Croatia-Serbia dispute. The desirability of such a move is beyond doubt, as in the newly established republic, both Croats and Serbs were in minority in relation to Muslims.[6]

In the context of the efforts made by Tito's apparatus to blur differences between the various nations in order to create a nation of Yugoslavs undivided by ethnic disputes, the decision to grant Muslims the status of a nation is puzzling. In accordance with the later amended Constitution, Muslims were one of Yugoslavia's nations, however, they did not have the opportunity to declare their national identity in the national census until the early 1960s. Not wanting to identify themselves with Croats or Serbs, they were referred to as "unspecified Muslims". Consent to the formal recognition of an ethnic group, and since 1968 of the Muslim nation, was a proof of the spreading of nationalist tendencies among inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the government's attempt to halt such tendencies.[7] Effects of a formal separation of a nation, whose existence is disputed by researchers[8], led to the pursuit of its self-determination, legitimate under the international law, and as manifested by, *inter alia*, Muslims after the collapse of the federation.

Economic development of the federation, which the Communist Party treated as a non-negotiable priority, was to follow the principle of *bratstvo i jedinstvo*, i.e. brotherhood and unity. That postulate implied the need to minimise the risk of an outburst of nationalistic attitudes. The project to bring the nations together, was presented at the end of the 1950s within the framework of the so-called Yugoslavism programme. Its authors originating from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and enjoying Tito's support, opted for getting the party and the people closer and building a Yugoslav identity in a socialist spirit. The failure to impose a uniform concept of national identity on citizens became apparent in 1971, during the events which are referred to as the "Croatian Spring". In consequence of deteriorating living conditions and accusing the party that its actions debased Croats and favoured Serbs, students walked out onto the streets of Zagreb, calling for changes in the Belgrade government policy. Those young people were supported by opposition activists of *Matica hrvatska,*a cultural organisation, which, together with the Association of Writers, postulated discussing the issue of the separateness of the Croatian language at the party plenum. Against the background of those events, the appearance of the name of Franjo Tudjman, a future president of independent Croatia, was significant. A historian, a major general, a member of the communist party, he joined the opposition in 1967, supporting nationalist tendencies emerging in Croatia. Expelled from

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[6] M. Kuczyński (1999), *Bałkańska pożoga. Wojny i konflikty na Bałkanach w latach 1981-1999*, Warszawa, p. 24.

[7] L. Benson (2004), *Yugoslavia: a Concise History*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke [Polish translation: *Jugosławia. Historia w zarysie,* Kraków 2011, p. 60 and 143].

[8] "Bosnian Muslims lack features most frequently mentioned in the definitions of a nation [...]. They are not, in any case, a nation shaped like Serbian or Croatian". M. Waldenberg (2000), *Narody zależne i mniejszości narodowe w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej,* Warszawa, p. 455.

the party, he continued his research on historiography of Croatia, spreading dissident ideas about its separateness and right to independence. Tudjman's views fully crystallised on the eve of Yugoslavia's disintegration which, in the era of rampant nationalism, allowed him to assume the role of one of most important actors on the political stage.

Tito's reaction to events in Croatia was brutal: the Soviet model of purging the party was applied and members of the opposition were expelled and many sentenced to prison, among others, to the infamous Goli Otok[9]. However, party authorities were aware that terror would not calm the agitated public sentiment and that some concessions had to be made. In 1971, the idea of a centralised state was abandoned in favour of granting individual republics political and economic privileges, which *de facto* resulted in empowering the republics at the expense of the federation. The system of appointing members of the Presidium was changed and eight delegates led the state. They were selected annually (rotation) in the six republics and two autonomous regions. The adoption of a new Constitution in 1974, which introduced the principle of unanimity in the decision-making at the federal level, was a clear symptom of the weakening of the state centralism[10]. Repercussions of the above were reflected in the progressing separatism of administrative units, which, having been granted the right to veto, torpedoed decisions taken in Belgrade. It became particularly apparent in economy. Many authors[11] underline that one of main causes of the progressive slackening of the state was the economic crisis which affected Yugoslavia in the early 1980s. Symptoms of an economic decline surfaced in the 1970s due to a global crisis and the deepening disparities in the economic development of administrative units. Croatia and Slovenia, exceeding other republics in terms of their economic potential, accused authorities in Belgrade of discrimination and exploitation of their standing by subsidising poorer regions from their income. This led to opposing the idea of "brotherhood and unity" and was an impetus for local authorities to try to take over power which would enable them to pursue economic policies independently from Belgrade. Zagreb and Ljubljana experienced economic collapse and frustration and were convinced that opportunities for their development were being limited. Thus it

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[9] *Goli Otok* is an informal name for a heavy prison located on an island of the same name. For residents of former Yugoslavia, it was what the Gulag Archipelago was for citizens of the former Soviet Union. Just like for Polish readers the testimony of the suffering in the Gulag is Gustaw Herling-Grudziński's novel *Inny świat* ("A World Apart"), those who wish to get an idea of the functioning of the prison on the Naked Island (Goli Otok) should read short stories by Serbian writer Antonije Isaković. Cf. A. Isaković (1976), *Tren 1: kazivanja Čeperku*, Prosveta [Polish translation: *Ułamek sekundy,* Warszawa 1982].

[10] As I. Rycerska argues such a solution was treated as another sign of republics' equality. It resulted in a situation in which the federation authorities were not sovereign in respect to its constitutive parts and citizens, making it impossible to call the state a federation. Cf. I. Rycerska (2003), *Rozpad Jugosławii. Przyczyny i przebieg,* Kielce, p. 14.

[11] Cf. S. Wojciechowski (2002), *op. cit.,* pp. 41-42; M. Kuczyński (1999), *op. cit.,* pp. 29-30.

should not be surprising that secessionist ideas emerged and, after the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, citizens became aware of such an option.

Tito's death resulted in the lack of a binding agent keeping the country in a relative balance. Being President for over 27 years, Tito consistently followed the path of preventing the eruption of nationalist sentiments in the society, often using violent methods. When the charismatic leader was no longer there, first cracks in the Yugoslavian monolith - a society acting in solidarity, appeared in 1981, in Pristina. On the tide of nationalist protests of Kosovo Albanians[12] aimed against Serbs, for the first time Slobodan Milošević made his name among people who significantly influenced the 1990s politics.

