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Project your own faults onto others

22. A second frequently applied principle is to project on your enemy your own faults or ascribe to him the will to commit acts which you yourself are on the verge of perpetrating. In this regard, it is typical to hear some of the most belligerent regimes swear that they do not want war and that, in fact, it is the opposing camp that is solely responsible for it. This deceptive logic leads to attack being presented to your own public opinion as the only possible form of defence and as an imposed course of action, for which the only choice ultimately lies between life or death.

The public opinion campaign relayed through the media to justify the war against the Croats is a good example of this. In its special edition of July 1990, *Duga* magazine applied itself to the task in its own way. Mihajlo Markovic, Marxist and philosophical ideologist and close collaborator⁴⁰ of the Serbian president, wrote that "*the tragedy of the Croatian Serbs has still not ended - it is ongoing and in the near future could reach tragic proportions*"⁴¹. In the same edition, doctor Jovan Raskovic, leader of the Serbian democratic party of Krajina, took up the same idea: "*Status of Serb people in Croatia is worse than the status of any, even the smallest national minority in Yugoslavia. Everyone has the right to language, culture mass media, etc. We, the Serbs in Croatia, are the only ones who are deprived of that right. To strip one people of their right to mother tongue and alphabet is a kind of crime*"⁴².

⁴⁰ An academician, he was appointed a member of the *Committee for Preparing the Memorandum on Society's Present-day Problems* in 1985 and became vice-president of the SPS shortly after the position was created in June 1990. In the weeks that followed and in the run-up to the December 1990 elections, he himself would travel to Negotin, Novi Sad, Krusevac, Smederevo, Nis and Uzice in support of the SPS. On this point, see the historian, Olivera Milosavljevic, "*Du mauvais usage de l'autorit  scientifique*" in *Radiographie d'un nationalisme: les racines serbes du conflit yougoslave*, under Nebojsa Popov, Les Editions de l'Atelier, Paris 1998, p. 220. On the closeness of Markovic and Milosevic, see Florence Hartmann, *Milosevic, La diagonale du fou*, Deno l, Paris, 1999, pp. 77, 176, 234, 320 and 372.

⁴¹ Further on, he continues that: "*Today Serbs are second-class citizens: The theory that only Croatian people enjoy sovereignty in the Republic of Croatia, while Serbs are treated as the disenfranchised "mob" who owe loyalty to the Croatian state, is openly espoused. Systematic denial and underrating of the genocide committed against Serbs during WW2 make it precarious for Serb people to live in Croatia. The denial of responsibility for the crime clears the way for its repeat...*"

⁴² See also the examples below:

- "*Everyone should know that Serbs and Serbia in Croatia must be defended unless, in the near future, we want to defend ourselves from Tuđman in Zemun*", Pavic Obradovic, Vice-president of the People's Assembly of Serbia, at a Kraljevo rally, TVB-Prime news, 23 September 1991.

- "*In its defence the Serb people shall turn Vienna into Hiroshima*", Vojo Kuprešanin, President of SAO Bosanska Krajina, *Večernje Novosti*, 27 October 1991.

Use the news to your advantage

23. A third principle is to turn the news to your advantage to guide people's minds, in particular, by exercising tight control over the media. Here too, it is a question of exaggerating the importance or significance of a reported fact – for example, through a title and comment playing on enthusiasm or hatred – or conversely distorting its meaning (especially by using out-of-context quotations) or remaining silent on the subject⁴³ when it contradicts the official version of matters⁴⁴.

- *"This variant of the rump Yugoslavia is the first clever game played by Serbs and is likely to be successful...For the first time we are creating a state bigger than Dušan's Kingdom, with minimal efforts and minimal casualties... In this war, we must avenge Jasenovac, Golubnjača, and all those mass graves with Serb victims. So when Montenegrins conquer Dubrovnik and we conquer Tovarnik, we shall all meet in Zagreb ultimately. Only after a definitive military rout of the Croats, can we create our state in peace",* Mirko Jović, President of the SPR, *Pogledi*, 29 November-13 December 1991.

- *"I think that it is important that our people in Krajinas are now de facto exempted from the Croatian authorities, since they were bent on destroying it..."*, Irinej Bulovic, Episcopo of Bačka, *NIN*, 20 March 1992.

- *"27 members of my family were killed in WW2. My mother grew up in an orphanage in Belgrade. I am involved in the whole story through the tragedy of my grandmothers and grandfathers...I feel sorry for young Ustashi when we take them before the firing squad ...But when I am at the front, when I fight and see my enemies die I feel happy, for thus people who threaten my people are eliminated. It has nothing to do with murder....Croats used all the means available – fascism, democracy, civil society – to promote the idea of the destruction of Serbs in these territories",* Dragoslav Bokan. Leader of "Beli orlovi", *Duga*, 29 March-11 April 1992.

⁴³ For instance, on 16 January 1993, when an umpteenth massacre resulted in 8 dead and 18 wounded in Sarajevo and Serbs were killed in the Bosnian village of Skelane, *Belgrade Television* reported only the second incident.

Belgrade Television also remained totally silent on certain news stories: no information would be given on 5 February 1992 about the fact that a very famous Bosnian Muslim actor had been viciously beaten up in Belgrade, and the same held true, on 19 October 1992, when 17 people were killed and 150 wounded in Sarajevo and again, on 18 March 1993, after Serbs destroyed five mosques in Bijeljina, one of which was protected by UNESCO. Milica Pesic, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ *RTS* thus said nothing about the forced exodus of the Croats from Hrtkovci village in Vojvodina in the summer of 1992; in its report of 20 August, none of interviewees expressed concern about the fate of the Croats. See Rade Veljanovski, *"Le revirement des médias audiovisuels"* in *Radiographie d'un nationalisme: les racines serbes du conflit yougoslav* under the direction of Nebojsa Popov, Les Editions de l'Atelier, Paris, 1998, p. 316. On this episode, see also Milica Pesic, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

Repeat your message endlessly

24. Another characteristic of all political propaganda is the systematic and recurrent repetition of the main theme or themes in such a way as to leave an indelible trace in the minds of people⁴⁵. In order not to tire the masses, the message (the meaning) must however change form and be adapted to the characteristics of each public as often as required. For propaganda to be effective it requires accurate follow-up which constantly feeds it new information, "evidence", revelations and shock phrases and gives it fresh impetus when an event considered noteworthy occurs.

Rely on myths and history

25. In order to be fully effective, propaganda must also rely on and start with a pre-existing support or fertile ground. Usually it uses mythology or exploits the conscious and unconscious feelings (historic prejudices and hatred) in the psyche of the peoples –

⁴⁵ In this vein, we can take as an example the threatening propaganda set in place and relayed through the media to dissuade the Muslims from leaving the Federation of Yugoslavia:

- *"It is true that Slovenians and Croats want to secede. But in my mind Muslims don't have any interest in secession from Yugoslavia. As regards Muslims a large part of them are heavily indoctrinated, but we nevertheless assess that most Muslims want good, tolerant, civilised, and, I would say, civil, friendly and good-neighbourly relations with Serb and other peoples in Yugoslavia.... They don't want the break-up of Yugoslavia, for there are deep roots, blood ties...."*, Slobodan Milosevic in *NIN*, 12 April 1991.

- *"An agreement should be reached with Serbs while they are ready for such an agreement. No war should be waged with Serbs. It is beautiful to live together with them and lethal to wage wars with them. We shall not be at peace until Foča and Goražde are annexed to Herzegovina, as historically and geographically they belong there"*, Biljana Plavšić in *Intervju*, 21 September 1991.

- *"War in B&H is avoidable because Muslims don't feel like waging war. Muslims in Bosnia are the majority population, but they inhabit only 18% of the territory, mostly along the river Bosna, and perhaps there they stand a chance of forming their independent Džamahiria. Most Muslims are not against cohabitation with Serbs"*, Vojislav Šešelj in *NIN*, 21 January 1992.

- *"I would like for us to cleanse Eastern Bosnia, but I don't mean ethnically cleanse... The International community has started using that term for a natural phenomenon and has, moreover, qualified it as a war crime. Even if we kept 70% of the territory, there shall be no peace there. To tell you the truth I am not well disposed towards them. But if I want to be at peace I must give them something, let them organise their lives, because then they would not keep disturbing me. This is how I perceive that 30%"*, Biljana Plavšić in *Svet*, 6 September, 1993, Novi Sad.

- *"Muslims are genetically spoiled material who converted to Islam. And those genes have been reinforced generation after generation. They have become worse and they dictate and express the Muslim way of thinking and behaving. The latter is embedded in their genes"*, Biljana Plavšić in *Svet*, 6 September, 1993, Novi Sad).

- *"We are upset by a rising number of mixed marriages between Serbs and Muslims, for they allow genes to be exchanged between ethnic groups, and lead subsequently to the degeneration of Serb nationality"*, Biljana Plavšić in *Oslobodjenje*, May 1994, Sarajevo.

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following in the footsteps of Nazi propaganda which used this procedure to exacerbate antagonism between the Serbs and Croats with the success that the world was to witness. Propaganda always nurtures preconceived ideas, prejudices and preconceptions and is all the more effective as it reassures the masses in their beliefs and opinions⁴⁶.

Create a national consensus

26. Another function or characteristic of propaganda is to seek to develop a feeling of unanimity in the population by anticipating that individual opinions will conform with publicly professed opinion. Propaganda strives to gain general acceptance through the media or demonstrations and parades. To make people conform in the way they think, intellectuals, sportsmen and stars are frequently held up as examples. Through the prestige they have, their subscribing to what is presented as general opinion (or the common cause) may be conveyed as a "pulling-in" or contagion effect⁴⁷. Propaganda can

⁴⁶ Such was the case of the crimes ascribed to the Croats during the Second World War, as illustrated by the following examples:

- "Genocide is one of the most inhumane, dishonourable and undemocratic actions. It was committed in Croatia in WW2 (the then Independent State of Croatia) by Ustashi against Serbs, Jews and Romany. No-one can resurrect those killed in Jasenovac, Staro Sajmiste, Jadovna and other concentration camps and detention centres. And only a small gesture of good will is needed ...to prove once again that the current locals of Croatia don't accept the ideology of genocide". Dr. Stojan Adasevic, in *Politika*, 5 March 1990.

