

The Serbian elites and Genocide in Bosnia

By Sonja Biserko

Ever since the foundation of the modern Serbian state in the 19th century, but especially since the Congress of Berlin, Serbia's elites have viewed Bosnia as a territory which could solve all their frustrations over borders. It was, namely, at that time that they set the goal of gaining access to the sea and expanding living space, something that could only be had at Bosnia's expense. The idea was that this 'must be solved by force' because without a sea Serbia was 'without economic breath, without lungs'.¹

When later the southern Slav peoples united in one state – Yugoslavia – the objectives of the Serbian elites were more or less achieved. The Serbian elites looked upon Yugoslavia as their own country, namely an expanded Serbia. Such perceptions of Yugoslavia reflected the fundamental misunderstanding between the Serbian elites and their Yugoslav counterparts, which also had their own ideas of how Yugoslavia ought to be arranged as a state. These tensions brought about the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Bosnia again came into the focus because the Serbian elites were bent on realizing their 19th-century dream even if war was the price to pay. In the event the expedition against Bosnia at the end of the 20th century resulted in genocide.

Serbia's genocidal policy in Bosnia cannot be understood properly without a knowledge of the attitudes prevailing in the environment in which such a policy was possible. Furthermore, one also needs to know about the ethnic group which was subjected to the genocide, namely about the Muslims and Serb perceptions of them. For one thing, Islamic fundamentalism was declared a threat to Yugoslavia's survival long before the campaign of genocide was launched in Bosnia. Serbia went to war against Yugoslavia trumpeting forth the Islamic fundamentalism thesis as an excuse for its aggression against Bosnia and Kosovo. It declared the 'operation of Islamic fundamentalism the chief danger for Yugoslavia, a far more serious one than the one on which greater insistence has been placed – Serb-Croat relations'. Warnings were uttered that in 'BiH [Bosnia and Herzegovina] a policy of reappraisal of the Ottoman empire is being implemented', that 'theses boiling down to Islamic fundamentalism are being spread under the guise of promoting recognition of Muslims in Yugoslavia', as well as that 'it is hard to draw a line of distinction between the ethnic promotion of Muslims and that which constitutes Islamic religiosity'.² The demographic picture of the Muslims in the former Yugoslavia attracted special attention, resulting in the publication of figures emphasizing their numerical superiority and holding out the prospect of their becoming the majority population in the Balkans in a very short time. The implication was that demographic engineering was a highly effective means of achieving Jihad's objectives: Sandžak, Kosovo and western Macedonia were said to be almost ethnically pure whereas in Bosnia Muslims were estimated at accounting for over half the total population, a situation which did not exist in the Balkans even under the Ottoman empire during the 19th century.³

¹ J. Cvijić, *Aneksija BiH i srpski problem* (the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serb problem), Belgrade, 1908.

² Miroljub Jevtić, *Intervju*, 15 September 1989.

³ *Ibid.*

Belgrade used the media to popularize such theories in paving the way for a 'moral atmosphere' preparatory for a later showdown with the Muslim population (genocide) in Bosnia and in Kosovo.

The anti-Muslim campaign was launched soon after Tito's death, at a time when Yugoslavia as a community of peoples faced the challenge of fundamental democratic transformation. Owing to different ideas about how such transformation should be achieved, ranging from a re-centralization of Yugoslavia (Serbia's option) to an alliance of states (advocated by Slovenes and Croats and later by others), the country entered upon a path of serious destabilization. Having failed to force consensus on replacing the Constitution of 1974, which they regarded as the prelude to the break-up of the SFRY, the Serbian elites very early on began preparations for a Serb state option as it was defined during the Second World War, or rather as it was envisioned by Moljević in his 'Homogena Srbija'. With the break up of Yugoslavia looming ever larger, the Serbian academic elites broke ground in 1986 with their *Memorandum*, an 'ideology' in the true sense of the word or a guiding set of ideas that was later used to mobilize the Serbs not only in Serbia but throughout Yugoslavia. So, the *Memorandum* put forward an analysis and warned of the dangers awaiting the Serb people as a whole. With the crisis in the country deepening and the balance of forces changing appreciably, the influence of the ideology promoted by the *Memorandum* increased. The media, which had been centralized and placed under state control, blazoned this ideology until an extreme political climate was created with the Muslims marked down as a group to target. Their demonization and their association with treachery and conversion were fertile ground on which the worst stereotypes of Muslims spawned.

The authors of the *Memorandum* served up nationalism pure and simple, which acted as the prime mover of the masses in the creation of a new Serb ethnic state. That Serb nationalism crystallized in the most radical form, namely as ethno-nationalism characterized by racism, became apparent in due course in the attitude towards other nations, especially the Muslims. As a starting point, radical Serb nationalism dismisses all who are branded in public discourse as 'enemies', that is, all who are perceived as being responsible for the situation into which the Serb people have been brought.