AT THE VERGE OF WAR

The economic crisis, which deepened in the 1980s implicating social unrest, contributed to the diffusion of separatist attitudes of local politicians. In two richest republics, i.e. Croatia and Slovenia, voices arguing for the need to transform the political system of the country by weakening relationships between administrative units and to form a confederation, were increasingly more popular. The situation was exacerbated by the breakup of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990, which, until that time, was the collaborative platform of politicians from the republics. The split was a result of representatives of Croatia and Slovenia opposition to an economy restructuring plan presented by Prime Minister Ante Marković at the Congress of the League. The plan was supposed to overcome effects of the crisis, however in the opinion of Zagreb and Ljubljana, it would do so at the expense of Croatia and Slovenia. Secessionist tendencies began to surface after Milan Kučan came to power in Slovenia and the nationalist party led by Franjo Tudjman won Croatia's parliamentary elections. Although in 1990, President Kučan and politicians of the *DEMOS* coalition, which was the strongest party in Slovenia, opted for transforming the state political system from a federation into a union of sovereign states, in result of the events in the neighbouring republics, they changed their stance and became more inclined to the opinion that such a move would be *ad hominem.* Secession was considered the final solution. In the case of Slovenia, the consent on the need to leave the federation and declare independence was based on the conviction that Slovenia, after becoming independent, would fully exercise its economic assets and take the first step toward an integrating Europe.[13] In addition, separatist senti-

[12] The crisis in Kosovo began in 1981 and initially took the form of street demonstrations and postulates to improve the living conditions and transform the autonomous region to the seventh republic. In response to the protests, the *Skupština* decided to introduce the state of emergency in Kosovo and send troops to pacify protesters. Despite this step, the crisis remained unresolved and lurked until 2008, when Kosovo declared independence.

[13] The motto of the *DEMOS* coalition was: "Yugoslavia as a concept is exhausted. Slovenia simply wants to join Europe and is not willing to wait for the rest of Yugoslavia to decide to do the same". L.J.

ments were fuelled by reports from the Serbian republic on limitation of Kosovo-Metohija autonomy , introduced by an amendment to the republic's Constitution in 1989. Slovenian politicians skilfully exploited the alleged hegemonistic tendencies of Milošević[14] and gradually followed their path to Slovenia's independence.

The possibility of Slovenia's secession, the only ethnically-uniform Yugoslavian republic, could be justified by people's right to self-determination. However, Marek Waldenberg rightly notes that "the right of peoples to self-determination under international law could not justify a unilateral declaration of secession. And if it is believed that it was the justification, the question raises whether it was also the justification for the separatist aspirations of Serbs living densely together in Krajina, a part of the Croatian Federal Republic, and for the efforts of Bosnian Serbs and Croats to adjoin lands inhabited mainly by them to their native countries".[15] Referring to many opinions supporting the secession of Slovenia from the federation, it should be remembered that, according to the country's Constitution of 1974, the alleged secession should have been endorsed by all administrative units, which, given the opposition of the Serbian and Montenegrin republics, could not have taken place. Milošević, in accord with the idea of Yugoslavia's centralisation which was promoted since the Kosovo crisis, initially categorically opposed breaching its borders, however, his actions taken in the face of escalating separatist tendencies demonstrated that he pragmatically recognised the inevitability of Slovenia's secession. One should not forget that, unlike Croatia, Slovenia was uniform, i.e. ethnically homogeneous, and Serbia did not have any historically legitimate claim to Slovenian lands. In this context, it is not surprising that Milan Kučan and President of Serbia in their communication issued on 23 January 1991 asserted that Serbia respects the "right of the Slovenian people and of the Republic of Slovenia to choose their own path and discuss the shape of its future relations with other Yugoslavian peoples and republics" and that "Slovenia respects the desire of Serbian people to live within the borders of one state and is of the opinion that the future government of Yugoslavia should take adequate steps to address the above demand"[16].

The conflict between Belgrade and Zagreb was very different. It was inspired by ethnic and political antagonisms and extremely quickly substantive arguments ceased to be used in favour of an armed conflict. At the time, Franjo Tudjman,

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Cohen (1995), *Broken Bonds. Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition.* Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, p. 90. Cf. M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.,* p. 479.

[14] Following the actions of the Slovenian elite, one can come to a conclusion that restricting the rights of Kosovo Albanians in result of the crisis in the region, has become a pretext for presenting the position that Slovenia was also threatened by Serbian nationalism and its spread could be prevented by leaving Yugoslavia.

[15] M. Waldenberg (2002), *Narody zależne...,* p. 447.

[16] A. LeBor (2003), *Milosevic. A Biography,* London, p. 135. Quoted in K. Pawłowski, *Polityka Federacyjnej Republiki Jugosławii wobec konfliktu w Bośni i Hercegowinie (1992-1995),* in: P. Chmielewski, S. L. Szczesio (eds) (2011), *Bośnia i Hercegowina 15 lat po Dayton. Przeszłość - teraźniejszość -perspektywy,* Łódź, p. 138.

the unquestionable political leader of the Republic of Croatia, became a main character in the unfolding drama. While tracing his actions in the early 1990s, one can be tempted to say in line with sociologist Erving Goffman's ideas, that Tudjman created a facade - a set of opinions and conducts which allowed him to manipulate public opinion in order to reach his objective, i.e. breaking away from the SFRY. Tudjman skilfully exploited ethnic animosities and Croatian people's irrational fears of Serbs' domination, and effectively fuelled national hatred, resorting to statements marked with extreme intolerance. In that context, his words "Thank God, my wife is neither a Jew nor a Serb"[17] are meaningful. One must not forget that Tudjman's actions were inspired by the Greater Serbian ideology propagated by Belgrade, and that suspecting Milošević of a relentless drive to unite all Serbs within one state, is unjustified.[18] It was Croatian nationalism[19] which is to be blamed for the Serbo-Croatian conflict. However, considering the fiasco of actions designed to centralise Yugoslavia and the progressing dismantling of the federation, enlargement of the territory of the Serbian republic by regions inhabited by Serbian people was a real threat. The above mentioned Military Frontier became a battlefield of uncompromising ethnic antagonisms in 1990. The *Vojna Krajina* was created by the Habsburg monarchy in the 16th century as a buffer zone protecting the country against attacks of Ottoman Turks. It was the destination of Serbian people fleeing from areas occupied by Muslims and became a region where people of Serbian origin constituted the majority. Tudjman's lack of political will to recognise aspirations of the Serbian population to have an autonomy, and the fuelled by Belgrade conviction of Croatian Serbs that their identity would be crushed by Croatian nationalism, brought about an undesirable effect, i.e. a growing distrust and hostility between nations. Milošević's support given to the Serb Democratic Party, founded in Šibenik by psychiatrist Jovan Rašković[20] and

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[17] L. Silber, A. Little (1996), *Smrt Jugoslavije,* Opatija, p. 75, in: M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.,* p. 481.

[18] To quote after A. Uzelac: "he would never use the phrase [..] "Great Serbia", he would also never say "all Serbs in one state". [..] formally, his hands remained clean". A. Uzelac, *Slobodan Miloszewić,* "Gazeta Wyborcza" 11.08.1995, "Magazyn" supplement, No. 32, p. 10.

