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Foreign Policy In Focus



FPIF Strategic Dialogue

Why Yugoslavia Still Matters



John Feffer | April 6, 2009

Editor: Emily Schwartz Greco

Foreign Policy In Focus

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This is part of a strategic dialogue on Yugoslavia. See Ed Herman's opposing argument [here](#), and their respective responses [here](#).

Yugoslavia, though you cannot find it any longer on maps, is still very much with us. The wars and political turmoil that convulsed this multiethnic country in the 1990s continue to reverberate today. These aftershocks can be felt in the standoff around Kosovo's independence, the political fragmentation in Bosnia, the conflict between Macedonia and Greece, and the failure of European integration to encompass most of what was once Eastern Europe's most Western-leaning country.

The country held responsible for Yugoslavia's disintegration and many of the ills that still affect the region is Serbia. Slobodan Milosevic, even after his death in 2006, remains a symbol of all that went wrong in that corner of southeastern Europe: corruption, militarism, ethnic cleansing. His four-year trial at the UN International Criminal Tribunal provided the world with a picture of a proud, self-serving, and mendacious figure desperate to rescue his legacy: the Richard Nixon of the Balkans.

It's all too easy to pin the blame for Yugoslavia's disintegration solely on Serbia and Milosevic. Other actors share responsibility for what took place in the 1990s, including the United States and NATO. The best writers on Yugoslavia have chronicled Croatia's ethnic cleansing campaigns, Slovenia's role in undoing Yugoslav federalism, and the war crimes of *mujahideen* fighters in Bosnia. They have challenged claims of genocide in Kosovo prior to NATO's bombing in 1999, and they have detailed the crimes committed against ethnic Serbs.

Providing such a well-rounded picture of Yugoslavia is essential, particularly in order to move beyond the current stalemates in the region. But the crimes committed by Serbia and Slobodan Milosevic in particular shouldn't disappear from all of this contextualizing. Unfortunately, for some writers on the left, providing a full context for understanding the disintegration of Yugoslavia requires just such a whitewashing. This revisionist history of Yugoslavia is even more one-sided than the mainstream media reporting that it criticizes. For every useful fact that the revisionists bring to the table there is a telling gap or historical distortion in their accounts.

The revisionists have disputed Milosevic's guilt, the disproportionate role that Serbia played in the Balkan bloodshed, and even the genocide of Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) in Srebrenica. It would be as if a group of analysts of World War II suddenly focused on the crimes of Hungarian, Romanian, and Ukrainian fascists in order to deny or diminish German responsibility for the Final Solution. The question is: Why are these revisionists fighting the Yugoslav wars all over again?

Serbian Nationalism

Anyone visiting Belgrade in the late 1980s without a cursory knowledge of Cyrillic might have mistaken all the signs and bumper stickers with hearts on them for a festival of love. In fact, the signs declared: *I [Heart] Serbia*. They frequently appeared next to pictures of the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic. Marooned in Belgrade in the summer of 1989 on my way to Dubrovnik, I was

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taken aback by this outpouring of affection for homeland and leader. I was still under the impression that Yugoslavia was an outpost of communist internationalism and that only post-war leader Marshal Tito merited a personality cult.

After doing a little research I discovered that Serbia was indeed experiencing a nationalist revival, which had been gathering steam since Tito's death in 1980. An adherent of the formula "strong Yugoslavia, weak Serbia," Tito had deliberately cut Serbia down to size by creating within the republic two autonomous regions — Kosovo and Vojvodina. Under Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia attempted to regain its past, mythic glory. From July 1988 to spring 1989, according to [Robert Thomas](#) in *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s*, Milosevic organized mass public rallies that featured nationalist songs and slogans — "In all the places where there are Serbian souls, that is the home and the hearth-place of my birth" — that mobilized 5 million Serbs. In spring 1989, on the heels of these rallies and just before my trip to Belgrade, Milosevic rescinded a 1974 compromise that had given Kosovo an even greater measure of autonomy from Belgrade. In March, ethnic Albanians demonstrated in Pristina, and riot police killed 24 demonstrators. The federal government cracked down, and Kosovo's *intifada* began.

When I returned to the United States that fall, I gave various presentations on the situation in Eastern Europe in that miraculous year of 1989. At one presentation, however, several people in the audience took issue with my characterization of a Serbian nationalist resurgence. "There is no such thing," they told me. "But I saw it with my own eyes," I reported. "You are mistaken," they told me. "Mihailo Markovic says that Milosevic is not a Serbian nationalist."

Mihailo Markovic was an influential Yugoslav philosopher who helped found the critical-thinking Praxis group, which combined Marxism and humanism. He'd taught in the United States and had lost his teaching job in Belgrade because of his heretical views. More recently, though, he'd become a kind of presiding figure for a sliver of the U.S. left that believed, against much evidence to the contrary, that Slobodan Milosevic was Yugoslavia's last, true socialist and internationalist.