- "... The myth of the Oustashi Movement is re-born. This must increase the concern of all Yugoslavs, regardless of their nationality, religion, and political convictions. Croats must be concerned too, and not only Serbs in that republic. A repeat of 1941 is not possible, but blood may shed again... We don't want vengeance or oblivion, although we have been trying to forgive these crimes for decades. And the sons of those who committed those crimes should be concerned about the consequences of the current escalation of the ideas about a Greater Croatia, and notably those of Mr. Tudman, the charismatic leader of the ICD, who is emerging in the political arena of Croatia in Yugoslavia. Crimes ascribable to the nationalist folly can be traced back to the recent past and hence cannot be easily forgotten". Dara Slobotka-Peles, *Politika*, 22 May 1990.

⁴⁷ The procedure would be used in particular during the war in Croatia by *Serbian Television* which was seeking to forge a spirit of national unity and encourage volunteers to enlist to fight there. To this end, it would often take "individual role models" as examples whom it would interview to influence the conduct and/or way of thinking of the television viewing masses. One could offer two examples from the time of the Vukovar siege.

The first portrayed a Serbian member of parliament who swapped his civilian clothes for uniform and chose to serve his country at the front rather than on the benches of the Assembly:

- News editor: "Among the volunteers and reserve soldiers going off to fight the war in Croatia are many members of the Serbian Parliament. So far more than twenty Serbian members of Parliament have donned military uniform. On the territory of Western Srem we can also find the Serbian member of Parliament Dragoslav Aleksic."
- Dragoslav Aleksic: "It's my patriotic duty and that is why I am here to fight together with the Yugoslav People's Army, to fight for the Serbs who live outside Serbia, and to prevent any enemy incursions into the territory of the Republic of Serbia, which have regrettably been happening

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arouse fear or exaltation in people through mass media and spectacles. The stated aim is of course to occupy the ground, multiply the shows of force and demonstrate superiority over the enemy. Such a logic naturally leads people to denounce as traitors those who cast doubt on or oppose the propaganda or common cause.

In this way the function of the media under Milosevic was to denounce⁴⁸ and ostracise those who, at one time or another, were in a position to publicly question or protest against the prevailing ultra-nationalism. The independent media, the only ones to open up

recently. But with our military campaigns and our unity, which is essential, Serb unity, I believe we can accomplish our goals."

- Reporter: *"Where is it more difficult, in Parliament or here in the war?"*
- D.A.: *"In the Parliament."*
- Reporter: *"Why?"*
- D.A.: *"Because here we are more united, there, I am sad to say, the situation is completely different."*

Departing from the norm, the second showed an interview of a young woman in uniform explaining what had driven her to enlist in the Serbian fighting forces:

- Reporter: *"This is rather unusual, a young woman going to war, isn't it? What do you think?"*
- Young woman: *"I don't think it is. We need to answer the call to arms. I am a mother of two small children."*
- Reporter: *"Where are you from?"*
- Young woman: *"I am from Pirot."*
- Reporter: *"How old are you?"*
- Young woman: *"Thirty-three."*
- Reporter: *"What made you decide to go?"*
- Young woman: *"Well, when I watch television, I see what's going on and I want to help, and it's worth sacrificing my life for this here Serbia of ours."*

For these two examples, see *Images and Words of Hate: Vukovar 1991*, produced by Lazar Lalic, ARHITEL, *The Right to Pictures and Words against Censorship and Abuse of Media*, 1995.

⁴⁸ Here again media and ultra-nationalists – be they political leaders, orthodox dignitaries, intellectuals, etc. – worked hand in hand to spread the message and encourage the homogenisation of Serbian society while the few rare independent media organisations attempted to denounce them. The press extracts below are a good example of this:

- *"And there where Serbian blood is shed and Serbian bones fall must be Serbian land. Those who think otherwise, are on the side of our enemy"*, Priest Nikanor, *Borba*, 3 April 1991.

- *"In Serbia, thank God, we are not in agreement, although we should be when the existence of the people must be defended... those who are against their own people, are traitors"*, Ljubomir Tadic, *Duga*, 5-29 July 1991.

- *"It seems to me that, at this moment in time, Belgrade is unfortunately a veritable fifth-columnists city. It is full of rogues, cowards, false pacifists, backers of the other side, but Serbia cannot shoulder the burden of that menagerie for ever"*, Moma Kapor, *Borba*, 7 - 8 March 1992.

- *"Perhaps Vukovar need not be repaired, but rather left as a warning to our offspring... if we had not heeded the warning in the shape of Jasenovac, they might be wiser. All Serb traitors who have led their people to the brink of survival, should be brought here and tried at the scene, under the shadow of these ruins, before the ghosts of butchered children"*, Srđan Stanišić, *"Đilas should be hanged"*, *Pogledi*, 27 March -10 April 1992.

- *"We are speaking about islamicized Serb traitors during the Ottoman enslavement, but we gloss over an important fact that our modern traitors are much more dangerous and lethal than traitors in the distant past...their treason imperils the very being of Serb people"*, Metropolitan of Montenegro and Coastal Area, Amfilohije Radovic, *Borba*, 28-29 March 1992.

to the opposition, would be the first targeted by the accusations of betrayal, especially during the electoral campaign. On 5 December 1992, the journalist and commentator, Stefan Grubac, one of the principal voices of nationalist propaganda on *Belgrade Television*, stated for example: *"So-called independent journalists collaborate with foreign forces and continually betray their fatherland. The media where these people work are actually among those who want civil war in Serbia and want war in Kosovo..."* The following day, an "expert" in religion, Dr Milan Jevtic, asserted: *"If there is anybody to be blamed for war in Bosnia, it is the so-called independent newspapers BORBA and VREME from Belgrade. By campaigning for peace they actually prevented Serbs from being properly prepared for fighting with Muslims. So they are responsible for so many dead Serbs"*⁴⁹. Similar procedures would be used against the sections of the political opposition and other active members of society opposed to the war in Bosnia. On 3 April 1993, during an item about a peaceful demonstration in Belgrade held that same day by the Civic Movement against the War shown on RTS, Stefan Grubac condemned the demonstrators as being anti-Serb: *"Belgrade intellectuals and so-called anti-war activists are under the protection of Izetbegovic. They do not have Serbs from Bosnia in their hearts but Muslims and foreign agency money"*. Commonly branded as traitors to Serbia and spies in the pay of the CIA, the members of the opposition would be subjected to frequent attacks by *Belgrade Television*, such as on 26 September 1992 when a commentator said of them: *"They are just so-called opposition, they want to sell our brother Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, they want power just to help our enemies destroy Serbia and Serbs"*.

Summary of Serbian Yugoslav propaganda

27. For these various fundamental principles to have maximum effect, the condition for propaganda to succeed, it is necessary to fight and prevent the circulation of information and alternative ideas – or at the very least to take action to ensure that the information and ideas remain limited to a narrow circle and do not cross over to the mass media. Like others, the regime of Slobodan Milosevic sought to do this by taking total control over

⁴⁹ Milica Pesic, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

the media owned by the state or public institutions, by restricting the independent press' freedom and using all means to prevent it from informing people, and by exerting constant pressure on journalists so that they would respect certain limits, agree to support the program and ideas of those in power, and bow to discipline.

Milosevic realised very early on, in fact, the importance of controlling and using the Party and the media to win over and maintain power. He made sure that he replaced the leaders of the Party with his own troops and personally ensured that his most faithful⁵⁰ allies within the party were placed in the most important positions in public media. Traditionally the directors of radio and television channels, like, moreover, the director of the press group *Politika* were members of the Party's central committee. Milosevic relied on support from *Duga*⁵¹ magazine and, in particular, the daily newspapers *Politika* and *Politika Ekspres* - overseen by Zivorad Minovic and Slobodan Jovanovic⁵² respectively, close political allies of Milosevic assigned to their positions as editors-in-chief by the Serbian League of Communists in 1986 - to eliminate all opposition to his nationalist position on Kosovo within the central committee of the Serbian League of Communists in September 1987⁵³. The 8th session of the Serbian League of Communists, followed shortly afterwards by Milosevic's definitive victory over his adversaries, was his opportunity to identify the journalists which should be dismissed because they did not support him on this occasion. Ivan Stojanovic, director general of *Politika* group, was then replaced in November by Zivorad Minovic who took over the group's publications. *Svet* was recast, youth publications, *Non*, *Mladost* and *Student* were done away with...; The same happened to Mirko Djekic, editor-in-chief of *Nin* (publication of the *Politika* group) whose editorial reorganisation Milosevic had sought some months previously⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ As confirmed by Borisav Jovic, a person's loyalty to him was the primary criteria in Milosevic's choice of collaborators: "*The key factor for him was who he trusted, not who the people trusted. It did not matter if the person was capable and honest, diligent and active, it was important to be loyal to him*". In *Book on Milosevic*, op.cit. p.31.

⁵¹ *Duga*, criticised as early as 1985 by the Serbian League of Communists, adopted a new nationalist editorial policy following the removal of its editor-in-chief in spring 1987.

⁵² It was also Slobodan Jovanovic who would transform the respected press agency *Tanjug* into an agency for Milosevic's sole use some years later.

⁵³ See paragraph 41.

⁵⁴ "*The Editor-in-chief of Duga has been changed, but the situation in Duga will not change before Duga's editorial office has been changed in the wider sense. We are talking also about a new editor of Nin. Regardless of the decision we reach, we will not solve problems in Nin, unless there is a serious*

This was also the case with Mihailo Eric, editor-in-chief for the news on *Belgrade Television (RTB)*... The autonomous provinces were also affected by these purges within the media some time later. In Vojvodina, after the “Yoghurt Revolution”, the main journalists of *Radio-Television Novi Sad* and the daily newspaper *Dnevnik* were replaced. In Kosovo, the Serbian government retook control over the media in the summer of 1990: the editor-in-chief of *Radio-Television Pristina* was replaced and some 1300 people were dismissed on 5 July; *Rilindja* newspaper, the only one in Albanian, was discontinued, resulting in 200 journalists being laid off; six local stations in Albanian were also closed etc. The control of the audio-visual media by Milosevic’s regime began in 1986-1987 and was complete in the summer of 1991. The day after an opposition march organised in Belgrade on 9 March 1991 to protest, in particular, against the control of Milosevic’s party over Television, Milosevic passed a new law unifying radio and television throughout the entire territory of the republic: the centres of Novi Sad, Pristina and Belgrade would subsequently form only one single network which would be easier to control. The new Law on Radio and Television in Serbia transferred the assets of *RTS* to the State, which became the owner, and in fact to Milosevic’s party... The entire radio and television management was replaced and new appointments were decided on⁵⁵.