[19] M. Waldenberg (2003), *Rozbicie Jugosławii...,* p. 115. Stjepan Mesić, a Croat and the last head of the SFRY, held an interesting view on the Great Serbia ideology of Milošević. He condemned the President of the Republic of Serbia, accusing him of megalomania and lack of political will to find a compromising solution which would prevent the conflict escalation. However, Mesić's opinions should be treated with caution as he explicitly emphasised his liking of Tudjman. More in: S. Mesić, *The road to war,* in: I. Žanić (ed.) (2001), *The war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995,* B. Magaš, London.

[20] From a psychological point of view, the overrepresentation of psychiatrists among key personalities who had a significant impact on the events, is interesting. Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian Serb leader and President of the Republic of Serbia in 1992-1996, was a student of Rašković. Skills acquired in the course of his studies and practice proved to be effective in fear management and fostering hostility of Serbs. Rašković himself supposedly said: "I feel responsible because I have made preparations for the war, even though they are not military preparations. Had I not stimulated psychological tension in Serbs, nothing would have happened. Me and my party triggered the explosion of Serbian nationalism not only in Croatia, but also in Bosnia and Herzegovina". *Psychiatria nienawiści,* „Wprost" No. 33/1999, p. 23.

after his death in 1992, headed by Milan Babić, remains controversial. Opting for a quantitative policy, i.e. emphasising the ethnic dominance of Serbian people in the region, nullified Serbs' right to Kosovo advocated by Milošević. Kosovo, from this perspective, should be Albanian. Tudjman objected. Using Croatians' anti-Serb nationalism, he consistently argued that Serbs had only the right to cultural independence as the areas they inhabited were a historical and natural part of Croatia.[21] In result, Tudjman's objections consolidated the idea of independence among Croatian Serbs, which was confirmed by the proclamation of the Autonomous Region of Krajina on 1 October 1990, and which became the prelude to the Serbo-Croat war.

It was in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina where the situation was most complicated due to its ethnic composition and political aspirations of particular nations. In face of the progressing erosion of the federation, the key question concerned the shape of the republic, should the state be dismantled. The then future of Bosnia and Herzegovina could be seen in three perspectives, i.e. of Muslims[22], Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats. When considering the causes of the war in the republic, it needs to be remembered that it constituted the so-called Little Yugoslavia, i.e. an ethnic conglomerate, a complex mosaic of nations living side by side. It proved to be the proverbial powder keg as people who had lived there in harmony and peace for centuries, then were not able to jointly confront the demon of hatred which spurred them on a fratricidal war. It should be noted that a tight group of Croats lived in the west of Herzegovina, with its capital in Mostar and Serbs prevailed in the eastern part of Herzegovina and at the border with Serbia, while Muslims - whose number was the highest - did not form a homogeneous group occupying a large territory but often lived next to members of other nations. During the war, that ethnic layout turned out to be detrimental to Muslims who, surrounded by enemies, could find peaceful enclaves only in cities where they traditionally constituted an ethnic majority.

The undisputed political leader and representative of Muslims at the Yugoslavian forum was Alija Izetbegović, the first President of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The role he played in the Yugoslav tragedy was a difficult and invidious one and the steps taken by him to prevent conflict escalation did not produce satisfactory results. In the 1980s, he was sentenced to prison for propagating the necessity of separating an independent Bosnian Islamic Republic within the federation. Later, however, to avoid the disintegration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he called for its independence in a multi-ethnic form. In retrospect, appropriateness of him resisting the republic's disintegration may be puzzling, since independence could only mean

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[21] M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.,* p. 485.

[22] The term "Muslims" is used in accordance with the 1974 Constitution, i.e. as referring to a nation. Since 1993, in result of provisions of the *Bošnjački Sabor*, the nomenclature provides for the word *Bošnjak* which signifies a follower of Islam, as opposed to the word *Bosanac*, which refers to all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of their religious or national identity. Cf. M. Waldenberg (2003), *Rozbicie Jugosławii...,* pp. 164-167.

war, of which Izetbegović had to be aware. Fears of the Muslim nation being dominated by neighbouring nations and the division of the republic, led Izetbegović to declare a secession, despite the prevailing mood among Bosnian Serbs and Croats. Serbs gathered around Radovan Karadžić, then President of the Serb Democratic Party, argued in favour of sustaining the federation, and in the case of the republic's disintegration, for the unification of all Serbs and adjoining lands occupied by them to their homeland, i.e. Serbia. A similar position was adopted by the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina, headed by Mate Boban, which stressed that Croats living in Bosnia and Herzegovina should have the right to secede from the republic and adjoin territories inhabited by them to Croatia. Those demands were undoubtedly inspired by the authorities in Zagreb and Belgrade, which gave full support to opposition members led by Izetbegović. Tudjman supposedly questioned the existence of the Muslim nation, believing that Bosnians are Croats who should live in Croatia: "Bosnian Muslims are blood of our blood, a flower of the Croatian nation and therefore should be seen as Croats and inhabitants of Croatia"[23]. Milošević, in face of the escalation of the conflict with Croatia, initially intended to persuade Muslims to peaceful coexist within the federation.[24] When separatist tendencies among Bosnian Serbs increased, he fuelled ethnic resentments, seeing a breakup of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a chance to replace the existing SFRY with a new state within which a territory inhabited by Bosnian Serbs would be located. The final nail in the coffin for Bosnia and Herzegovina was Tudjman and Milošević's meeting in Karadordevo in March 1991, during which a decision was made to divide the republic between Serbia and Croatia and go ahead with resettlements necessary in that situation.

The declaration of independence by the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 1992 and the outbreak of war wracked Belgrade and Zagreb's plans of the division, however the agreement reached by the politicians was a significant symbol of hypocrisy and self-interest and nationalistic efforts to annex as much territory of the bleeding Yugoslavia as possible in the name of ethnic unity. The war, which should be a measure of last resort, in the hands of decision-makers inflicting lethal wounds to long peaceful Yugoslavia, became but an instrument for the implementation of far-reaching plans to create independent national states. However, it is worth to give a thought to whether the end justified unconceivable crimes committed in the name of Serbian, Croatian and Muslim dreams of independence.

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[23] P. Żurek, *Bośnia i Hercegowina w wizji politycznej Franjo Tudmana,* in: P. Chmielewski, S. L. Szczesio (eds) (2011), *op. cit.*, p. 15

[24] This proposal suggested a threat of turning against Muslims, should they not be pragmatic. The threat was conveyed as follows: "If we have to, we'll fight. However, I hope that our opponents will not be stupid enough to fight us. For, admittedly, we do not know how to work and manage the economy, but at least we can fight." In: M. Grmek, M. Gjidara, N. Šimac (eds) (1993), *Le Nettoyage ethnique. Documents historiques sur une idéologie serbe*, Paris, p. 272, after: M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.,* p. 528.