Markovic appears in this guise as a witness for the defense in Milosevic's trial in The Hague in Edward Herman and David Peterson's revisionist essay [The Dismantling of Yugoslavia](#). In this account, Markovic confirms Milosevic's contention that there never was a plan for a Greater Serbia. This was the equivalent of Adolf Hitler calling Joseph Goebbels as a witness for his defense. What Herman and Peterson neglect to mention is that Markovic was a chief ideologue for Milosevic's party and a defender of Milosevic's push for Serbian expansion. In the mid-1980s, Markovic was one of the authors of a controversial memorandum that stoked the fires of Serb nationalism. "The SANU Memorandum laid the groundwork for all that is happening now, foreseeing as it did the coming together of all Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the ethnic borders, thus enabling a clash with the creators of the new world order," Markovic [wrote](#).

Milosevic was not by any means a blood-and-soil nationalist like his sometimes right-wing partner Vojislav Seselj. Milosevic used nationalism as a mechanism to seize power within the Yugoslav Socialist Party, to whip up political support by exploiting the Kosovo issue, and to mobilize Serbian fears in the conflict with Croatia. His instrumental devotion to a Greater Serbia is well-documented. As the country around him disintegrated, he used "Yugoslavia" as a code word for Serbian domination. "Either Yugoslavia's various nations would accept Serbia's vision of a 'normal,' unified state that served Serbian interests, or Serbs from all the republics would 'join together' and achieve their national unity by force," [writes](#) Serbian peace activist Vesna Pesic.

Milosevic was willing to unleash the furies of nationalism to achieve his political goals. Long before his Kosovo campaign of the late 1990s — and NATO's response — Milosevic set Yugoslavia on the road to disintegration: not because he desired that outcome but because he craved power above all.

Vukovar and Srebrenica

In their accounts of the wars that convulsed Yugoslavia, the revisionists often jump over the incidents that reflect most poorly on Milosevic and Serbian state policy. Consider the matter of Vukovar, the town in Croatia that the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) along with Serbian paramilitary forces leveled in fall 1991. As Croatia seceded from Yugoslavia, the Milosevic regime encouraged the Serb minority in Croatia to declare its independence in turn. The Serb minority had reason to be concerned about the clerical, authoritarian state that Franjo Tudjman was creating in Croatia, and it was within its rights to clamor for greater self-determination. But Milosevic wasn't interested in asserting political principles. Through control of the national army and the secret police, Milosevic militarized the conflict.

The culmination of this strategy was the battle over the border town of Vukovar. Preceded by the killing and mutilation of Croatian policemen and the ethnic cleansing of several surrounding villages, Vukovar became the symbol of Serbian aggression. The siege of the town lasted for 87 days. The JNA won in the end, but sustained heavy losses. Tens of thousands of Croats were expelled, an unknown number were executed. In the most notorious massacre, Serbian paramilitaries executed nearly 200 hospital patients. It wasn't only the international community that turned against Serbia and

Milosevic after Vukovar. Serbs themselves, disgusted by the war, expressed their disapproval by draft-dodging in large numbers, leaving the country, and supporting the Serbian peace movement.

When it comes to Srebrenica, the revisionists work hard to call into question the very notion that a massacre took place there in July 1995. The Internet is full of stories declaring the massacre a "hoax." Diana Johnstone, in her [book](#) *Fool's Crusade*, takes on the commonly cited figure of 8,000 Bosniak deaths. She points out that only 2,300 bodies were exhumed by 2001 and only 50 identified. "In an area where fighting had raged for years, some of the bodies were certainly of Serbs as well as of Muslims," she writes.

Johnstone writes as though we have only forensic evidence. But there are countless eyewitness accounts, interviews with survivors, meticulously composed lists of missing persons, and even video footage taken by the Serbian Ministry of the Interior's Skorpion unit involved in the massacre. In any case, her numbers are now out of date. More mass graves have been found in the last several years. The International Commission on Missing Persons has exhumed and identified more than 5,000 victims through DNA analysis. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague has convicted several of those responsible for the massacre. And the Bosnian Serb government itself has [apologized](#) after issuing a report acknowledging the responsibility of Bosnian Serb forces in killing more than 7,000 Bosniaks.

Serbs against Milosevic

Some of the strongest voices against Milosevic, against the Serb conduct in the Yugoslav wars, and against Serbian nationalism in general have come from Serbs themselves. These voices are largely absent from the revisionist accounts. Serbia under Milosevic was not Germany under Hitler. Thousands of Serbs protested against Milosevic; thousands dodged the draft and went AWOL; thousands joined the peace movement and the opposition. And, in 2000, they succeeded in a nonviolent democratic revolution to unseat Milosevic once and for all.