Media set up as a propaganda lynchpin

28. The media were used as weapons of war, sometimes to achieve political goals – for instance to launch and defend the theme of a State for all Serbs – and sometimes to accomplish strategic objectives – such as the capture of territories by force⁵⁶, the practice

reconstruction of the whole editorial office”, declaration made on 18 February 1987 at a rally of the municipal committee of the League of Communists.

⁵⁵ In August, Dobrosav Bjeletic, former executive secretary of the central committee of the Serbian League of Communists, was appointed director general; Krste Bjelic, responsible for war propaganda for the Serbian Republic of Krajina for a time, was appointed editor-in-chief of the news programs...

⁵⁶ Whilst war was breaking out in Slovenia and clashes between Croatian and Serbian autonomist forces were growing in number in Croatia, the Belgrade regime’s entire propaganda machine would work towards preparing public opinion for the need to protect the Serbs living outside Serbia and so for the war with Croatia. When interviewed on *Serbian Television*, Vojislav Seselj, leader of the Serbian Radical Party, stated: “I don’t think force should be used to prevent Slovenia from seceding from Yugoslavia. Their leaving us is to our mutual advantage. As for Croatia, things are a bit different. We can’t have the same attitude towards the Croats as towards the Slovenes. The Croats can go as well, but without Serbian territories. Since the federal government practically does not exist, the Serbian government should assume

of ethnic cleansing and the destruction of targets described as symbolic and having priority. To reach its ends, the Milosevic regime would therefore do everything within its means to ensure control over the television, radio, and written press. Such control over the most important broadcasting channels would be accompanied by a method combining propaganda, partial (and biased) information, false news, manipulation, non-coverage of certain events, etc. This entire arsenal would be mobilised to help justify the creation of a State for all Serbs⁵⁷ - and so legitimise an ethnic policy which was presented as a fight for freedom, a measure taken to protect the Serbian people's native soil - and, lastly, reinforce the power and position of the Milosevic regime.

Sometimes Milosevic himself issued the most open threats against those who opposed Serbian unity. On 16 March 1991, in his address to the leaders of the communal councils of Serbia, he stated for example that: *"We must ensure our unity in Serbia if we, as the largest and most populated of the republics, wish to dictate what will follow the events. These are questions of borders, questions of State. And it is always the powerful, never the weak, who dictate the borders. It is therefore vital that we be powerful. And in order to be powerful, we must be united as regards our national interests (...) Yesterday I again ordered the mobilisation of the police reserve contingent and also the mobilisation and formation of new police forces; the government received the instructions for preparing suitable formations which would ensure our security in all eventualities, that is those which would make it possible for us to defend the interests of our republic and, I say, also the interests of the Serbian people outside Serbia (...) I have been in contact with our people in Knin, Bosnia, the pressure is huge (...) I hope that they will not be stupid enough to fight us because even if we don't know how to work well and manage the*

authority over the entire territory or what remains of Yugoslavia. The military high command has to accept it, otherwise the army will fall apart. The Serbian army can be formed within 48 hours, since the majority of Serbian officers would join it. The withdrawal of troops and arms to the Karlobag-Ogulin-Karlovac-Virovitica line should be ordered, thus amputating Croatia". It was again on television that the regime's figureheads would set out the objectives to be achieved - following the example of a certain Mihajlo Markovic, an academician and Vice-President of the party in power, when he announced in a televised interview: *"It is more and more evident that the Croatian leadership will not have the power to impose its will upon the Serbs in Krajina, Slavonija, Western Srem...and Raranja. By establishing a new ethnic border and withdrawing the Yugoslav Army to this new border of Yugoslavia, we will prevent the further prolongation of this war".* See *"Images and Words of Hate: Year Two"*, Foundation for Right to Pictures and Words, Lazar Lalic, B 92-ARHITEL, 1997.

⁵⁷ See also the examples in paragraph 15.

economy, at least we will know how to fight"⁵⁸. Generally, the media would be used to dissuade⁵⁹ the non-Serbs from remaining in territory considered as historically Serbian – even if this required the use of force⁶⁰ to purify that territory⁶¹.

A rule: pit the Yugoslav communities against one another

29. Certain key words would be used over and over again to stir up a defensive reaction among the Serbian citizens who would then support the government's plan to create a State for all Serbs. For example, the terms "Ustasha fascists" and "cut-throats" were used to stigmatise the Croats and "Islamic Ustasha" and "Djihad fighters" to describe the Bosnian Muslims pejoratively⁶². Systematic recourse to such key words imposed on the media by the Milosevic regime undoubtedly provoked and nourished hateful behaviour toward the non-Serbian communities.

Use the media as a fully-fledged weapon

30. As we shall attempt to show later, the use of the media for nationalist purposes was thought of as a fully-fledged component of a military campaign and, in this sense, we can truly speak of "war media". By making up lies, inventing differences and overplaying oppositions between communities, the television, radio and written press played a dangerous game. Systematic recourse to false, biased information and non-coverage of certain events made it possible to inspire and arouse hatred and fear among the communities. The media prepared the ground psychologically for the rise in nationalist hatred and became a weapon when the war broke out.

⁵⁸ *NIN*, 12 April 1991, pp.40-41.

⁵⁹ "We don't need a Greater Serbia, only realistic borders within which only Serbs shall live and engage in self-rule", Dr. Jovan Raškovic in Čačak, *Politika*, 15 May 1991.

⁶⁰ "What we conquer is ours. Only what we conquer is ours. Whoever wants to join us is OK, whoever does not: a bullet in his back", General Andrija Biorčević, Commander of Corps of the Yugoslav Army, *NIN*, 21 August 1992.

⁶¹ "I would like us to completely cleanse Eastern Bosnia from Muslims. I am not referring to ethnic cleansing. But they have thus termed pejoratively a natural phenomenon, and qualified it as a war crime", Biljana Plavšić, *Svet*, Novi Sad, 6 September 1993.

⁶² A typical example of such a procedure is the report made at Bratunac in Bosnia and Herzegovina (broadcast by RTS on 31 July 1992) where, in the words of the journalist, 114 Serbs had been massacred "in the name of Allah"...

31. This can be illustrated using a few examples which we will examine in greater detail below. Historical facts were imbued with mystical qualities to be used as nationalist objectives so that the Serbian people would feel and express a desire for revenge directed at the prescribed enemies, the Croats and Muslims – who were presented as the Devil. In an atmosphere of patriotic euphoria, the regime-controlled media also widely broadcast the lie that the political opposition and independent media were responsible for all of the evils afflicting Serbia. Under the pressure of the political authorities, the media had to attempt to convince the citizens of Serbia that they were the victims of an international conspiracy to eliminate them and remove Serbia from the face of the earth. The fact that the media and, in particular, national television⁶³ built up such hateful stereotypes incontestably laid the necessary emotional foundations for conducting a wartime propaganda campaign.

⁶³ As a well-placed observer, the writer Philip David, who was dismissed from RTS in 1993 and criticised for participating in setting up an independent union within the company, provides a good summary of Serbian Television's specific role: "Today it is clear to everyone that without the role played by television, that war would perhaps not even have happened, or at least it would not have been so bloody. Television played the key role in creating hate speech, in other words preparing the war, and later in war propaganda. That role was expressed in creating stereotypes. For example, one of the stereotypes was the genocidal character of Croats, another was the suicidal character of Muslims, then there were the stereotypes of the existence of an international conspiracy against Serbia, and a stereotype that all independent reporters and independent intellectuals were in the service of foreign intelligence agencies, etc. If you tried to do something, write or think outside of the stereotypes, you would be proclaimed a traitor". In *Images and Words of Hate: Vukovar 1991*, produced by Lazar Lalic, ARHITEL, *The Right to Pictures and Words against Censorship and Abuse of Media*, 1995.

II. Media in the Service of War

32. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia illustrates that there can no longer be war without catchwords or slogans, that is, without propaganda and communication. In Serbia specifically, the use of the media for nationalist ends and objectives formed part of a well-thought through plan – itself part of a strategy of conquest and affirmation of identity.

33. As such the expression “media war” assumes its full meaning since, as in any war situation, we are dealing with a context of clashes and conflict linked to political goals and objectives not only related to strategic ends (conquest of territory, take-over or destruction of specific targets, ethnic cleansing...) and appropriate means (control of the media) but also requiring a method or tactic in order to “hit” the enemy (propaganda, disinformation, manipulation, lies, etc.).

34. The temporal dimension of the media war allows us to distinguish three types of action at work⁶⁴. First, the long-term actions of education, conditioning minds and shaping mentalities, in a word contamination, which approximately corresponds to the phase of development of the Serbian nationalism from the early 1980s until June 1991⁶⁵. This phase is marked by an attempt to hijack and manipulate History in order to mobilise Serbian public opinion against fresh dangers. These themes were conveyed by the entire Serbian intellectual and artistic scene, whether this be the theatre, literature, painting etc. Next, the medium-term actions: opinion-forming campaigns meant to propagate certain arguments or ideas in line with well-defined objectives. The column “*Echoes and reactions*”⁶⁶ in the daily newspaper *Politika* played an essential role here in the sense that it provided Serbian nationalism with a “scientific” cover. The quality of the contributors

⁶⁴ See the article by Admiral Pierre Lacoste, “*La guerre médiatique*”, in *Défense Nationale*, December 1987, pp. 25-33.

⁶⁵ Supported by the political situation, the contribution of certain audio-visual programmes, which drew open parallels between the past and the present, hastened the awakening of Serbian nationalist sentiment. Examples of such programs are “*When all the saints*” broadcast by *Radio-Belgrade* and *Radio-Novı Sad* in 1988 or the drama “*Welcome to Gallipoli*” broadcast on the second programme of *Radio-Belgrade* on 11 April 1991 recounting the adventures and misadventures of the Serbian army during the First World War.

⁶⁶ See paragraph 49.