SLOVENIA. THE TEN-DAY WAR

In 1918, which was a very meaningful year for Europe, the statement *Im Westen nichts Neues*[25], used as an anti-war slogan in the title of a novel by German writer Erich Maria Remarque, became invalid. The end of the maelstrom of war which lasted for four years during which people's "knowledge of life" was "limited to death"[26], brought about changes throughout Europe. New states emerged. Calls for autonomy and independence were popular. In the spirit of demolishing the existing order, in October 1918, a meeting of the last Emperor of Austria - Charles IV of Hungary, and Anton Korošec, a representative of the Slovenian political elite, was held. Korošec informed the ruler about Slovenia inevitably leaving the Empire and the planned establishment of an autonomous kingdom by Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. Arguments of Charles IV, who wished to keep Slovenia within the borders of the state, were dismissed by Korošec's famous words: "Too late, Royal Highness, too late"[27].

It is easy to imagine that a similar exchange of opinions could happen between Slobodan Milošević and Milan Kučan in 1990, at the verge of the war which buried Yugoslavia.[28] Slovenia took the first step toward independence by holding a referendum on 23 December 1990. The turnout was 94% and 89% of voters were in favour of establishing an independent state, which strongly supported opinions of Slovenian authorities that the disintegration of the federation was inevitable. Drago Jančar brilliantly summed up the referendum result, saying: "Living together in the Yugoslav marriage, seventy years after the joyful wedding, has become intolerable"[29]. The proclamation of sovereignty, which took place on 25 June 1991, crowned separat-

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[25] The communiqué "All quiet on the western front" delivered from the battlefront of the First World War cynically informed about a situation in which thousands of people died every day.

[26] E. M. Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues* [Polish translation: *Na zachodzie bez zmian,* Olsztyn 1992, p. 45].

[27] The anecdote was offered by Slovenian writer Drago Jančár in his essay published in "Gazeta Wyborcza". D. Jančar, *Wspomnienia o Jugosławii,* "Gazeta Wyborcza" 20.04.1991, p. 12.

[28] Leopold Unger, a "Gazeta Wyborcza" publicist, in his essay *Głośniej nad tą trumną* published in 1991, argued that one should not oppose the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, which he called "Frankenstein states". He was of the opinion that Western European diplomats should actively support dismantling those countries. Marek Waldenberg argued with Unger cautioning against hastily supporting the federation's disintegration. He wrote: "The end of Yugoslavia will not end national conflicts in South-Eastern Europe [...], next to the 'coffin' in which it will rest, dozens of real coffins will appear". How prophetic his words were was proved by developments in the following months, which resulted in the outbreak of an armed conflict. Cf. L. Unger, *Głośniej nad tą trumną!* „Gazeta Wyborcza" 10.07.1991, p. 9; M. Waldenberg, *To nie było więzienie narodów,* „Polityka" No. 36/1991, pp. 23-25; idem (2003), *Rozbicie Jugosławii...*, pp. 31-34.

[29] The quoted sentence needs to be extended. Jančar ironically concludes that the secession of Slovenia makes him reluctant because "after formalities which were terrible and humiliating for both sides, finally the divorce takes place and there is emptiness. The emptiness of an abandoned apartment, after an amputated life, an empty sound of silence (in what is missing ...). Common sense dictates that it must be so, because that state was not properly constructed from the very beginning. And yet we spent our whole life in it and with it". D. Jančar (1991), *op. cit.*

ist sentiments. Two days later, units of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) crossed borders of the newly formed state. It was the beginning of military actions and the first act of the Yugoslav tragedy.

Milošević's position on Slovenia's secession has already been presented, however, the position of the command of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) on the planned disintegration of the state is worth mentioning too. The disintegration inevitably would lead to changes in military structures. The army, headed by Veljko Kadijević, the then Minister of Defence, strongly opposed Slovenia's and Croatia's secessions, rightly predicting that once the republics leave the federation, the army would be disorganised. The discord in attitudes of Milošević and the Serbian army command should be attributed to their different objectives. Milošević, following his vision of the Serbian nation within a united country, pragmatically accepted the succession of Slovenia which was ethnically uniform. He pressured the army command to abandon the plan of intervention in Slovenia and ensure security of Serbian enclaves in Croatia, which, in the case of the secession proposed by Zagreb, would be within Serbia's extended frontiers. Milošević's colleague Borisav Jović, President of the SFRY in 1990-1991, confirmed the Serbian leader's consent to Slovenia's independence. In his diary, where he described the events of that time, he wrote: "the difference in the position of the army and us in Serbia (Slobodan and me) is very clear. [...] generals are obsessed with Yugoslavia's unity as it is, with no harmony and future. […] Milošević suggested that we begin to act as soon as possible, but only against Croatia, and leave Slovenia in peace. And in Croatia we should act only where Serbs live"[30]. General Kadijević was not willing to make concessions to the president of the Serbian Republic when deciding to pacify Slovenia. About three thousand soldiers were sent to the Slovenia-Yugoslavia border and confronted by Slovenian National Defence Corps. Under the Act on National Defence of 1969, additional Territorial Defence forces were established. In contrast to the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA), which reported to federal authorities, units of Territorial Defence were obliged to carry out tasks assigned by a republic. In face of the approaching conflict, they constituted specialised forces capable of standing up to the regular federal army. That is why Kadijević sought to eliminate national defence squads, rightly fearing a confrontation of the ethnically non-heterogeneous army[31] with national Territorial Defence forces.

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[30] B. Jović (1995), *Poslednji dani SFRJ,* Belgrade, p. 201, 218 and 257. After: M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.*, p. 519.

[31] On the eve of the war, desertion of YPA soldiers coming from republics hoping for Yugoslavia disassociation were commonplace. The penalty for leaving army ranks was often death on the order of the command. In addition, Muslims, Albanians, Croats were not willing to pacify the Slovenian republic, which pursed their dream to withdraw from the federation. It is worth noting that in the troops of the Fifth Military District, which were sent to the Slovenian-Yugoslav border, Albanians constituted 30%, Croats 20% and Muslims 10%. Many soldiers immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, laid down their arms and surrendered to Slovenians. More in: L. Benson (2004), *op. cit.*, p. 226; M. Kuczyński (1999), *op. cit.,* p. 38.

In December 1990, in an interview with the Belgrad "Danas" weekly, Kadijević said: "Territorial Defence, which was created in the late sixties and seventies, is [...] a huge deception. Currently it facilitates creation of a basis for republican foundations, bursting the state's unity"[32]. Combat effectiveness of Slovenian defence forces, which, together with militia units countered the federal army, was confirmed by an incredibly quick victory, which resulted in the signing of a declaration ending "the ten-day war" on July 8, on the island of Brioni. Under the agreement, the federal army was ordered to leave Slovenia, which, having obtained recognition on the international scene, became a fully independent state of Europe.[33] Small losses (about 60 killed) and the short duration of the military action were astonishing compared to the bloody and long war which took place in the territory of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the following months. The reasons were the lack of agreement between the military command and Milošević, ruthlessly aiming at war with Croatia over territories inhabited by Serbs, and the disproportionate effectiveness of the military, resulting from the federal army's disrespect for Slovenia's troops lacking heavy weapons. Another reason was the determination of Slovenes who, to win independence, stood up to tanks.[34]

CROATIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1991-1995)

Republic of Srbska Krajina

In parallel with the events that led to the secession of Slovenia, a conflict in the neighbouring Republic of Croatia flared up turning into a bloody war between its inhabitants, i.e. Croats and Croatian Serbs. Nationalistic ideas propagated by both Belgrade and Zagreb fed the fire of lurking ethnic animosities steadily deepening antagonisms between the nations.