The Serbian left — Svetozar Stojanovic, also of the Praxis Group, Vesna Pesic of the anti-war movement, Sonja Licht formerly of the Open Society Fund — was particularly harsh in its criticism of Milosevic. Zoran Djindjic, who handed Milosevic over to the war crimes tribunal, spoke for many in Serbian society when he [told](#) Norwegian writer Asne Seierstad that Milosevic "built a web of wickedness. He manipulated us for 13 years. He starved the whole country with his madness for war, and turned the rest of the world against us." Maja Miljkovic [wrote](#): "Under the Milosevic regime the Serbian political elite succeeded in destroying the basis of the identity of the Serbian nation: its democratic structure, economy, and culture."

Milosevic was able to secure a measure of popular support. Thanks to his manipulation of Serbian fears and his control of the media, he managed to win elections. His opposition was often more nationalist than he was. Even the democratic opposition took nationalist stands, particularly on the Kosovo issue. This, too, was Milosevic's legacy: putting nationalism at the core of Serbian politics to such a degree that no candidate or party could easily resist its pull. Still, Milosevic did not represent all Serbian views. And when his project sputtered in Croatia and Bosnia — much as the imperial project of the Bush administration did in Iraq and Afghanistan — the people turned away from him.

Serbia has begun the difficult process of shouldering responsibility for the tragedies of the Balkan wars. In The Hague, 147 accused have appeared before the ICTY: 95 Serbs, 31 Croats, 14 Bosniaks, and seven Kosovar Albanians. Serbian government officials, sometimes under pressure but often as a result of evidence presented, have cooperated with the tribunal. Today, Serbia is a different place than it was during the Milosevic years, one with a thriving civil society and cultural scene. "Everything has changed in Serbia from the point of view of economy, of understanding difference, of intercultural discussion," activist Andrej Nosov [told me](#) in Belgrade in 2007. "But in connection with Kosovo, nothing has changed." So, this process of coming to terms with the past is still a vital part of Serbia's present.

Why Revise?

The revisionist eagerness to rescue Milosevic's reputation seems odd. He wasn't an attractive or charismatic figure. He wasn't committed to progressive politics. He was overthrown by his own people. He did, however, stand up to the United States. Under Milosevic, Serbia withstood the first ever military campaign by NATO. Herein seems to lie the revisionist motive. If Milosevic stood up to the U.S. imperium in 1999, then surely he must have been a worthy figure during the preceding wars.

This "enemy of my enemy is my friend" approach has seduced the left in the past, prompting support of figures like Mao in China or Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Just as we should be clear-eyed about U.S. military and economic power, we should be equally attentive to the motives, actions, and lies of authoritarian leaders who stand up to the United States.

The flip side of this softness for anti-American tyrants is the tendency to see the U.S. hand behind all the world's ills. The revisionists focus on U.S. imposition of neoliberal economic reforms in Yugoslavia

in the late 1980s, relying a great deal on Susan Woodward's arguments in the [book](#) *Balkan Tragedy*. As someone who [made such arguments](#) even before Woodward, I am sympathetic to this analysis. However, the application of shock therapy was part of the cookie-cutter approach that the United States and the International Monetary Fund brought to the region. I don't believe that U.S. officials intended such measures to destroy Yugoslavia. The country wasn't, after all, an enemy, and U.S. officials generally prefer predictability and stability.

This preference for stability carried through into the war years. George H.W. Bush's administration was determined to stay out of the brewing conflict ("We have no dog in that fight," Secretary of State James Baker famously [said](#) at the time). The Clinton administration was dragged kicking and screaming into involvement in the conflict, and U.S. negotiators like Richard Holbrooke showed a predilection for negotiating with Milosevic in the service of preserving some measure of status quo. Later, of course, the Clinton administration backed the Croatian army in its terrifying turning of the tables and bombed Belgrade to put an end to the Kosovo crisis. As a result of these actions, the United States indeed has much to answer for. But it would be a mistake to project this involvement back into the earlier stages of the war.

So, in the end, the revisionists are fighting the Yugoslav wars again for the same reason that the neoconservatives fight the Vietnam War over and over. Both want to repair the reputation of a statesman (Milosevic, Nixon), salve the wounds of the losers (Serbia, the United States), and explain the resolution of the conflict through reference to a conspiracy (U.S. malfeasance behind the scenes by the government in the first case and the peace movement in the second).

Serbia, like Vietnam, has moved on. It's time for the revisionists to do likewise.

John Feffer is the co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies.

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Name: L **Date:** Apr 06, 2009

Until all victims of 90's civil war and WW2 are recognized, most likely there won't be peace in Balcan. Serbs are dedicated as evel, all others as angels. Serbs need to be punished, others need to be rewarded for their crimes. Kosovo Albanians and Croats wanted separation from Yogo and they are those who steared the war in Balcans with help from west-as simple as that. West needed Kosovo for NATO convenience to keep on eye on Middle East and natural resarces. When did west ever admit its mistakes? It is allways other guy, never us.