– academics, doctors, university professors, judges, etc. – gave it an authority and a certain legitimacy in the eyes of the Serbian public⁶⁷. Lastly and more directly linked to the beginning of the hostilities point-specific tactical actions indissociable from the previous ones, such as rumours and lies.

History manipulated to nationalist ends

35. A climate of distrust and then hatred fed by ancestral fears and exploiting exacerbated nationalism gradually took hold in each republic beginning in the late 1980s. Although there is nothing surprising about how receptive public opinion was to the simplistic and xenophobic messages conveyed by the media, such receptiveness can be explained by the fact that the ground was exceptionally fertile. The impact of the media messages on opinions still marked by the scars of the 1940 war could be compared to the effects of an hallucinogen. We know that the memory of those tragic events was completely repressed and covered up by a federal power and the will of one man, Tito, out of fear that any reminder or allusion to those events would reawaken the worst demons and cause the break up of the Federation.

36. Ultimately it was through maintaining the taboo for decades and not undertaking a beneficial collective

exorcism after the war ended – through a true public analysis of the historical facts and responsibilities – that it became easier for history to be manipulated⁶⁸ by the nationalist

⁶⁷ For the historian Olivera Milosavljevic the *“active participation of the intellectual élite [in Politika] provided an appearance of objectivity, specific to a scientific dialogue and not a political one. The backing of the intellectuals served only to lend more weight to the propaganda, in comparison with the transparent discourse of the purely political propagandists, although the content of the declarations of both groups came down to the same”*. See her article *“Du mauvais usage de l'autorité scientifique”* in *Radiographie d'un nationalisme: les racines serbes du conflit yougoslave* under the direction of Nebojsa Popov, Les Editions de l'Atelier, Paris, 1998, p.233.

⁶⁸ On this point see Gordana Igric, *“Relectures guerrières de l'histoire yougoslave”* in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1995. Through a reading of the new school textbooks, the article uncovers the work done to destroy the Federation's history. Thus: *“(...) young Serbs learn at the age of ten that their “fellow citizens” were ignored by the Croatian constitution, then reduced to the rank of a national minority and stripped of their rights. As regards “the Catholic church and its fanatic believers” they “undertook to fight against the Orthodox Church and the Serbs”. The external enemy then comes on the scene: “Due to the bias of the European Community, and above all of Germany, as it is the influential and most aggressive member of the Community, the fight never stopped (...) For the third time in the 20th century, Germany and Austria repeated their “Drang nach Osten” (“March Eastwards”) but this time politically and*

political parties that had already existed for a long time or had come to power in the former federal republics when free elections were held in 1990.

37. The very structure of the media system set in place under Tito – characterised by considerable decentralisation to guarantee to each culture the opportunity to express itself and in which each republic had developed its own media complex⁶⁹ - encouraged these nationalist parties to take control of what they henceforth considered their own media.

Responsibility of the intellectuals

38. In Serbia, the issue of nationalism would be raised openly in the mid-eighties in an atmosphere of economic stagnation and social crisis. At the start of 1986, under the influence of the Serbian novelist and academician, Dobrica Cosic, the *Serbian Writers' Association* transformed into an instrument for amplifying the Serbian identity claim by multiplying the calls and demonstrations for a petition to be signed condemning the “genocide” of which the Serbian population in Kosovo was allegedly victim.

39. However, it was the publication through a deliberate leak of several extracts from a *Memorandum on contemporary social issues in our country* by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Science in *Vecernje Novosti*⁷⁰ several months later which would truly spark things off and raise the issue of Serbian nationalism publicly. In the text prepared by sixteen academicians and largely inspired by Dobrica Cosic⁷¹, all of the nationalist

economically, lending their support to the secessionist forces of the Yugoslav Republics”. Serbia and Montenegro therefore defended themselves fighting side-by-side for Yugoslavia. This “aroused the anger and the desire for revenge of the instigators of the new world order who decided to punish them”. In their geography classes, the Serbian children of fourteen years of age learn not only the characteristics of the “Serbian Republic of Krajina” and the “Serbian Republic of Bosnia” but they are also to know how to interpret the break-up of Yugoslavia: “The Serbian Republic of Krajina was established during the religious war in Croatia which began in 1991 (...) In order to end the national and religious war, the United Nations made the decision to place Krajina under the protection of their armed forces”.

⁶⁹ To cite only the example of television, Yugoslav Radio Television (YRT) was in fact only a co-ordination network for the 8 television centres in the various republics. It was a central structure based in Belgrade, the JRT, that was responsible for co-ordinating program exchanges between these centres.

⁷⁰ 25 and 26 September 1986.

⁷¹ Dobrica Cosic plays a special role as academic and novelist and also as the person formerly responsible for the propaganda of the Serbian Communist Party who used the frustrations of the Serbian people and the rise of Serbian nationalism. Already in 1977, in his address at his becoming a member of the Academy on

arguments which would fuel the ethnic hatred and provoke the war were set out through the analysis of the crisis in the socialist federal system. The *Memorandum* condemned the political, social, economic⁷² and cultural discrimination shown toward the Serbian people

29 March, he stressed the "tragic" fate of the Serbian people (particularly in Kosovo) who had "won all the wars but lost all peace"... Through his repeated anti-Yugoslavian stances and his numerous attacks against the non-Serbian peoples, Dobrica Cosic had a direct responsibility in the rise of inter-ethnic hatred – even aggravating the situation during the wars of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 20 June 1989, he stated in an interview for *Danas* magazine: "For a long time now I have no longer been convinced that Yugoslavism is a priori a Serbian interest, and less still that this Yugoslavism means democracy and socialism (...) Serbian Yugoslavism, in its current form, is being transformed in the experience of the other Yugoslav peoples into the opposite of what it is: it gives rise to feelings of anti-Yugoslavism and anti-Serbism. I see no reason for us, as Serbs, to support Yugoslavia more than any other Yugoslav people(...)"

When war broke out in Croatia, he stated in *Politika* on 15 September 1991: "Our State has become a country of misfortune and shame; peace has become war; the peoples we used to consider as brothers are repaying us with unbrotherly, oustachi and VMRO hatred and enmity; our neighbours have again become our persecutors and murderers; the Serbian people in Croatia are seeking refuge and conducting a defensive war, while a hundred thousand of them are fleeing to Serbia. In this protracted time of misery we are not only victims; we too are causing others to suffer, with little thought as to why or how much (...) Europe, which presents itself as new Europe, is acting like old Europe with regard to Serbia: it is accepting the chauvinist lie as a political truth, nazism as democracy, it depicts victims as oppressors (...)"

Similarly, while fighting was taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he addressed his peers of the Academy as follows: "The worst has happened to us: the break-up of Yugoslavia undoes two centuries of fighting for freedom for the lives of the Serbs in one State; the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are threatened by the return of Oustachism and militant Islam and frightened by the new genocide, they are forced to conduct a terrible war of defence against chauvinist-oustachi Croatia and the Muslim djihad; we are being punished by banishment from the world community; we are sentenced to a long ordeal, humiliation, exodus and assimilation. We respond to the crimes being inflicted on us with crimes and we sometimes dishonour ourselves to the point where we no longer recognise ourselves." In *Politika*, 16 June 1992, p. 7.

⁷² The economic exploitation which Serbia and the Serbs supposedly suffered was very soon to be denounced in the columns of *Politika*:

- *I demand satisfaction on behalf of all workers of Heavy-Duty Vehicles "Prag" in Rakovic who lost their jobs when their plant was fully dismantled in the post-war period and transferred to Maribor, where the "TAM" was founded. Thus Serbia had to be a blood-donor for those who are insulting it now. It had to give up its modest industry for the sake of the industrialisation of purely rural Slovenia!*". Engineer Sava Maksimovic, in *Politika*, 15 November 1988.

- *"I have never understood the real goal of the cross-border trade, but I fully understood its results. Namely in a very small, underdeveloped country very strong commercial companies have emerged which, under the guise of cross-border trade, amassed enormous wealth by importing from Italy, Austria, Germany, France, England and Switzerland, the countries allegedly "bordering" Slovenia, at the expense of a "border belt" comprising in addition Slovenia, Croatia, B&H, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. I hope that it is not necessary to explain how much money Serbia and other federal units of the SFRY had to give to powerful Slovenian commercial machinery for this kind of favour/service. It should be stressed that numerous wheeler-dealer Italian companies have profited from such trading".* Momčilo Gačić, in *Politika*, 22 April 1989.

- *"I remember how a deceased high official from the northern part of the country justified the decision to erect a "TAM" plant in Maribor by stating that the local availability of a highly skilled workforce shall boost development in all our regions!"*. Ilija Devic, in *Politika*, 12 May 1989.

- *"Information that Vojvodina and part of Serbia were to be inundated during the Informbiro pressure provoked disappointment and consternation in the population at large. People were not aware of the conspiracy. They believed that all action was taken for the benefit of socialism and the working people.*

by the other republics of the Federation⁷³, an anti-Serbian coalition which, through the 1974 coalition, allegedly relegated Serbia and the Serbs to a position of inferiority. Starting with the Serbian people's own interests, the sixteen academicians called for the lost territories to be recaptured and for the Serbs to reassume control over the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. This call to reunite the Serbs scattered to the four corners of the Federation – allegedly victims of “cultural genocide”, “extermination” and “forced assimilation” in Kosovo but also in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – demanded that the Serbs have and run freely their own State, failing which they would resort to force and call into question the borders they shared with the other Federation republics⁷⁴.

40. Slobodan Milosevic managed to ensure that the Central Committee of the Serbian League of Communists did not comment on the explosive text - no one would be

After many years the people have finally learned that military and economic experts planned to put a dam on the Danube (Djerdap gorge) in order to erase part of Serbia and Vojvodina from the world map”. Dimitrije Govedarica, in Politika, 27 August 1989.

- “It was publicly stated recently that the external debt of Yugoslavia is \$15 billion. The debt is being repaid by the National Bank of Yugoslavia from the state coffers. Since that bank has the relevant data of the break-down of the debt, a Solomonic solution was found: each republic should repay its part of debt, even those republics which have not received foreign currency from the granted loans”. Ružica Despotovic, in Politika, 6 November 1990.