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[32] D. Marijan (2000), *Jugoslavenska narodna armija u agresiji na Republiku Hrwatsku 1990-1992 godine,* "Časopis za suvremenu povijest" No. 2, p. 295, in: M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.,* p. 519.

[33] The first country to recognise independent states of Slovenia and Croatia was Germany, which did so disregarding decisions made at the European Community summit on 16 December 1991. The summit participants came to the conclusion that the recognition should take place in mid-January 1992, after Slovenia and Croatia have met international legal standards relating to e.g. protection of national minorities. German Chancellor Kohl's premature recognition of those countries was perceived as a symptom of arrogance and a step toward building the German sphere of influence in southern Europe. More on Germany's position on the secession of Slovenia and Croatia in: M. Waldenberg (2003), *Rozbicie Jugosławii...,* pp. 81-91.

[34] Journalist Tadeusz Olszański eye witnessed Slovenia's struggles for independence and described the confrontation of Slovenes and YPA soldiers as follows: "Tens of thousands of Slovenes went out to the roads and ran next to the columns of tanks. And it were not the barriers or hastily erected barricades, which, anyway, were crashed by the tanks, but the running exuberant crowds of thousands that, of course, were impossible to be shoot, which were the main cause of the defeat". T. Olszański (1995), *Mój brat Cię zabije!* Warszawa, p. 14.

Franjo Tudjman made a fundamental error disregarding demands of the Serbian minority living in a compact group in the region of the Military Frontier and Slavonia. Serbs demanded to be treated equally to the Croatian population. Lack of sensitivity in respect to Serbs' fear of Croatian domination in an independent state definitely contributed to escalating Croatian Serbs' hostility and led to the outbreak of the armed conflict. A manifestation of ill will toward the Serbian people, who for centuries lived in areas to be included in the planned independent Croatia[35], was the Constitutional Act of the Republic of Croatia, adopted by Franjo Tudjman's Croatian Democratic Union *(HDZ)* on 22 December 1991, which, with regard the peoples residing in the republic read as follows: "The Republic of Croatia is established as the nation state of the Croatian nation and the state of the members of autochthonous national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, and the others who are its citizens"[36]. That very wording in the Constitutional Act could well be a reason for concern about discrimination as Serbs were denied the right to regard themselves as a nation equivalent to Croats, and it was.[37] Milošević was Tudjman's "worthy" partner in the *danse macabre* which was spinning up, fuelling fears and separatist sentiments among Serbs, who ceased to accept their coexistence with Croats within the borders of one state. He did not hide his involvement in pursuing the idea of ethnically heterogeneous Great Serbia, and readiness to use the army in order to unite lands inhabited by the Serbian population. He hypocritically consented to the planned secession of Croatia, but firstly its borders were to be "corrected" and regions where Serbs had their homes adjoined to Serbia. Serbs' houses frequently were next to houses of Croats living on the same street, in the same village or town. Milošević's efficiency in creating Serbs' nationalistic phobias stemmed from his belief in the need for unification of all Serbs within one state, which "entitled" him to make territorial claims against other republics.

According to the then President of the Serbian republic, "only nations have the right to self-determination. The premise of the Serbian nation is that currently it has its own uniform federal state and, as a nation, wants to decide on its future from that perspective. Serbian people want to live in one state, with uniform civil rights, within the same, internationally recognised, borders, with one army, money, market. If anyone wants to live with the Serbian nation respecting equal rights, one is welcome. [...]. A federation of minimal functions which will be possible to perform effectively, is the best form of functioning for Yugoslavia. In practice it means that we negate republics' right to break away. And that is because the right is not theirs but nations"[38]. This short passage is a blunt demonstration of Milošević's skill to

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[35] It should be observed that Serbs constituted about 12% of the population living in densely populated enclaves in the Republic of Croatia.

[36] *The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia of 22 December 1990* [Polish translation: http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/tekO l/txt/konst/Chorwacja, accessed10.05.2012].

[37] M. Waldenberg (2003), *Rozbicie Jugosławii...,* p. 113.

[38] M. J. Zacharias (2004), *op. cit.,* p. 518.

create reality. By indicating that nations have the right to self-determination, he does not question Croatia's right to secede, but he also warns against disregarding the right of national minorities to determine their own status in a country. The support given to authors of the Autonomous Region of Krajina, formed within the borders of the Croatian republic, exemplified Milošević's views. One of the main protagonists of the tragedy in Croatia breaking up along ethnic division lines, was Milan Babić, who after the death of Jovan Rašković, succeeded him as President of the Serbian Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka - SDS*). The Party's main objective was to protect rights of Serbian people living in the Croatian Republic. Milan Babić, with the approval of Milošević, used exacerbated rhetoric toward Croatian politicians, fuelling resentments and nationalistic attitudes among his countrymen. Pursuing guidelines coming from Belgrade, the *SDS* aimed at making territories inhabited by Serbs independent from Zagreb. In August 1990, a referendum was held and over 90% of Serbs opted for political autonomy should the Croatian Republic leave Yugoslavia. The referendum produced a snowball effect. The lack of will to reach a compromise in the dispute and recognise antagonists' postulates, demonstrated by authorities in both Belgrade and in Zagreb, led to an escalation of separatist attitudes which resulted in the declaration of independence of the Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina (SARK) in February 1991.[39]

The announcement of the declaration of independence by Zagreb[40] led to self proclamation of the Serbian Autonomous Oblast of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Syrmia by Serbs living in Slavonia. Central Croatia was in the grip of Serbs, which, inevitably, led to a conflict. First armed clashes took place in the spring of 1990. They followed the non-recognition of the autonomy of territories inhabited by the Serbian people by authorities in Zagreb. [41] No consent to the secession of regions within the boundaries of the Republic of Croatia was justifiable since Tudjman by opposing authorities in Knin wanted to protect interests of Croats neighbouring with Serbs and threatened with resettlement.

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[39] The Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina, on 19 December 1991, i.e. during the ongoing war, transformed into the Republic of Serbian Krajina with its capital in Knin. This satisfied the conditions for its recognition as a state (people, power, territory), but it was not recognised internationally. Five days later, after a second autonomous area adjoined, the Republic constituted 27% of Croatia and was inhabited by about 500 thousand people. M. Kuczyński (1999), *op. cit.,* p. 76.