Name: William **Date:** Apr 06, 2009

It is wrong to soley blame one country and one person for the fall of an entire country without getting all the historical facts straight.

Name: Louis Proyect **Date:** Apr 06, 2009

I urge one and all to keep your eye out for David Gibb's book on the Balkan Wars, "First Do No Harm" that is supposed to be available in June or so of this year.

Name: Julianne Schwartz **Date:** Apr 07, 2009

Something to add about war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. The following is from 'The Scholars Initiative - Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies'. Teams of scholars from around the world and from all former Yugoslav Republics were brought together to confront the lies and truths about the wars in the former Yugoslavia (note: each team consisted of at least one Serb to avoid bias)

Between 1991 and 1995, as many as three million people were displaced in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina by “ethnic cleansing” -- “a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.” Most scholars concur that “ethnic cleansing” (1) is carried out systematically, (2) identifies and targets specific groups by ethnicity, nationality, or religion, (3) entails the deliberate use of violence, and (4) reflects the intent of the authorities either to support such a practice or to refrain from prevention.

Given the extensiveness of crimes committed in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, significant gaps remain in what we know. What follows should be regarded as a preliminary report, which will be updated periodically as additional research by international agencies and individual scholars fill some of the gaps in the historical data. Nonetheless, it is clear that “ethnic cleansing” and other crimes were perpetrated to some extent by all parties in the conflict, and that there were victims on all sides, although the gravity and dimension differed markedly. The great majority of the violations were committed by Serb forces, first in Croatia during the second half of 1991 in Slavonia and the Krajina, then from April to October 1992 in Bosnia, principally against Bosniacs, although Bosnian-Croats and up to 30,000 Roma were also targeted. Within Bosnia, perhaps 70% of all expulsions and deaths occurred in April-August 1992, the overwhelming majority committed by Serbian forces. Of the final tally of 2.2 million expellees and 100,000 killed, a clear majority were Bosniacs. Over 80% of non-Serbs disappeared from the territory of Republika Srpska. Whereas Serb forces were responsible for the great bulk of rapes committed in Bosnia, earlier estimates of 50,000 victims are at least twice the actual number; much more research needs to be undertaken on this subject.

Although the JNA evidently drafted contingency plans for war in Bosnia in 1991, no written document has yet come to light that would prove conclusively that the government in Belgrade planned a campaign of “ethnic cleansing”. There are, however, many indications that this was its intent, including published statements by several Serbian and Bosnian-Serb political and military officials, and what the UN Commission of Experts concluded were discernible operational patterns of violence and expulsion that were carried out with remarkable speed and efficiency. Indeed, the geographically contiguous areas in which the expulsions occurred coincided closely with prior declarations of the necessity of creating two “corridors of life” in the Drina Valley and the Posavina Corridor. The methods employed included discrimination (i.e. in employment, health care), intimidation, repression, beatings, torture, rape, the destruction of homes, detention, expulsion, and summary execution. The single greatest incident of violence against civilians occurred in July 1995 with the execution of 6,500-8,800 Bosniac men and boys, together with the expulsion of over 30,000 civilians from there and

Žepa. (See 6: Safe Areas)

Croat forces also conducted “ethnic cleansing” campaigns against Bosniacs around Mostar and central Bosnia in 1993, as well as against Serbs in western Bosnia. Discrimination against civilians also accounts for at least some of the 78,000 Serbs who fled Croatia in 1991 though this was mostly due to the 200,000 Croat and Bosniac refugees who fled to Croatia after being expelled by Serb forces. In a few instances, Bosnian Muslim forces victimized Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but only on an ad hoc basis and on a much smaller scale than the other belligerents. Fundamentalist Muslims (Mujahedin) also perpetrated significant atrocities against Croats and Serbs. A similar pattern manifested itself in the destruction of cultural heritage, with Serbian forces destroying most Catholic and virtually all Muslim houses of worship in areas under their control, while Croatian forces superficially damaged a small amount of Orthodox and Muslim sites, and Bosnian government forces left virtually all non-Muslim sites unharmed. Moreover, there is no evidence to support claims by Serbian media in 1991-92 of master plans concocted in Zagreb and Sarajevo to commit genocide against Croatia’s or Bosnia’s Serbian minorities.

Despite its undeniable brutality, “ethnic cleansing” should not per se be equated with “genocide” (defined as acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group). To date, only a few of the most extreme examples of “ethnic cleansing” in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina can be characterized as acts of genocide, most notably the Srebrenica massacre in 1995 and Vukovar in 1991. Forcible transfer does not constitute in and of itself a genocidal act. Only when “ethnic cleansing” implies the specific intent of extermination, does it represent genocide. Politically charged debates over the term and its definition cannot, however, call into question the extent and horror of the crimes committed and recounted in this report.

Name: Wim Roffel **Date:** Apr 07, 2009
Strange article.