⁷³ Four essential points or grievances are outlined by the academics; the first point refers to the “*continuing discrimination against the Serbian economy in the post-war period*” and its state of underdevelopment with regard to the other Republics and, in particular, Croatia and Slovenia; the second point refers to “*Serbia's constitutional status, undefined and fraught with internal conflict*” which prevents its “*political consolidation*”; the third point discusses “*the physical, political, judicial and cultural genocide of the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija*” which “*is the greatest defeat ever suffered by Serbia in its struggles for liberation*”; the last point denounces the “*discrimination*” and “*the refined and efficient policy of assimilation*” affecting the “*Serbian people in Croatia*”. See “*Mémorandum fait par un groupe d'académiciens de l'Académie Serbe des Sciences et des Arts sur des questions sociales actuelles de notre pays, Deuxième partie: La position de la Serbie et du peuple serbe*”, published in *Le nettoyage ethnique. Documents historiques sur une idéologie serbe*, collected, translated et commented on by Mirko Grmek, Marc Gjidara et Neven Simac, Fayard, Paris, 1993, pp. 236-269.

⁷⁴ The academicians stated: “*Establishing the total national and cultural integrity of the Serbian people - irrespective of the republic or province in which it is to be found - is its historic and democratic right. Achieving equality and developing independently have a deeper historical meaning for the Serbian people. In less than fifty years, within two generations, the Serbian people, twice subjected to physical annihilation, forced assimilation, religious conversion, cultural genocide, ideological indoctrination, the depreciation and abnegation of its own tradition under an imposed guilt complex and intellectually and politically disarmed, was exposed to ordeals too harsh for them not to have left deep scars in its psyche (...) If it intends to have a future within the family of civilised peoples, the Serbian people must have the opportunity to find itself again and become a factor in history, to rediscover the consciousness of its historical and spiritual being, to see its economic and cultural interests clearly and to develop a modern, national and social programme which will inspire today's generations and tomorrow's (...)*”. *Ibid*, pp. 265-266.

demoted or dismissed. He himself would not pass comment straight away or personally condemn the *Memorandum*. Certain information⁷⁵ suggests that Milosevic and his entourage could not have been unconnected to the leak to *Vecernje Novosti*. The fact that the prestigious Serbian Academy addressed the issue of relations between the Yugoslav

⁷⁵ Although Slobodan Milosevic himself did not actually adopt any stance when the *Memorandum* extracts were published in *Vecernje Novosti* and he managed to avoid being condemned by the League's Central Committee, he would publicly acknowledge several years later that the Academy had acted legitimately in intervening in Serbian politics: "I really don't see why the Academy wouldn't have any influence on politics in Serbia. Where is there a people or State in the world which claims to be reasonable that would be ashamed of its Academy?" (in *Politika*, 22 December 1989). This complicity with the Academy was reciprocal: at its general assembly in May 1989, the Academy would declare: "As a result of the praiseworthy struggle and unity of its people, which required daring, bold and honest positions, and as a result of the unity of the Party and State's new leadership, headed by president Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia has recovered its sovereignty, statehood and unity and has become an equal member of our socialist, federative and multinational community. The Academy has supported and still supports today the efforts and programme of the new Serbian leadership". Statement reproduced in the 26 May 1989 issue of *Politika* which ran, in bold, the headline "The Academy supported and supports the programme of the new Serbian leadership".

Moreover, beginning in 1990, Milosevic would be very open about his contacts with the authors of the *Memorandum* - in order to sound them out about his plan to unite the entire Serbian people within a single state. Borislav Jovic recounted how Milosevic received Dobrica Cosic in the winter of 1990 several times (See *The Last Days of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, a Diary Extract, Politika*, 1995, Belgrade, p.130). In April 1992, Milosevic would place Dobrica Cosic, the real inspiration behind the *Memorandum*, at the head of the new Yugoslav Federation.

In January 1992, the academician and Serbian parliamentary deputy for Milosevic's Socialist Party, Antonije Isakovic, stated: "The fundamental thing is that the 'Memorandum' had its impact - some accepted it, while anti-Serbs were mostly against it", *Duga*, 1-14 February 1992.

There would be another indication of the collusion between the Milosevic group and the people behind the *Memorandum* in June 1992 when some of the academicians would have the misfortune to demand Milosevic's resignation. Rados Smiljkovic, leader of the Socialist Party and a loyal ally of Mira Markovic (Hartmann, *op. cit.*, p. 31), Milosevic's wife, declared at the time: "The members of the Academy do not have the right to harm this institution's place in the life of the nation by signing the petition for the president of the republic to resign. The academicians cannot call for one thing in the *Memorandum* and the absolute opposite now". In *Politika*, 15 June 1992, p. 11. On the very evening that 65 academicians called for Milosevic to step down from power, Mihajlo Markovic, an academician and vice-president of Milosevic's party, said in a programme on *National Television*: "(...) Raising questions about the position of the Serbs in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia, the Academy has advocated for a beginning of the battle which has brought us to the situation we're in today. From the way these questions were raised it was obvious we had to fight for the right of the Serbs to survive in these parts. And we had to express our human solidarity, thus getting into conflict with great powers and the New World Order. So it's immoral that some members of the people who stood up in the name of the whole nation, that came to a complete consensus with very few exceptions, today blame others for the consequences of this policy. The whole thing is immoral. It can be excused for pragmatic reasons, for fear of the consequences, because of the need to submit to those who are stronger, but not for moral reasons". See the documentary *The Academicians*, directed by Mirko Bojovic and produced by Lazar Lalic, ARHITEL, 2002.

Lastly, it should be recalled that the political execution of Dragisa Pavlovic, orchestrated by Milosevic in September 1987, was directly linked to the attack Pavlovic made upon the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and its *Memorandum*. Borislav Jovic wrote on this subject: "Dragisa Pavlovic was, at the time, the most prominent Serbian politician who had been attacking the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences for the contents of the well-known draft of the *Memorandum*, but also because he openly sided against Milosevic himself, concerning the way of solving Serbian problems in Kosovo and Metohija", in *Book on Milosevic, op. cit.* pp. 9-10.

partners and raised the matter of Serbia's position within all of Yugoslavia would give legitimacy to the anti-Yugoslav, nationalist programme that emerged in the public and political arenas. Architect Bogdan Bogdanovic who left the Serbian Academy in 1981 confirmed that, in his view, the publication of the document pointed to complicity between certain political and intellectual circles in Belgrade and that the *Memorandum* constituted an encouragement, scientific backing, for Serbian nationalism: "*Such a document couldn't have come out without collaboration between the academicians-national leaders and some of the Party's members. Not Stambolic for sure (...) In Belgrade it was welcomed as a start for a race: 'our intellectuals are telling us to go forward'. To what? To Greater Serbia, of course. To wars, to fulfilment of our great traditional ideals, etc.*"⁷⁶

Milosevic was later to take over the programme for his own ends and use it to come to power before truly starting to apply it, with the direct assistance of certain academicians⁷⁷, after he had been elected President of Serbia. Like his use of Serbian history and mythology, the media were to prove Milosevic's most worthy allies in his consolidation of power.

Milosevic relies on the media to consolidate power

41. During the decisive battle which S. Milosevic won over the reform wing of the Serbian Communist Party in 1987 – first over Dragisa Pavlovic, the president of the Belgrade communists and then Ivan Stambolic, the Serbian President – the most important Serbian media were going to play a crucial role. Dusan Mitevic, *Belgrade Television's* number two and a close ally⁷⁸ of Milosevic, Zivorad Minovic, *Politika's* editor-in-chief⁷⁹, and Slobodan Jovanovic, director of *Politika Ekspres*, would support

⁷⁶ *The Academicians, op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Bogdan Bogdanovic stated: "*This will sound horrible, but I think it is true. I heard they had committees of demographers, historians, psychologists to see, as they were sure about the war, how many lives the Serbian-nation could afford to lose, what Serbian casualties would be in the war. Can you imagine that horror? Old men counting how many young men they could send to war to get killed!*". *Idem.*

⁷⁸ "*Mira Markovic: Power behind Milosevic*", *BBC News*, Saturday, 13 January 2001.

⁷⁹ It was Zivorad Minovic who would provide Milosevic with *Politika's* support in the power struggles within the Serbian League of Communists. After Milosevic's victory, he would be appointed general director of the group in place of Ivan Stojanovic. At the same time, he would be put in charge of "hearts" and "minds" within the Central Committee as, from that point on, the two responsibilities of "training" the cadre "in ideological and political matters" and of disseminating "propaganda and stirring people up" fell to

Milosevic against his enemies within the Party, accused of being anti-Tito and anti-Yugoslav. Won in a hard struggle during a meeting of the Party's Central Committee, Milosevic's victory over the reform wing of the Party would lead shortly after to a media coup orchestrated by Dusan Mitevic⁸⁰. The "eighth session" of the Party was the first ever to be broadcast "live" on television in front of millions of Serbian viewers who would witness Slobodan Milosevic take control of the Serbian Communist Party⁸¹. Borislav Jovic, a loyal ally of Milosevic and the former President of the Yugoslav Federation, would confirm that the media coverage of the "eighth session" played an important role in legitimising Milosevic's take-over of power⁸².

42. This scene would be reminiscent of another, that of 24 April 1987 when, dispatched to Kosovo to meet the Serbian minority there which was complaining about the violence committed by the Albanian autonomous authorities, Milosevic would build his legend as defender of the Kosovo Serbs based on a pre-planned incident and speech⁸³. An incident alleged to have been completely arranged with the local police which would give Milosevic the opportunity to tell the Serbian minority that "*no one has the right to beat*

him. He would turn the *Politika* group's publications into the Serbian government's ideological weapon. See Mark Thompson, *Forging War. The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Article 19, "International Centre against Censorship", Avon, May 1994, p. 69.

⁸⁰ On 29 September 1994, Dusan Mitevic would clarify his role in an interview given to the BBC team preparing a documentary on the suicide of the Yugoslav nation: "(...) *In socialist countries, as you know, sessions were not broadcast live. We reported from the sessions but there were no live broadcasts. But this time we created a precedent. It lasted for two days and it was broadcast live on one of our channels. The decision was made by me personally because I thought it would be better to air it instead of having many TV crews covering the event. But the basic reason it was possible to implement the decision was that I didn't consult anyone and nobody actually banned the broadcast (...) And President Milosevic scored a major point there because with that coverage he gave the people the opportunity to support him and it made things easier for him greatly because, you know, a month later some top state leaders were replaced, including Ivan Stambolic, so the public was prepared in advance with the live coverage of the session.*"

⁸¹ Florence Hartmann, *Milosevic, la diagonale du fou*, Denoël, Paris, 1999, pp. 19 – 21.