[40] Tadeusz Olszański, who was in Zagreb on that day, described the reaction of the people to the news about the declaration of independence as follows: "Bells tolled loudly in all churches, people stood to attention, many of them crying. [...] I was moved by the great joy and emotions of people waving Croatian flags everywhere, by this unique moment." T. Olszański (1995), *op. cit.,* p. 13. Cries of joy of the residents of the capital of a new independent state were followed by cries of despair in the ruins of bombarded Dubrovnik and levelled to the ground Vukovar.

[41] The first ethnically "motivated" incident occurred in the town of Benkovac, which after the Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina declared its independence, was part of it. Hostilities between Croats and Serbs in the newly proclaimed Republika Srpska escalated in spring 1991, when first fatal events started a period of hatred and killing.

"Murder of Vukovar" and ethnic cleansing

The end of the war in Slovenia was the first act of the Yugoslav tragedy. In the summer of 1991, forces clashed in the Republic of Croatia. A description of particular clashes between soldiers of the Serb army, supported by the federal army, and the Croatian National Guard should be left to historians. However, to reveal the strength of antagonisms between nations inhabiting the ruins of the SFRY, one should point to crimes that long haunted mutual relations and hindered the post war dialogue. The list of animosities is very broad: vicious murders, rapes, unimaginable atrocities committed in the name of ideology, material gains, traumatic effects of fear, et cetera. The war in Croatia had yet another dark face which Bogdan Bogdanović, a distinguished Serbian architect and essayist, called a "ritual murder of a city"[42].

On August 22, the Serbian army began the siege of Vukovar in eastern Slavonia. Vukovar was an ethnic mosaic or collage typical of borderlands. The mosaic was composed of Serbs, Croats, Hungarians, Jews, and Slovaks. After 90 days of fierce fighting, the city surrendered and what was left were ruins and ashes. Fatal casualties included about three thousand defenders and over two thousand Serbian soldiers. Over 50,000 Croats were displaced in the name of purifying Slavonia, which was to lose its multi-ethnic character for the sake of Serbian homogeneity. Vukovar, like bombarded Guernica, Rotterdam demolished by air raids, and ruined Warsaw, became a symbol of the brutal killing of the city, a perverse manifestation of power resorting to a scorched earth strategy. The policy of destroying everything foreign in order to make room for what is "one's own" triumphed once again, and the hopeful words of John Paul II, "no more war"[43], which should be the basic premise of political activities of the modern world, turned out to be but an illusion.

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[42] This phrase is the title of Bogdanović's essay published the Belgrade newspaper "Borba" in 1992. Bogdanović concluded that the destruction of the cities is a sign of barbarism and conscious renunciation of civilisation. He expressed concern that in case of extremism, defenders of Serb villages and disappointed captors of Croatian cities could lose themselves in an effort to clean up Serbia's foreign cultural accretions. And this, as he ironically concluded, would lead a situation in which if they opted for a completely racial and national revival of cities and devotedly work to that end, all of those whom they would not be able to expel forever, they would transform into monkeys as holy books advise. B. Bogdanović, *Murder of the City*, English translation: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1993/may/27/murder-of-the-city/ [Polish translation: *Rytualne zabijanie miasta,* "Krasnogruda" No. 6/1997, pp. 15-17.

[43] Quoting Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II said so in 1979, during his pilgrimage to the remains of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. His call for cessation of warfare at the memorial of victims of Nazi crimes remains universal. In the context of the bloody squandering of the Yugoslav coexistence legacy, it is also worth to refer again to his homily: "Never one at the other's expense, at the cost of the enslavement of the other, at the cost of conquest, outrage, exploitation and death." http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jpii_hom_19790607_polonia-brzezinka_en.html.

The fall of Vukovar and the ongoing fight for the city of Osijek mobilised the international community, which passively watched events in the Serbo-Croat battlefield, to take action.[44] Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Croatia, Cyrus Vance, negotiated with Tudjman and Milošević who decided to sign a truce. The next step in the normalisation of mutual relations was the acceptance of the peace plan designed by Vance, which provided for establishment of three demilitarised buffer zones (*United Nations Protection Areas – UNPA*), including Krajina and Eastern and Western Slavonia. The compliance with the conditions of the agreement and peace and security in the UPAs were to be ensured by UN peacekeeping troops, i.e. the United Nation Protection Force (UNPROFOR), established under the UN Security Council resolution of 21 February 1992. The introduction of "blue helmets" into the conflict area froze the front line. The UN mission did not prevent armed clashes between Serbian and Croatian soldiers in which more people were killed. The reason was the very nature of the UNPROFOR and restrictions on the use of arms.[45]

The consistent policy of Tudjman, who opposed the recognition of sovereignty of the Republic of Serbian Krajina, manifested itself in the Croatian military offensives repeated in 1993. They were opposed by the Security Council which demanded withdrawal of Croatian troops. Despite international mediation and the signed truce, the source of the conflict did not cease. It was fuelled by conflicting plans put forward by the Serbian and the Croatian parties[46]. The stalemate was overcome with tanks and machine guns in the spring and summer of 1995.

In the military operation codenamed "Lightning", the Croatian army captured Pakrac and Okučani, which were the main municipalities in Western Slavonia. The Croatian offensive led to a mass departure of Serbs living there (about 30-40 thousand people), which prompted the Security Council to condemn the "Lightning" operation, call for a truce and stopping human rights violation. Under the impact of events in neighbouring Bosnia, where Bosnian Serbs, Muslims and Croats fought one another, Tudjman decided to keep Serbian forces fighting and attack Krajina.

On 5 August, at dawn, the Croatian army launched a massive operation codenamed "Storm" which, after several days of fierce fighting, resulted in the defeat

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[44] Polish publications especially interesting in this context are: S. Wojciechowski (2003), *Społeczność międzynarodowa wobec kryzysu jugosłowiańskiego - wybrane aspekty,* „Przegląd Politologiczny" No. 3, pp. 31-36; M. Waldenberg (2002), *Narody zależne...*, pp. 444-447.

[45] From the beginning of military operations (25 June 1991) to the establishment of the peacekeeping force (21 February 1992) more than 10 thousand people lost their lives and about three thousand were found missing. Around 380 thousand Croats and 170 thousand Serbs were forced to change their place of residence due to ethnic cleansing. M. Kuczyński (1999), *op. cit.,* p. 50.