At the end of the Cold War you saw nationalisms rising everywhere in the former communist countries as people heard a lot that you were not allowed to discuss under communism. This included discrimination of Serbs in Croatia and specially Kosovo. It was the good democratic right of the Serbs to ask that something should be done about that. It was also their good democratic right to ask for border changes. After all there was nothing sacred about the borders between the republics. They had only been drawn after World War II by the communists and as now became clear one of their goals had been to keep the Serbs under control. Many countries modify their provincial borders when needed.

The SANU had held shortly before an [enquete](#) among Serbs who had left Kosovo, so they knew what they wrote about.

Yugoslavia obviously needed a lot of discussion. Unfortunately the West refused to condemn Croatia and Slovenia for blocking national elections for Yugoslavia. The local nationalists there knew they looked better when they could paint the central government as not chosen and not democratic. This was defended by claiming that Milosevic wanted to rule the whole of Yugoslavia. But Serbs were only 36% of the population and only about half of them supported Milosevic.

The Yugoslav constitution stipulated that separation was possible but "in mutual agreement" and this was meant to be a huge obstacle. Yet when Slovenia declared independence and some violence followed (mostly by Slovenes) Europe treated the Slovenian government and the Yugoslav government as equals - implicitly recognizing Slovenia. This attitude was formalized half a year later when the Badinter Commission threw the Yugoslav constitution out of the window by declaring Yugoslavia as "in dissolution".

Croatia has now 400,000 Serbs less than before the war. The hostility that led many to leave urged others to declare "autonomous areas". Yes, they committed war crimes - but they had a cause. And Milosevic had a good reason to support them.

The Bosnia conflict did not start Arkan and his men entered Bosnia. It started when Bosnia's Muslims refused the Lisbon agreement and declared independence without bothering to negotiate with the Serbs. It got worse when the first government after independence was completely Muslim-dominated.

The discrimination of the Albanians in Kosovo was not an invention of Milosevic. He had copied it from the Croats who used the same methods (including demanding the signing of loyalty declarations as an excuse to fire people from their jobs) to discriminate against their Serb minority. As the Croats could get away with it Milosevic believed he could get away with it too. Note also the similarity between Operation Storm that drove the Serbs from the Krajina and the behavior of the Serb troops during the Kosovo War. Western hypocrisy has a high price.

Milosevic was not very smart. He didn't understand international politics very well. He was ruthless and used militias composed of criminals that inevitably made many innocent victims. But he had valid worries about the position of the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. He didn't believe in a Great Serbia. Not that he was against it, but he was a pragmatist who was looking for solutions. If Great Serbia would have offered itself as a solution he wouldn't have refused, but it was not his goal.

Name: what's it 2 u **Date:** Apr 07, 2009
srebrenica is nowhere near 5000 let alone 8000 deaths. If you were not there then don't try and talk like u understand it

Name: Julija Bogoeva **Date:** Apr 07, 2009
John Feffer is greatly mistaken about Svetozar Stojanovic, greatly. Stojanovic's negative role and his support for the ethnic cleansing in BH may surprise Mr Feffer, but to his peril. His analysis that the Serb revisionists, as he calls them, are trying to rescue the image of a beloved leader (SM) is superficial. The struggle in Serbia is very deep and still quite dangerous. The evidence on Srebrenica victims has moved far beyond what is mentioned in this article. Disappointing!

Name: Branka **Date:** Apr 08, 2009
Yugoslavia will matter as long as articles such as this are written. By not dealing with the past the past will come back to haunt us. While Mr. Feffer was in Belgrade witnessing such nationalism I can understand that he could not have been in two places at once but perhaps, to give some credibility to the article above he should have visited other parts of Yugoslavia. As it happens, I was in Croatia all that time. The sahovnica or red chess board was in evidence everywhere. This was an Ustasha emblem from WWII. Split was awash with them as were porters wearing badges with the same insignia. In Dubrovnik key chains with the same insignia were sold and worn all over town. Belgrade registrations were being pushed into the sea and houses owned by Serbs were marked, as were Jewish homes in times past. Why have the Serbs been singled out for this draconian treatment by the US and EU when it was their only ally in WWII, while The Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Kosovo Albanians supported Hitler? It is a real mystery to me.

Name: David Peterson **Date:** Apr 08, 2009
To the Readers of Foreign Policy In Focus:
In the tenth paragraph of his contribution to the Foreign Policy In Focus "strategic dialogue" on the former Yugoslavia (<http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5972>), John Feffer writes that in Edward Herman's and my "revisionist essay" for Monthly Review' (<http://monthlyreview.org/1007herman-peterson1.php>) "The Dismantling of Yugoslavia" October, 2007: we show the ethnic Serb philosopher Mihailo Markovic "confirm[ing] Milosevic's contention that there never was a plan for a Greater Serbia."

"This," Feffer adds, "was the equivalent of Adolf Hitler calling Joseph Goebbels as a witness for his defense."