⁸² Borislav Jovic wrote: "*The echo of the discussion at the CK session was enormous. All the media, television, radio and the daily papers, broadcast every word that was spoken. The citizens "glued" themselves to their TV and radio sets and started in huge numbers to take part in the debate by sending telegrams of support to Milosevic and criticism about the current way of conducting the policy. These telegrams were read out loud at the session in order for all CK members to be familiar with them, which stirred resistance and dissatisfaction in the Stambolic group, but also encouraged new telegrams to be sent, and so on indefinitely. As never before, headlines in the newspapers, almost from the front page to the last page, were as huge as if they had been on posters, with highlights from speeches of all the speakers. Politicization reached its climax. By public vote Milosevic's policy was accepted and the responsibility of Dragisa Pavlovic established, with only seven voices against*". In *Book on Milosevic*, Belgrade, 2001 (draft translation by ICTY), p. 44.

⁸³ Daniel Vernet, "*Milosevic, l'homme du malheur serbe*" in *Le Monde*, 7 October 2000.

the people" was in fact filmed by *Serbian Television* present on the scene with Dusan Mitevic's complicity⁸⁴. Shown and re-shown on the air and the subject of much commentary in the written press, the pictures would set the seal on Milosevic's image as the saviour and unifier of the Serbian people and consolidate his power within the Party.

"Serbian identity under threat"

43. The first demonstration of collusion between Milosevic and the Serbian media united by nationalist aims would be followed in the summer of 1987 by an intense media campaign which lasted until 1990 designed to stir up the Serbs against the Albanian majority in Kosovo accused of all the evils.

44. The image of a Serbian identity threatened by its neighbours, and above all by the Albanians, would be greatly exploited by a daily newspaper such as *Politika* which would become one of the regime's main instruments for manipulation and misinformation⁸⁵.

⁸⁴ Rémy Ourdan, "Les guerres perdues de Slobodan Milosevic", *LeMonde.fr*, 31 March 2001.

⁸⁵ One might cite the example of the alleged exponential increase of the Albanian population, which was purportedly part of a plan knowingly devised and which threatened all Serbian presence in Kosovo, a region depicted as the historical cradle of the Serbian people:

- "The current numerical superiority of the Albanians in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and in some other areas represents the mainstay of the demands for a Greater Albania. However, that numerical superiority and the high birth-rate are not a natural consequence of historical development but rather a result of their political will. It is obvious and need not be proved (there's a design to their settling and re-settling; high birth-rate is propagated; bigamy is tolerated, etc.). It is essential that we understand this as an act of violence against ordinary social development and handle it accordingly, using violent means. While the creation of a Greater Albania is the publicly proclaimed goal of the Albanian separatists, their covert goal, in the foreseeable future, is the break-up of Yugoslavia. This is best attested to by the direction of Albanian population-settling. There is a conspicuous absence of Albanians in areas which, under the post-First Balkans War treaty, were to be annexed to Bulgaria. The moment is approaching when the Serb and Macedonian people shall be finally separated by the buffer zone inhabited by the non-Slavic nations. Thus, the Macedonians shall be practically isolated from the rest of Yugoslavia. Similar developments are taking place in Sandzak, which used to be the link between Serbia and Montenegro". Djordje Jankovic, in *Politika*, 5 November 1988.

- "Every state, especially one characterised by a major disproportion in the population birth-rates, must monitor "the national distribution of babies." This also applies to Yugoslavia, for its two big republics and one big province (Vojvodina) cannot attain the birth-rate in Kosovo. More babies are born in Kosovo than in the federal units of Croatia, Slovenia, and Vojvodina! It is an inalienable right of all of our citizens to procreate and multiply, but it is also his or her obligation to ensure the future of all the children in Yugoslavia. Yet nations with high birth-rates and those with low ones should be equally concerned by the upset biological scheme of rejuvenation of the SFRY's entire population. A high birth-rate for a people in a joint state can be accepted only if all the other peoples agree to it, that is they give their consent to "sustain" the increased number of children and share with them all of the resources and territories. Any

Spreading the worst of rumours without checking them and yet presenting them as authenticated, the newspaper would describe an apocalyptic situation nothing like what was actually happening in Kosovo but which aroused Serbian resentment while inciting hatred and stirring people to violence. This course of action used a technique already

forcible socialisation would run counter to the crystal-clear democracy formulated by Comrade Kardelj: "The rights of every citizen of the SFRY are limited by the rights of the other people in the country". Miodrag D. Ignjatovic, in *Politika*, 20 November 1988

- *"Though hemmed-in, the surviving Albanian nationalists and separatists did not renounce their mindless goals in the post-WW2 period. They changed their tactics but their strategic goal remained the same as in 1912, 1919, 1944-1945. Armed rebellion was replaced by hellish plans to conquer the territory of the South Slavs by means of a demographic boom in the Albanian population within our country, plans which aimed to create an "ethnically pure Kosovo". The strategy entailed all kinds of open and perfidious pressure on the indigenous Serbs and Montenegrins to force them to emigrate, the penetration of separatists into all of the institutions of the socio-economic system in Kosovo and Metohija, and measures aimed at Albanising Kosmet and separating the province from the FR Serbia as well as plans to legally transform Kosovo and Metohija into a republic, which would later secede from Serbia and the SFRY and unite with the People's Republic of Albania"*. Dr. Gavro Marjanovic, in *Politika*, 6 December 1988.

- *"While the birth rate of the Serb people is rapidly decreasing, the Albanian baby boom has been Yugoslavia's most salient problem for quite some years. It used to be the taboo topic. Many glossed over it, and some stated that they were too ashamed to discuss the topic of birth rates. However the Albanians are not ashamed of having the highest birth rate in Europe and are instead striving to make it the highest in the world. Our federal constitution guarantees the right to give birth freely but has forgotten to add "in line with society's economic potential". It is impossible to meet the megalomaniac demands of a demographic conqueror"*. M.A. Dusan Nikolic, in *Politika*, 30 October 1989.

- *"The Yugoslav political leadership's Albanian policy from the mid 1960s until 1981, that is until the fifth-column mutiny of Albanian separatists and chauvinists, was a total failure. It contributed greatly to the forced changes made to the ethnic map of Kosovo and Metohija, that is, to the forced Albanisation of the old centre of Serb statehood and spirituality"*. Batric Jovanovic, in *Politika*, 5 May 1990.

A similar mechanism would be employed against the Croats, who would be portrayed as the heirs to those responsible for crimes committed against the other populations, including the Serbs, during the Second World War. The drawing of unjust parallels also played a role in manipulating and disinforming the public:

- *"The world is not sufficiently informed about the Ustasha genocide, for if it were some countries would not tolerate its supporters and Jasenovac would not have been omitted from the list of Europe's worst concentration camps during WW2. I do not know whether it had the highest death toll but I do know that the deaths there were the most..."*. Dr. Ljubomir Ramcevic, in *Politika*, 8 May 1989.

- *"Croatia, the so-called Democratic Community, is proud of Ante Starcevic! According to a folk saying, the wise shy away from places where fools tread. Croatia is proud of the so-called Independent State of Croatia and is covertly and stealthily preparing a fresh slaughter of Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. If these honest, but passive and indifferent, Croats allow Tudjman and his followers to be installed...then the bloodiest civil war Yugoslavia has ever seen shall break out...this is more than feasible in view of the recent statement made by Tudjman's close aide, Seks, who said that they intended to eliminate all unitarianists in Croatia"*. Radoslav Blagojevic, in *Politika*, 3 March 1990.

- *"Your intentions are to compel the entire Croat nation to feel responsible for the genocide committed by the roguish elements of the Croat people, the Ustashas. You, like your backer and name-sake Dr. Franjo Kuharic, have the courage to speak about "only" 40-50,000 victims in the concentration camp of Jasenovac but, to date, we have discovered six times as many victims in mass graves in Gradina"*. Cudomil Huber, "Open letter to Dr Franjo Tudjman", in *Politika*, 8 March 1990.

- *"The genocide was forgotten thanks to the efforts of the party and the partisan leadership of Yugoslavia, and in particular high-ranking politicians, because of their passivity. A gesture similar to Brandt's has never been made by our head of state. Even lesser gestures of tribute or memory have not been made...and those which have always focused on the general humanistic aspect of the event and not the concrete historical element"*. Mr. Miroslav Zivkovic, in *Politika*, 5 June 1990.

employed by Nazi propaganda in order to justify in advance aggression against Czechoslovakia and Poland under the pretext of defending the German minorities. "Information" and "accounts" from these minorities describing the atrocities they were suffering were faithfully reproduced by the German press, so giving the propaganda an air of authenticity⁸⁶.

45. As of 1987, Milosevic would rely the media which he used directly and cynically to impose his obsessional themes. The Belgian journalist Jean-Paul Collette confirms that "according to various people's testimony" he "personally inspired the televised propaganda messages through which he vented his nationalist hysteria"⁸⁷. Milosevic's actual take-over of the media and what they broadcast was also confirmed by Borisav Jovic, one of his closest collaborators, who wrote on 2 August 1990 in the notebook he kept every day as vice-president and then president of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia: "I wrote a series of three articles, 'The Truth about Ante Markovic', and sent them to Slobodan. He instructed that they be published in Politika. They will appear as instalments on the 5th, 6th and 7th under some pseudonym. We must expose him, because the people are seriously mistaken about who he is and what he is. Many see in him some sort of saviour, but he is an ordinary impostor and enemy of the Serb nation"⁸⁸.