[46] In the 1994 referendum in Krajina, a vast majority of Croatian Serbs (over 90% of votes cast) chose that the republic join Yugoslavia. Tudjman, supported by the UN which decided that Krajina was Croatia's integral part, headed toward gradually taking control over the Serb-inhabited areas by Croatian forces.

of Serbian forces and caused massive expulsion of about 200 thousand Serbs from territories inhabited by them for generations. Forced migration of people - both Serbs and Croats, who fearing for their lives had to leave their homes, is one of unquestionable war atrocities. It affected individuals forced to go on exile frequently under threat of death, but also wasted the long coexistence of different nations, burdened after the war with the memory of mutual grievances and ethnic hatred that constitute an barrier on the road to forgiveness and dialogue. Atrocious murders, which in the course of the war were committed by both parties in conflict, cast shadow on Serbo-Croatian relations. Actions of the paramilitary troop of Serbian criminal, businessman and MP Želijko Ražnatović, known as Arkan, made a dark legend.[47] He created and financed a paramilitary force called *Tigrisi* (Tigers) responsible for the extermination of civilians after capturing the hospital in Vukovar. The wounded and the staff (about 300 people) were taken to the nearby village of Ovčara and executed there. The Croatian army under the command of Dobroslav Paraga, the leader of the extreme nationalist Croatian Party of Rights, was also responsible for ethnic cleansing crimes including genocide and forced relocation. At the beginning of the war, Paraga headed the Croatian Defence Alliance (*HOS*), which aided regular troops in the fight against Serbs, executing Serbian civilians in line with the Ustaše ideology.[48]

Buildings can be rebuilt, windows replaced, bullet holes can be masked, one may start working again, hang out with friends at a nearby restaurant. But where to find a cure for memories, a remedy to help forget the death one's father, mother, neighbour, forget about life to which there is no return? The war in Croatia which is now independent and grows rapidly, produced a void left by the expelled, killed, and buried in anonymous graves. Dubravka Ugrešić, a Croatian writer, in one of her essays wrote: "Seen from outside, at this moment the Yugoslav peoples resemble demented gravediggers. They appear stubbornly to confirm the dark stereotypes others have of them. Included in that repertoire of **stereotypes** is the idea that, throughout their history, the Balkan peoples have done nothing other than bury and dig up human."[49] Great determination of every individual affected by the war is needed for these words to become outdated, and for the desire of neutral coexistence to overcome mutual animosities.

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[47] Ražnatović, wanted in the 1990s by INTERPOL for robberies and murders, during the war became a close associate of Milošević. From 1992 he was a member and founder of the pro-presidential Party of Serbian Unity. Indicted by the ICTY for crimes against humanity, he said he recognised only courts in his country because they were independent. In his view, the court in Hague was a "political court". He was shoot dead in 2000 in Belgrade. There have been insinuations that he was assassinated on the order of Milošević who wanted to neutralise the threat of Ražnatović's knowledge of his actions. More in: H. Suchar, *Śmierć kata,* „Wprost" No. 4/2000, p. 34.

[48] M. Kuczyński (1999), *op. cit.,* p. 46

[49] D. Ugrešić, *The Confiscation of Memory*. "New Left Review" I/218, July-August 1996, http://newleftreview.org/I/218/dubravka-ugresic-the-confiscation-of-memory.

BOSNIA: "THE DAMNED YARD"[50]

Bombardment of Sarajevo

On 1 March 1992, in the background of the ongoing conflict in Croatia, the authorities of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, called "Little Yugoslavia" due to its ethnic composition, held a referendum on the independence of the republic. This day is now celebrated as the country's Independence Day. However, as it was rightly observed by writer and journalist Gojko Berić, a Sarajevo inhabitant of Serbian origin, the holiday is of importance to Bošnjak-Muslims only. For both Croats and Serbs, it "evokes unpleasant associations"[51] . This observation is not surprising, considering that what politicians did at the time, led to a division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into territories hostile toward each other. In December 1991, Radovan Karadžić, implementing the idea of an alliance of all Serbs who should live in one state, proclaimed independence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its capital in Banja Luka. Assured by Sarajevo that Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted to leave the federation in January 1992, he proclaimed that the new republic joined Yugoslavia. In effect, first armed clashes between Serbs and Muslims and Croats took place. Bosnian Croats living in a compact group in western Herzegovina and the so-called Posavina in the vicinity of Orasje in the north of Bosnia, in the first stage of the conflict opted for the republic independence, provided that areas dominated by them ethnically would potentially enjoy wide autonomy. Hand in hand with Muslims, in the spring of 1992, they opposed Bosnian Serbs. It should be noted, however, that the Croat-Muslim alliance, aimed at preventing the Serbian territorial expansion, was part of political games played by Mate Boban, the leader of Bosnian Croats. The fight against the common enemy increased Croats' chances to prevent Serbs from taking lands, which, in accordance with Mate Boban's and Tudjman's plans, were to be adjoined to Croatia, once Bosnia and Herzegovina were divided. The proclamation of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia with its capital in Mostar, in July 1992, was part of the project. Since then, chaos overwhelmed Bosnia and everyone fought everyone.

The city of Sarajevo was a witness to the drama.[52] Already during the war, it became a symbol of Bošnjaks' resistance and suffering. It was Sarajevo about which Muhamed Nerkesija, a poet who lived at the turn of the 16th and 17th century, said: "no other city like it ever existed"[53]. On 6 April 1992, the date of Bosnia and Her-

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[50] *The Damned Yard* is a title of Ivo Andrić's novel. Andrić was a Bosnian novelist and the 1961 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature. *The Damned Yard* refers to a prison yard and is an allegory of enslavement by terror, fear and hatred, of a palce where everybody is guilty.

[51] G. Berić, *Ziemia niczyja,* „Gazeta Wyborcza" 24.02.2005, p. 15.

[52] On 1 March, the day of the referendum, a wedding procession in the Muslim part of Sarajevo was fired at. The victim was a Serb who carried the Serbian flag. Other guests were surrounded by Muslims and beaten. Cf. *ibid*., p. 181.

[53] J. Tlałka-Stovrag (2007), *Jeszcze żyję...,* Bydgoszcz-Kraków, p. 11.

zegovina's declaration of independence, Sarajevo, emblazoned in prose and poetry, was mercilessly besieged. The Army of Republika Srpska stationed in the surrounding hills and Sarajevo was bombarded almost continuously.[54] Reports from the capital of the newly formed state, which for over three years was besieged Serb forces, are a poignant testimony to the ravages caused by war which destroyed Bosnia and Herzegovina like cancer.[55] Throughout the entire period of the war, residents of the city were exposed to the threat of death in result of artillery or sniper fire[56]; they suffered from malnutrition, cold and relentless fear of being forced to leave their homes. More than 11 thousand people were killed in besieged Sarajevo and several thousand were forced to flee. The city, which before the war was a symbol of transnational cultural and religious symbiosis, ceased to exist. What was left were only the Sarajevo roses, a burnt library, bombarded churches, mosques and orthodox churches. There were also countless graves in cemeteries, which during the war were the only places where a Serb, Croat and Muslim could rest in peace one next to another.