I will leave it up to FPIF's readers to discern the parallels implied between Hitler - Goebbels and Mlosevic - Markovic, as well as Feffer's charge that our analysis is "revisionism."

More important is what Feffer decided not to share with FPIF's readers: That we show no less a

figure than Geoffrey Nice, the lead prosecutor in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, also confirming Milosevic's and Markovic's contention that no Lebensraum-inspired plan for a "Greater Serbia" played an important causal role in the dismantling of Yugoslavia.

Hence, in Section 2 of our "revisionist essay," after we review some evidence of how deeply engrained is this belief in a "Greater Serbia" on the minds of a representative sample of Western commentators, and after we cite a small part of the Milosevic - Markovic exchanges in court (e.g., Markovic: "Why would Serbs be expelling Croats from Croatia if they're not expelling them from Serbia?"), we show trial Judge O-Gon Kwon asking Nice to explain to the court what the Prosecution believes this "Greater Serbia" allegation really means.

According to Nice (see Milosevic Trial Transcript, http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/050825IT.htm, August 25, 2005, pp. 43227, line 14 - 43228, line 10: http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/trans/en/050825IT.htm:

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14 MR. NICE: At the end it may be that the accused's aim was for
15 that which could qualify as a de facto Greater Serbia, yes. Did he -- did
16 he find the source of his position, for I don't wish to identify it as an
17 ideology or a platform. Did he find the source of his position at least
18 overtly in historical concept of Greater Serbia; no, he didn't. His was
19 perhaps to borrow His Honour Judge Robinson's term or was stated to be the
20 pragmatic one of ensuring that all the Serbs who had lived in the former
21 Yugoslavia should be allowed for either constitutional or other reasons to
22 live in the same unit. That meant as we know historically from his
23 perspective first of all that the former Yugoslavia shouldn't be broken up
24 because he argued, well, then, if they all live in the same place one
25 where they can do it in the former Yugoslavia. Once the former Yugoslavia

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1 breaks up, the Prosecution case is the only way you can achieve the desire
2 that all Serbs should live in the same state is by doing the various
3 things that happened in the three different territories. Now, -- or in
4 particular in the two different territories of Croatia and Bosnia. So
5 that that's why we describe it as -- or we don't describe it. We analyse
6 it in the terms of his desire or his expressed desire that all Serbs
7 should live in one state, accepting that at the end of the exercise the
8 factual position may be little different from that which would have been
9 wanted by this particular witness under his long-term historical concept
10 of Greater Serbia.

As we observe in Monthly Review, Nice's explanation "betrays the fact that the prosecution itself doesn't believe its most notorious accusation against Milosevic et al. as to why Yugoslavia broke apart...Until historians recognize that the ultimate crime for which the serial indictments have been brought against Milosevic et al. was the crime of trying to hold [Yugoslavia] together or a successor state on a similarly unified, federal model, they will never understand the enormity of what Nice conceded in Court on August 25, 2005."

David Peterson
Chicago, USA

Name: J. P. Maher **Date:** Apr 09, 2009

John Feffer's piece is boiler plate from start to finish. "Greater Serbia" is the 1914 precursor of WMD. Croatian "defenders" in Vukovar were not residents of Vukovar. War Criminal Branimir Glavas, who murdered the moderate Croat mayor (Kir-Reichl) of the city of Osijek, hailed as "true Ustashas" hundreds of Croatian POWS released by the Yugoslav Army in 1991. See him in this Youtube feature: <http://www.yidio.com/branimir-glavas---hdz-ustasa/id/2976230262>

"Srebrenica" WAS a hoax. Vukovar and Dubrovnik? Susan L. Woodward. 1995. Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War. -- "An assault on Dubrovnik (beginning in early October), which was protected under the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was particularly significant in creating antagonism toward Serbia and the Army: the Croatian government had calculated in using sharpshooters on the Dubrovnik walls to provoke a YPA attack on the city, knowing that Dubrovnik would attract more attention than the obscure city of Vukovar ..."

-- I went to Dubrovnik on 25 March 1992, three months after the "total destruction". It was totally restored, so well that VOA's Pam Taylor broadcast in 1994 that people might even believe Serb propaganda that it was never destroyed.

I'll be happy to show my film of the Pearl of the Adriatic. Anybody want to see my film shot on 25 March 1992? --- "Revisionism" and "Denial" are in reality the characteristics of the Srbophobes.

Name: Eel **Date:** Apr 14, 2009

It is amazing that such a one sided, biased, inaccurate view is allowed (or given prominence). Facts (Srebrenica, Gorazde, Vukovar) confirm greater Serbian losses as those were mainly Serbian populated towns (villages). A handful of patriotic signs or those showing national pride are not condoned - does that logic apply to the time of Edward Koch's "I love NY" campaign? I doubt it.