⁸⁶ Judge Antoine Garapon and university professor Muhamedin Kullashi accurately analyse how the procedure was applied in Kosovo in their article *Les ressorts du discours de la haine autour du Kosovo*, especially when they write: "Unity was re-established by demonising the Albanians and more specifically espousing three themes which resurfaced unendingly to the point of being hammered home by the media and by the intellectuals themselves who played a decisive relay role: invasion, genocide and exodus. All of the themes reveal that this was no ordinary nationalism staking a claim to a territory but more fundamentally a racist discourse, that is to say, one based on the demonisation of others who are transformed into outsiders. The propaganda used classic methods, namely, the weaving of a big lie on a framework of "small truths" (ordinary law conflicts systematically transformed into inter-ethnic conflicts, real tension between the Albanians and Serbs in periods of political and economic crisis), the accounts of atrocities based on made-up facts or mostly falsified information and, in particular, the incessant repetition of lies ("genocide", "terror", "ethnic cleansing") which, with time, Serbian public opinion took to be true." <http://www.col.fr/cera/pays/kosovo.htm>

<http://www.col.fr/cera/pays/kosovo.htm>

⁸⁷ In "Un monstre d'opportunisme", on-line edition of the *Le Soir* newspaper, 12/02/2002. <http://www.educweb.org/Alterfocus/Dossiers/Delponte/Milosevic.htm>

⁸⁸ In *Last Days of the SFRY*, Journal of excerpts translated by David Stephenson for the ICTY, pp. 145-146. Another interesting example provided by Borisav Jovic: "It happened very often that Milosevic received for talks various foreign statesmen, who had different views and opinions than him on the issues discussed. The rule was never to stand in front of TV cameras, where everybody could express their views, but to publish a press release, which had been personally edited by Milosevic and which featured his views as the subject of

Serbian mystique exploited by those in power

46. The use of history and the revival of ancient Serbian myths for nationalist ends would lead to cultural and political events being orchestrated to keep the Serbian masses mobilised. Nazi propaganda had shown that myths bind the masses together tightly. Indeed, it was through myths and, therefore, the appeal to the forces of the unconscious, to fear and terror, the instinct of power and the lost community that the propaganda orchestrated by Goebbels had succeeded in winning over the Germans and melding them into a compact mass. The Serbian regime would use a similar technique. To weld the population together official propaganda drew on the sources of the Serbian mystique, that of a people who were the mistreated victims and martyrs of history and that of Greater Serbia, indissolubly linked to the Orthodox religion⁸⁹.

47. From 1987, the most nationalist intellectuals took turns on the television to extol the Serbian nation's past whilst the papers saw a rise in the number of historical features⁹⁰ glorifying medieval Greater Serbia and articles listing the injustices and attacks suffered by the Serbs⁹¹, beginning with the battle of *Kosovo Polje* in 1389 – which the Ottomans

the talks, without the views of the other party". In *Book on Milosevic*, Belgrade, 2001 (Draft translation by ICTY), p.16.

⁸⁹ In the summer of 1991, a ban was introduced at RTS on any music written or played by non-Serbs and increasing importance was given to the Orthodox religion and its representatives. Reports on Orthodox festivals were at that point a matter of course.

⁹⁰ Citing the case of *Politika*, Mark Thompson writes in this regard: "From 1987, *Politika* was swiftly monopolised by hate- and fear-mongering articles about a growing roster of internal and external enemies (the Albanians of Kosovo and, later, the Croats, the Slovenians, the Bosnian Muslims, the Vatican and the CIA). The back pages of the paper, meanwhile, were 'given over to interminable obsessive features on Serbia's past: its battles, its dynasties, its unique sufferings'". In *Forging War. The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Article 19. "International Centre against Censorship", Avon, May 1994, p. 69.

⁹¹ Of the many television and radio historical programmes broadcast to illustrate the threats weighing down upon the Serbian people and which justified the attacks upon the non-Serbian populations of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, one could cite:

"*Red is the Sky*", a docu-drama aired by *Radio Belgrade* in August 1991 which, using eyewitness testimony, dealt with the exodus of the Croatian Serbs; the programme "*The Consecration of the Kupresko Polje Grave*", into which Serbs, with their throats slit, were thrown during the Second World War, shown on *TV Belgrade*; the report "*The Monument*" aired on *Radio Belgrade's* second station, which dealt with the "cleansing" of a Serbian village in Herzegovina during the Second World War; as well as "*The Sword Does not Cut off the Heads of Those who Submit*", a radio report in which the present was interpreted in the light of the past and in which the hapless Serbs massacred by the Ustasha were discussed. For more details, see Rade Veljanovski, *op. cit.* pp. 314-315.

won and which put an end to Serbia's autonomy – and going through to the 1943 “genocide” committed against the Serbian populations by the independent Croatian state⁹² recognised by Hitler and Mussolini and run by Ante Pavelic, leader of the nationalist movement of the Ustasha responsible for the assassination of King Alexander in 1934. On 9 February 1990, *Politika* published a letter signed by Vojislav K. Stojanovic, president of the *Association of University Teachers and Scholars of Serbia*, which very clearly exaggerated the number of Serbian victims during the Second World War and the supposed demographic explosion of Kosovo Albanians: “*The Serbian people has never been a conquering nation and has never sought to oppress other peoples. Yet, as its tragic destiny has been played out, the other peoples have sought to subjugate and oppress it (...) In the crime of genocide committed by the Croatian ultra-nationalists, the Serbian nation lost over two million innocent victims simply because they were Serbs (...) The Albanians acted in an immoral and inhuman way. They conducted an unprecedented campaign for their wretched and pitiful women to bear children and this led to a demographic explosion the like of which has never been seen anywhere before - the biggest in the world. As a result, they have multiplied 50 times over in just forty years in Kosovo and Metohija.*”

Media coverage of “political masses”

48. Artistic, religious and ritualistic ceremonies would become increasingly common countrywide to commemorate the “Serbian victims” through history. Milosevic who understood the psychological impact of such scenes on the crowd and did not omit to attend in person ensured that they were at the top of the media's agenda⁹³. Thus, in April

⁹² One example among others: during the summer of 1990, *Politika* daily newspaper devoted five of its six pages in its feature “*Echoes and Reactions*” to articles listing the Ustasas' crimes during the Second World War.

⁹³ The sociologist, Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, recalls that “*The rebirth of the Serbian people' was the main subject of Orthodox propaganda from 1987 onwards. Religious ceremonies which 'reburied the dead' (old anthropological theme), Serbian martyrs of past genocides whose remains were supposed to seed 'Serbian soil', were widely broadcast on Belgrade television. During such ceremonies the bones of martyrs were held up for show*”. In *Systematic Rapes in the Former Yugoslavia – 1991-1995*, International Symposium “Children of War. Changes, Memory and Traumatism” organised by the International Centre for Childhood and the Family, CEDRATE program, 6-8 March 1997, Paris.

<http://psydocfr.broca.inserm.fr/colloques/cr/cedrate/intervcedrg.html>

1990, two editors-in-chief of news programmes for *Radio-Television Novi Sad* in Vojvodina were dismissed for not making the celebration of a Serbian feast attended by Slobodan Milosevic the main headline⁹⁴.

49. From a symbolic viewpoint, the most successful "political mass" was indisputably that organised by the regime on 28 June 1989 for the six hundredth anniversary of the defeat at the "Field of Blackbirds" at Kosovo Polje which saw the Ottomans establish themselves in the region for several centuries. In front of a million Serbs gathered for the occasion, Slobodan Milosevic promised the Serbian people "new battles" to cleanse it of the sacrificial defeat which had left tens of thousands dead, and called upon the nation to awaken. *Serbian Television*, like all of the media, would give special importance to this scene which cast Milosevic as the saviour who had given back to the Serbian people their collective dignity by reclaiming "the lost paradise" of ancient Serbia⁹⁵. As Florence Hartmann correctly writes, "the regime's propaganda machine exploited emotions, glorified the past, and manipulated the collective memory in order to prepare people's minds for the war that Slobodan Milosevic had just announced"⁹⁶. In this respect, a special place must be reserved for the *Politika* daily newspaper and its column "*Echoes and Reactions*" renowned for advocating hatred and xenophobia. Between July 1988 and March 1991, over 4,000 contributions from intellectuals, trade unionists, soldiers, teachers, doctors and public institutions would be published. Using different themes directly drawn from the grievances or aims set out in the Serbian Academy's *Memorandum* of 1986⁹⁷, the same message was tirelessly repeated like a leitmotiv, that of the historical injustices done to the Serbian "people"⁹⁸ ... it being understood that the

⁹⁴ *Reporters sans frontières, La liberté de la presse dans le monde. Report 1991*, p. 179.

⁹⁵ On 28 March 1989, amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia were adopted which from then on deprived the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina of the autonomy they had enjoyed since 1974.

⁹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁹⁷ It should be noted that the academicians would make a significant contribution to the column. The first contributions to "*Echoes and Reactions*" dated back to November 1988 and supported the policy then conducted by the government which consisted of propagating anti-Slovenian and anti-autonomist sentiment. See the articles by the academicians Dejan Medakovic ("*We will not allow anyone to deprive us of our future*", special issue "*The Fight for Truth*" of 19 November 1988) and Vasilije Krestic ("*The Historical Bases for the Autonomy of Vojvodina*", 4 and 5 November 1988).

⁹⁸ Below are a few examples of contributions of intellectuals to the "*Echoes and Reactions*" column addressing these different issues. The same message repeatedly appeared in their subtext - that of a people destined always to be victims:

By Prof. Dr Marko Mladenovic, writer, Radomir Smiljanic

- "(...) Today the exodus of the Serbs from the south is being helped by Europe, notably Catholic Europe, for it hopes to win over the Muslim Albanians in Yugoslavia (Albanians are 98% Muslim, although the West literally lies that only 40% are of that faith). By demonstrating such open support, it hopes to convert them all to Christianity during the next stage. But they are forgetting that the Muslims and Orthodox people have cohabited for centuries and are therefore closer... Thus, the Vatican would like to hurt the Serbs (and Slavs) again, in the same way that it damaged the Slovenians and Croats by latinising them earlier on in history (...) And the Croats? Why do they keep silent? And are they silent? Suvar made a cautious remark that "despite the continuing love, people need not live together any longer." Why then did the Slovenians and Croats want to join Yugoslavia so much, even though we knew that they did not like us very much and were wary of such unification? Well, it was well known that they wanted to seize 'their' territories from the victorious Serb army. And yet they could not do anything without that army. By force of historical circumstances, they were on the opposite side and we Serbs understood that and we accepted them within a joint state. But then, in the last war, they paid us back with mass graves and knives in Herzegovina and Dalmatian (...)", in *Politika*, 13 December 1989.