Mostar - Stari Most

The agreement on the common fight against Serbs, reached by Tudjman and Izetbegović in June 1992, proved to be short-lived. The proclamation of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia by Mate Boban a month later, in fact meant breaking the alliance and was a signal for Muslims to prepare to a war with Bosnian Croats. The bloodiest clashes between nations took place in Mostar, the capital of the historic region of Herzegovina, chosen by Bosnian Croats for the capital of the newly formed Republic. Mostar, due to the lack of a nation prevailing and long peaceful coexistence of different nations, better exemplified a pre-war peaceful cohabitation than Sarajevo. According to the last pre-war census, Mostar population was 34.8% Muslim, 33.8% Serb, 19% Croat and 12.4% defined as "others", most of whom identified themselves with the non-existent Yugoslav nation. Divided into East and West

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[54] Withdrawal of heavy equipment by means of which Sarajevo was bombarded for several years took place only in February 1994 as a result of an ultimatum given to Serbs by the command of NATO, which implied that failure to move the artillery over 20 km away from Sarajevo would result in a NATO military intervention.

[55] The situation in Sarajevo was documented by Poles, mainly in reports of war correspondents who were present in the city during the conflict. Recommended readings include: T. Olszański (1995), *op. cit.;* R. Bilski (2000), *Widok na Sarajevo,* Warszawa; D. Warszawski (1995), *Obrona poczty sarajewskiej,* Warszawa; S. Stovrag, *Pozwólcie mi milczeć,* „Gazeta Wyborcza" 16.10.1995. The most reliable Polish publication covering all conflicts in the former Yugoslavia since 1993, is the book by Dawid Warszawski, *Obrona poczty sarajewskiej*. Warszawski accompanied the Special Envoy of the UN Human Rights Commission, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and had a direct access to testimonies of the war victims.

[56] The main street of the city, where most important buildings were located including a Holiday Inn which hosted foreign journalist, became a symbol of unexpected death inflicted by a rifle bullet. It was commonly known as the Sniper Avenue as it was filled with warnings: *Pazi - snajper* (Watch out for snipers).

by the Neretva River, Mostar was an example of a city where ethnic origin was of minor importance. Muslims densely inhabited the easten part of the city and Croats lived the western part. This division became relevant only after nationalist feeling escalated. Before the war, "You were neither a Croat nor a Muslim or Serb. You were a Mostarian, proud of coming from this city."[57]. Bombardment of Mostar made its citizens aware that the feeling of injustice when loved ones die calls for an identified enemy. Suddenly, it became relevant on which bank of the Neretva River one lived. In result of the fights between Muslims, Croats and Serbs, for whom the city became a battleground, not only its residents suffered. Mostar, like Vukovar, bombarded by Serbs Dubrovnik, and methodically destroyed Sarajevo, was a victim of the barbaric murder of the city by destroying its monuments and annihilation of manifestations of its culture, the roots of which went back many centuries. Events which took place on 9 November 1993, illustrate the point. On that day, in result of Croatian artillery fire from the nearby hills, the Old Bridge - the symbol of the city fell into the Neretva River. The *Stari Most,* called the "heavenly firmament" and the "stone crescent", was built in the 16th century at the order of Suleiman the Magnificent. Constructed by master Hayruddin, the Sultan's architect, it became an object admired throughout the Ottoman empire, as evidenced by Evliya Celebi, a famous sixteenth-century Turkish traveller, who wrote: "Viziers, nobles and high-ranking people would come from all sides to enjoy the view of the bridge."[58] Thus on the banks of the river a city began to emerge that owned its name to the so-called *Mostari*, i.e. "the bridge keepers". The demolition of the ancient symbol of the city, which not only was an example of the artistry of its builders but, most of all, a stone structure bonding people divided by a river, clearly demonstrates the intensity of ethnic hatred, the goal of which was the destruction of everything that was of "the others". The bridge, which for centuries served both Muslims and Serbs and Croats, was destroyed. Its remains at the bottom of the river can be considered an allegory of the ties between nations broken by the war. It is worth recalling the words of Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulić, who accurately assessed the importance of the destruction of the bridge writing that for four centuries, people needed the bridge and admired it. The question is not who bombarded and destroyed it. It is not even why somebody did so as destruction is part of human nature. The question is: what kind of people do not need the bridge? The only answer that has come to Drakulić's mind is: people without faith in the future - their own or their children's future - do not need that bridge.[59]

Drakulić worried but there were people who wanted to cure the wounds inflicted by the war. The ending of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 made rebuilding the destroyed bridge possible. With the support of EU funds and using parts of the bridge resting on the bottom of the river, the "stone crescent" has once again

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[57] J. Schneider, *Mostar* [Polish translation], "Krasnogruda" No. 6/1997, p. 145.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[59] C. Merril, *Stary Most*, [Polish translation], *ibid.*, p. 161.

bridged the banks of the Neretva in 2003. The rebuilding of the bridge can be seen as the first symbolic step toward establishing relations and forgiving the harm inflicted in the course of military operations.

ABSTRACT

The object of the study are the determinants of the collapse of Yugoslavia considering the historical circumstances that defined the shape of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and were a basis of erosive movements at the beginning of the 1990s that led to a bloody conflict. Relations among the Yugoslav nations under the rule of Josip Broz Tito are described. The situation in the federation on the threshold of war is analyzed with emphasis on the decisions of the political elite of those times who perceived armed conflict as instrumental in implementing the ideas of creating independent political organisms. The course of the 10-day war that led to the emergence of Slovenia as an independent state, is outlined. The endeavors of political decision makers to create a nationally homogeneous Croatia to the exclusion of the vital interests of the Serbian minority inhabiting compact enclaves in the region of the Military Frontier and Slavonia are discussed. The character of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is shown through a description of the besieged Sarajevo, a divided Mostar, the balance of wrongs experienced by inhabitants of Bosnia due to atrocities committed by all the warring parties.



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Stabilizacja nieładu i destabilizacja ładu Kryzysy humanitarne wywołane działalnością człowieka część I

[Disorder stabilisation and order destabilisation
Humanitarian crises caused by human activity, part 1]

Joanna Dobrowolska-Polak, Editor

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Humanitarian crises resulting from human activities are major threats to global security. They constitute a serious challenge to security policy of a state, its allies and partners.

The international community has instruments to ensure stabilisation: soft power of diplomacy, international sanctions, peacekeeping missions, military interventions and humanitarian aid. They constitute a comprehensive set of measures available to global powers and international organisations. However, in regions plagued by humanitarian crises, comprehensive stabilisation missions (preventing massive violations of human rights, enforcement of truce, restoration of peace and foundations of statehood, delivery of essential humanitarian goods) are held only occasionally. In most cases, different countries and organisations pursue fragmentary actions; sometimes their operations redundantly double; and often they are passive in face of humanitarian crises.

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The authors of papers included in this volume try to assess the impact of states and international organisations on areas of armed conflicts and failed states' territories and, vice versa, the impact of humanitarian crises on international and national security. They mostly focus on security policy of countries in the Euro-Atlantic region in relation to third countries outside the region, including the existing (and being shaped) security policies of international organisations, namely NATO and the European Union. Other issues discussed are socio-economic and political-military consequences of armed conflicts and consequences of failed states for stability, peace, and security in the Euro-Atlantic region and globally.