The author lacks fundamental knowledge of history and facts to be able to conclude where the true answers may be found. Following the logic displayed here - we can conclude that World War 2 was started on Sept 1, 1939, since Poland refused to deliver Danzig (Gdansk) to Hitler's demands therefore the Nazi invasion of Poland was justified. Even if Serbs did display signs of national pride or patriotism, how much skill does it require to avoid the facts in which the Slovenian uprising attacked and imprisoned Serbian JNA (Yugoslav Army) members in four towns? How did we lose sight of over 250,000 to 350,000 "displaced Serbs" including the entire city of Knin - almost exclusively Serbian.

Linguistically there is no Croatian language but there is a stocavic or kajkavic dialect of Serbian.

Ethnically the Great migration of the Southern Slavic tribes deposited some Serbs as far north as Berlin (Luzice) and as far south as the Celtic dominated Balkans. Crusades, Ottoman Wars, Balkan Wars, World wars 1 and 2 resulted in Serb's forced conversion to Catholicism or Islam.

Never has there been one single act of aggression committed by Serbian people against any neighboring nation - so while Serbian actions were purely defensive and fought on the lands dominated by the oppressed Serbs, we find that to be a crime, while the French actions in Viet Nam, Algeria, U.S. actions in Korea, Viet Nam, Iraq - with no Americans endangered (except by the phantom WMDs seem to be acceptable). Where, in God's name is the logic in that. The article submitted here is violently biased, manufactured with non-existing motives for such "Serbian crimes", riddled with false data and a product of the on-going anti-Serbian propaganda. This is even more exaggerated now - 10 years after the NATO's illegal actions, U.S. lead invasion of Kosovo (more Albanians died from the U.S. military actions than from the Serbian "persecutions". No wonder such documents are fabricated to rid the world of the serious error in judgment enforced by the military machine of the conquerors. There is neither enough space, nor enough time to isolate and point out all the falsehoods in this shameful article.

Name: Eel **Date:** Apr 14, 2009

This is how bolier plate propaganda works: Take any unconfirmed or largely debunked myth, keep repeating it, eventually somebody will start accepting it as TRUTH. Who exactly are "Bosniaks"?

Here is an inaccurate (debunked reporting) "cited figure of 8,000 Bosniak deaths."

Even if this were true, we'd have a real hard time defining Bosniaks - the word was coined just recently as to label Serbs of Muslim faith (those that forcibly accepted Islam during the Ottoman rule of Serbia) - abandoned their Eastern Orthodox Christianity and became a part of an administrative section of former Yugoslavia, named Bosnia.

In spite of the fact that over 70% of Bosnia's population are listed as Serbians, now the Bosnians get introduced as "BosniaKs" only in order to create greater confusion. Who are they? Where do they come from? What is their culture, folklore, costumes, alphabet?

All Serbian.

But for the needs of Goebels propaganda they are now re-named Bosniaks. Yes there was a modest number of Croats within Bosnia as well (equally Eastern Orthodox Serbs forcibly converted into Roman Catholicism during the fun times of the NDH Fascist Croatian Republic) blessed by the Pope of Rome and skillfully guided by Cardinal Alojz Stepinac. Short of these pogroms against the Serbians over the last two or three centuries anybody would be hard-pressed to find a "Bosniak" or Croat tribe that truly arrived to the Balkans with their own culture, music, costumes, other ethnic differences which would indicate their possessions, lands, language, culture, etc.

There is no such evidence anywhere in the last 2000 years and the divisions made between the people of the Balkan peninsula remain largely man-made and self-serving to the powers that benefited directly from DEVIDE ET IMPERA.

Name: Colin Hubbell **Date:** Apr 14, 2009

Interesting article and good points about the leftist tendency toward embracing anyone that stands up to the U.S. One thing I find troubling-- absurd in fact--is the comparison to Nixon, who is perhaps the most unjustly maligned president of the 20th century. And, the conflict really isn't comparable to Bush and Iraq/Afghanistan either; motives were not entirely different, but different enough to avoid drawing as many parallels as he does.

Name: Daniel (Srebrenica Editor) **Date:** Apr 14, 2009

Herman still uses his old selective arguments distorting facts and quoting unreliable sources, such as former paid Serb lobbyist and alleged rapist Gen. Lewis MacKenzie who had never been in Srebrenica. Here are some of the most interesting myths that Herman actively promotes.

MYTH: In his latest article, titled "Serb Demonization as Propaganda Coup" unqualified Edward S. Herman challenged DNA science and claims that the "[Bosniak] post-2000 findings and DNA identifications have been further compromised by their very unscientific handling of the body remains (in the ground five or more years."

FACT: The forensic remains and DNA of Srebrenica genocide victims have been processed according to the highest international standards and by the world-renowned ICMP (International Commission for Missing Persons). You can read more about forensics here.

MYTH: Edward S. Herman goes on to criticize the U.N.-based International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for not including Serb forensic expert Dr. Zoran Stankovic as a witness. Herman claims that "Serb forensic expert Dr. Zoran Stankovic never testified at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia."