- "(...) However the vaguest is the stance of the USA, the diplomacy of the USA, which is heading towards diplomatic bankruptcy by opposing the Serb nation, the biggest and most state-making nation in the Balkans. Does America know that it is still at war with Croatia? The notorious Independent State of Croatia declared war on the USA in late 1941 and the Croatian Democratic Community has naturally taken on that State's rights and obligations." in *Politika*, 3 June 1990.

- "Today in the heart of Europe, the West only sees the Serbs, their former allies from both WWs, through the Vatican's merciless propaganda (through Croatian and Slovenian tribalism). At the heart of the dispute is obviously Kosovo, which the Western and Comintern politicians firmly decided to hand over to Albania, the most retrograde and obscure construction in the world (I always feel sorry for our Kosovo Shiptars when I imagine how they will live when they find themselves in their state, on the other side of prokletije). The poor Westerners also talk about how the Serbs have firmly embraced orthodox Bolshevism, so that they cannot eliminate it... The terrible fate of the Serbs in Kosovo and Croatia was not a clear enough warning of the heralded rage. The Serbs are becoming "notorious" even though we have given to the Shiptari national minority more than they have merited under any criteria (Academy of Sciences, University, National Library, TV, radio, press, all in their mother tongue) and we even allow foreign commissions to work in all parts of our country...and we are forgetting that we started the war in 1914 because we banned one such commission from entering... We rejected that ultimatum and the whole world had to wage that war! At the time, our move was prompted by the need to preserve the dignity of a people (...) Milosevic has become the symbol of the Serbs' restored dignity and he might become a key prime mover in the next elections for head of state, even if his newly-emerged party fails to win 30% of the vote at the next elections. He is the only serious candidate in the upcoming general, popular referendum: republic or kingdom. I talked to him once for a full 6 hours and found no fault with him", in *Politika*, 6 September 1990.

By Dr. Mileta Markovic, Zagreb

(letter to the President of the European Parliament in Strasbourg)

- "(...)It is tantamount to asking the Nazis and not the Jews about the genocide against the Jews. In Kosovo, the Serbian people are being persecuted and not the Albanian people. The persecution started three hundred years ago. Although it may sound paradoxical, the fact is that the most far-reaching persecution and most extensive exodus of the Serb people happened in post-war socialist Yugoslavia. All of the other Slav and non-Slav people in Kosovo are also being intimidated and threatened, the Montenegrins, Macedonians, Muslims, Turks, Croats and Romanies, and all the peoples living close to the borders of the so-called "Greater Albania", which was conceived and gradually made a reality by "a fire and sword" campaign stage-managed by the power-holders in Tirana (...) According to the 1948 census, 58% of the population in Kosovo was Albanian (350,000) and 42% (about 300,000) Serb and other peoples. Since 1948 incredible things have happened in Kosovo. Now there are nearly 2 million Albanians in Kosovo, and only 300,000 Serbs and other peoples! And this happened because three bombs were planted in Kosovo by the political and State leadership:

The first 'bomb' was the birth-rate. The Albanian population in Kosovo (and outside Kosovo) has the highest birth rate in Europe and one of the highest in the world. The birth-rate is being boosted by the Albanian separatists, using all means available, for they are waging a demographic war, or a campaign to

conquer foreign territories. Relevant data may be found in the recently published *Bela Knjiga* (White Book). The second "bomb" was the mechanical growth of the population. Although NR Albania has been considered a country hostile to Yugoslavia since 1948, many families have crossed that border and settled in Yugoslavia, and no-one has tried to stop them. On the contrary, they have immediately been given houses and property belonging to the local population (Serbs, Montenegrins, etc.) and even social assistance. Currently, no one knows how many Albanians have illegally emigrated to Yugoslavia, but no Serb or Montenegrin (and there are quite a few of them in Albania) has managed to escape to Yugoslavia, because in Albania they are stripped of their national, cultural and religious rights. The third "bomb" is a political one: under the 1974 Constitution, Serbia was divided into three parts which, practically, made it possible to create an Albanian state in the Balkans. As such, the Serbs and other peoples in Kosovo became national minorities, and the Albanians a ruling nation, for the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo practically became a state within the state. It was not an Albanian experiment or error. It was the result of a wrong conception of the Yugoslav (con)federation. It was very risky", in *Politika*, 1 July 1989.

By Radomir Smiljanic

- "(...)Both the deaf and the blind are aware that the Ante Markovic way out of a crisis entails the further "exploitation of all resources" by Slovenia and Croatia, at the expense of the central and southern republics of the SFRY. The depreciated prices of electricity and coal (Serbia is its largest producer), railway and PTT services (the longest railway lines run through Serbia and the south of Yugoslavia) and ferrous and non-ferrous products (Serbia, B&H, Montenegro and Macedonia are the largest producers thereof) clearly indicate that the federal government, composed of representatives from 6 republics and 2 provinces, are catering to the needs of the two republics in the north west, Slovenia and Croatia (whose representatives make up over half the government)", in *Politika*, 24 December 1989.

- "(...)If, as it clearly stems from the conduct of many of Tudjman's faithful, the Croatian secession comes to pass and Yugoslavia is broken up, the Serbs will then also obtain their right to chose with whom they will live outside the right-wing, neo-Nazi Croatia - for, in the latter, their existence would be threatened, given the still raw memories of the terrible genocide committed by most Croat sons in Pavelic's Croatia. Tudjman calls the country "the historical dream of all Croats". Perhaps the Serbs will also avail themselves of the right to secede as a people, like the Croats, and then they will probably join the most likely "vestiges" of Yugoslavia. In the territory adjoining Bosnia, for example", in *Politika*, 22 August 1990

- "(...)I had to ask the lady minister from Slovenia what the Slovenian foreign policy would be like in view of the fact that, for example, Yugo-Italian Osim Agreements would remain in place as long as the Yugoslav federation existed. (And she told me that Yugoslavia no longer existed..) Yet, it is a well known fact that Italy had legitimate territories in the whole of Istria as far as Susak, Zadar and many other islands and peninsulas. Slovenia, therefore, would be land-locked (like Serbia) and Croatia would get only one fifth of its current coastline", in *Politika*, 22 October 1990.

By Veljko Guberina

- "(...) After WW2, the Serb people was the first to embrace the slogan "Brotherhood and Unity" and instead of extending support to the Serb people in their justified struggle for the rights already enjoyed by other peoples in the country, they were attacked in the most brutal way...and their only fault was their belated reaction to the discrimination against their own people by the Albanian national minority which, in this country, enjoys superior rights to any other national minority in Europe - rights SUPERIOR TO THE ONES EXERCISED BY THE SERB AND MONTENEGRIN PEOPLES IN KOSOVO...", in *Politika*, 20 January 1989.

- "(...) Slovenia which is proclaiming full sovereignty should be ready to defend its territorial integrity. However, as Slovenia is aware that it cannot do so successfully, it needs the confederation as a way to ensure the deployment of Serb soldiers (renowned for their qualities) to protect its borders, which Slovenia got because the Yugoslav state existed! If it no longer wants Yugoslavia, then it cannot count on Serbia", in *Politika*, 9 October 1990.

- "(...) And who is throwing their weight behind the current leaders? Only five million people bearing an onerous legacy from the recent past. A people whose name has not gone down in history because it earned glorious war victories, had famous warriors or created empires, but a people whose name was put on the map of the world in 1102 when they gave their freedom to foreigners on a plate. Had Serb soldiers not gone to Croatia in 1918, it would have never been recovered", in *Politika*, 25 January 1991

- "(...) In that regard, he needs to be explained two things which he should have known a long time ago: the Shiptari are a national minority in Yugoslavia but they enjoy rights superior to those exercised by any

time had come to set matters straight. The feature, which played a key role in manipulating Serbian public opinion, was used by the electronic media controlled by the authorities, *TV Politika* and *TV Belgrade*. The very many contributions were presented as the expression of the Serbian “people’s” will and so served as so much justification for implementing the Milosevic regime’s nationalist arguments – a classic propaganda procedure to artificially create unanimity or cohesion around a leader and his policy.

Attack on the media

50. The regime’s official propaganda would be all the more effective since Slobodan Milosevic took control⁹⁹ of Belgrade television just after “imposing” himself as the leader of the Communist Party¹⁰⁰. The management was replaced by trusted men and party members responsible for building up the ideological pressure of “Serbian nationalist renewal”¹⁰¹. Several hundred journalists who did not subscribe to the Slobodan Milosevic policy were dismissed by the television stations¹⁰² and newspaper companies¹⁰³ in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Pristina.

other minority in the world, and they were accorded those rights during the Vatican-Vienna and Comintern harangue against Serbia and the Serb people. The second thing we have to explain is their current number - 3 million! He is probably referring to the golden era of Tito when all of the Romanies, Muslims, Turks, and Gorani, etc, who lived in Kosovo and Metohija were simply declared -Shiptari”, in Politika, 21 February 1991.

⁹⁹ He would gain tighter control in July 1991 with the passing of a *Radio and Television Law* which created a single enterprise (*Serbian Radio Television*) henceforth State-owned – the government having complete control over RTS.

¹⁰⁰ The journalist, Véronique Soulé, states that in the weeks following the eighth plenum of the League of Communists of Serbia, the “*new leader of the Serbian CP put his men in charge of the main media: Belgrade Television (two channels received throughout Serbia) and the powerful Politika group which owned in particular two daily newspapers and ten or so weekly publications*”. *Libération*, 21 March 1991, p. 20.

¹⁰¹ A privileged witness to this umbilical link between Milosevic’s party and the RTS, having worked for the RTS from 1983 to 1992, the journalist Milica Pesic made clear this point: “*Officially and formally, RTS is a public enterprise. However, in practice it is a television station controlled primarily by the Serbian government – in other words, by the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) – the party in power – and its allies. All the leading men in RTS, instead of being appointed by the Parliament of the Republic, as is laid down in the relevant law, are actually chosen by the ruling party (SPS). And the extent to which the RTS and the regime are linked is illustrated by the following : The Director of RTS, Milorad Vucelic, is simultaneously a member of the Main Board of the Socialist Party of Serbia. Many journalists are also officials or members of the SPS, in contradiction to the Law on Public Information*”, *op.cit.* p.16.

¹⁰² RTS would be purged regularly. In January 1993, for instance, the management fired *de facto* and according to political and ethnic criteria 1,500 journalists, workers and technicians who were denied access to their Belgrade and Novi Sad offices. Challenged by those involved, the decision would however be