FACT: The fact is that he did. In his own words, Dr. Zoran Stankovic said:

"I testified before this Tribunal on two occasions. Once, I was present during the proceedings of General Krstic, and then in May I was an expert witness for the Defence in the trial of Milutinovic, Sainovic, Ojdanic, Pavkovic, and Lazarevic, and Lukic."

<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/seselj/trans/en/090115ED.htm>

MYTH: Edward Herman claims that Bosniaks in Srebrenica never demilitarized. Thus far, he suggests they were legitimate military target.

FACT: Apparently, Herman is not aware that Serbs around Srebrenica had never demilitarized, even though they were required to do so as per the demilitarization agreement. The Bosnian Government had entered into demilitarization agreements with the Bosnian Serbs. On 21 April 1993, the UNPROFOR issued press release saying that the process of demilitarization of Bosnian defenders of Srebrenica had been a success. According to the Agreement, the Serbs should withdraw their heavy weapons before the Bosniaks gave up their weapons. The Serbs refused to demilitarize. They never honored their part of agreement. Instead, Serb military and paramilitary troops continued using surrounding Serb villages as a base for attacks on (and brutal siege of) Srebrenica.

<http://srebrenica-genocide.blogspot.com/2009/04/edward-s-herman-genocide-denier-caught.html>

Name: Roger Lippman **Date:** Apr 26, 2009

John Feffer provides helpful background information on the various Serbian nationalist wars and a good critique of Edward Herman's habitual distortion of the history of those wars. Feffer also grapples with a pertinent question: What motivates the Revisionists? (Herman does not appreciate being labeled "Revisionist," so to be fair, perhaps it would be better to refer to them as war-crimes deniers, or genocide apologists.) Why the affinity for an ultra-nationalist, war-mongering dictator, especially on the part of some who once had credentials as leading Left intellectuals?

Feffer posits that Milosevic and his criminal campaigns are glorified because he stood up to the United States over Kosovo, withstanding NATO's first-ever military campaign. But this can't be the whole story. Edward Herman has been just as supportive, at least retrospectively, of Serbian nationalist expansion in the earlier Bosnia war as he is on Kosovo – firmly denying the worst of Serbian atrocities in Bosnia. With moral support from Noam Chomsky, Revisionists were right there with Serbian nationalist expansion while genocide was being committed at Srebrenica, and before.

Somehow, the Milosevic apologists glommed onto the notion that Yugoslavia in its decline represented a last bastion of socialism, under assault by capitalist forces. This, despite the fact that Milosevic presided over a kleptocracy, run by profiteers and warlords who privatized state property at will and used much of the proceeds to fuel their wars, pocketing a portion to boot. But a clique of intellectuals including Herman, Diana Johnstone, and Michael Parenti, who had something of a following, spun an entire fantasy that Milosevic was the victim of Western machinations, rather than the one who fomented nationalism and started four wars that wrecked the country. This idea found fertile soil in a Left that had not quite gotten beyond the Cold War mindset. The ideas were given credibility by Chomsky, who should know better but doesn't. (He is helpful when he knows what he's talking about, as in Israel and Palestine, but not here.) The Serbia-as-victim notion was widely propagated in the Left press.

This is not just an academic issue. Herman et al are engaged in a continued campaign against the victims, dead and surviving, of Milosevic's wars. On the tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre (which they think didn't happen), Herman and others went so far as to hold a press conference at the United Nations, not to memorialize the victims, but to insult the widows, parents, children, and other survivors of Bosnian Muslim civilians (who they think weren't killed), while these survivors are still finding, counting, and burying the dead. The struggle goes on in Bosnia to resettle refugees and reclaim housing and land stolen by the Serbian warmakers. And in Kosovo, Serbia still supports forces of destabilization.

All the while, the Hermans of the world, acting in concert with Serbian nationalist propaganda, are on the sidelines cheering on the war criminals, past and present. (Their pronouncements eerily resemble the wartime coverage on Serbian TV - no reports of atrocities in Kosovo, with refugees described only as people fleeing NATO bombing.) And I'm sure they will go on denying that there were more than "only" 2000 victims of the Srebrenica massacre even when the 8000th body has been identified – not because they are uninformed, but because they are ideologically committed, like their Stalinist forbears.

Too much of the Left's supposed intellectual leadership is still reflexively living out a Cold

War paradigm, apologizing for those who have committed ethnic mass murder in the name of a shadow of socialism.

Roger Lippman
Editor, Balkan Witness
<http://www.glypx.com/balkanwitness>

Name: Santa - Non-muslim Bosniak

Date: Oct 26, 2009

Who are BosniaKs she\he (Eel) asks - well maybe some education, few books, go back to school again without skiping classes would be of some help in finding out: who are BosniaKs!

(It is interesting how Serbs dealing with other Serbs who "pretend" to be BosniaKs, raping our women, murdering our children and men.)

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