The *Memorandum* – the Serb national project

The Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) published its *Memorandum* in 1986 as an 'endeavour' to respond to the Yugoslav crisis. The *Memorandum* was both pro- and anti-Yugoslav in that it suggested a transformation of the country (which Ćosić publicly advocated), albeit through its re-centralization. At the same time, however, the *Memorandum* made provisions for a different outcome, that is, in case such a solution was rejected. It concludes that the 'unsolved question of Serbia's statehood is not the only shortcoming which should be eliminated by constitutional amendments. Under the 1974 Constitution Yugoslavia has turned into a very loose state community in which options other than the pro-Yugoslavia one are being considered, as witness the recent statements of Slovenian workers and of Macedonian politicians before them. Such thinking and the fundamental disintegration achieved lead one to think that Yugoslavia

faces the threat of further destruction. The Serb people cannot await the future calmly in such suspense. Therefore all the nations in Yugoslavia must be given an opportunity to declare their aspirations and intentions. In such a case, Serbia could make its own choice and define its national interests'.⁴⁹

In this informal document the SANU chose to dwell on the allegedly unequal position of Serbia and Serbs in Yugoslavia. The *Memorandum* stressed the gravity of the Yugoslavia crisis and warned that the country might break up unless the crisis was dealt with properly. The *Memorandum* did not basically repudiate socialism, its criticism being directed chiefly against Tito's Yugoslavia, i.e. Tito's confederal arrangement of the country under the 1974 Constitution, as well as against every attempt at economic reform.

It put the most blame for the economic difficulties to the economic reforms launched during the 1960s, when 'everything took the wrong direction'. The disintegration of the Yugoslav economy was blamed on the confederalization of the country under the 1974 Constitution and, especially, the fact that all decisions had to be made by consensus. The *Memorandum* noted that the process of democratization came to a halt in 1960 owing to 'bureaucratic decentralization'.

The part dealing with the situation of Serbia and the Serb people alleged that besides problems shared by all, the Serbs had three more: 'economic backwardness of Serbia, unsolved legal status vis-à-vis Yugoslavia and the provinces, and genocide in Kosovo'.

Further, it was stated that Serbia was in an inferior position regarding Croatia and Slovenia, which had put their interests above everything else. The part dealing with the Serb people stated that the Serb population of Kosovo was 'victim of physical, political, legal and cultural genocide'⁵² while the Serb people in Croatia was 'subject to assimilation'.⁵³

The *Memorandum* essentially revived the Kosovo myth to mobilize Serbs throughout Yugoslavia. The Kosovo myth and the Kosovo oath⁴ to liberate Kosovo shaped the history of Serbia and the Serb people up to the time of the Balkan wars and the incorporation of Kosovo. The Faculty of Law professor, Radomir Lukić, pointed out that the 'Kosovo myth unified the Serb people dispersed across Yugoslavia, in spite of its mixing with other peoples, in whose midst they were in a minority'. He said that the

⁴⁹*SANU Memorandum*, 'Odgovori i kritike' (replies and critiques), Kosta Mihajlović, Vasilije Krestić, SANU, Belgrade, 1995.

⁵²The *Memorandum* states that the 'Physical, political, legal, cultural genocide of the Serb population of Kosovo and Metohija is the worst defeat in Serbia's liberation struggle waged from Orašac in 1804 to the uprising in 1941.'

⁵³Regarding the Croatian Serbs, the *Memorandum* states, inter alia, that 'Lika, Kordun and Banija remained the least developed parts of Croatia, which gave a strong impetus to Serb emigration to Serbia and to moving to other parts of Croatia in which the Serbs, as a minority and socially inferior group of newcomers, were highly susceptible to assimilation.' After all, the Serb people in Croatia are subject to a sophisticated and effective policy of assimilation.

⁴ The Kosovo myth has three elements: explanation of defeat (the people are exonerated and the blame put on the Serb landed nobility); creation of new ideology (a heavenly kingdom is preferred to one on earth); and 'revenge of Kosovo' with a view to recovering the earthly kingdom through Obilić-like valour.

‘Kosovo myth was a major factor in the Serb independence uprisings (against Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Russia and later in 1913, 1941 and 1948)’ and that it ‘will go on fulfilling its role, something one must not lose sight of even today in connection with the Kosovo drama’.⁵ The placing of the Kosovo question on the agenda as part of the demands for amending the Constitution and reintegrating Kosovo into Serbia’s constitutional order raised the issue of borders within Yugoslavia.

The *Memorandum* basically only adopted the parameters of the Serb national programme from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, with the demand for the ‘liberation and unification of all Serbs and the establishment of a Serb national and state community throughout Serb national territory.’ In this sense, the *Memorandum* raised all the key issues or relevance to the accomplishment of the national programme. The key issue were the borders in the event of the Yugoslav peoples failing to reach agreement on a new Yugoslav formula. Thus the topic of borders dominated public debates. Another issue widely discussed in public was alleged Islamic fundamentalism (with reference to Yugoslav Muslims among Bosniaks and Albanians). In truth the Bosniaks are not specifically mentioned in the *Memorandum* because Bosnia was expected to stay with Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia in the event of the disintegration of ‘greater Yugoslavia’.

Negative stereotypes were encouraged also of other Yugoslav peoples, especially of Croats, who were perceived as a main threat to Yugoslavia’s survival on account of their separatist aspirations. The Slovenes and the Croats, it was said, used Yugoslavia merely to preserve their ethnic territories and to be able to defect from the defeated to the victorious camp, hence their perceptions of Yugoslavia as a transitional state. The future political and economic model emerged as a third issue, giving rise to the development of a ‘non-party pluralism’ thesis. In practice this meant exactly what Milošević did: he replenished the party with his cadres to secure unity, mobilized it and returned it to strict centralism. A dogmatic-conservative current gained a foothold in the party, with Slobodan Milošević promoting a ‘non-party pluralism’, a ‘pluralism of forces with socialist commitments’ ideologically fathered by the philosopher Mihajlo Marković. He was supported by Mira Marković, who at the time formulated her belief in a socialist future as follows: ‘The mobilization of that majority on a scientific basis, and within the framework of politics, is the scope over which socialism wins the battle without difficulty and proceeds along its historical, civilizational path towards a community of free people in communism.’

Although the *Memorandum* spoke of the need to introduce multi-partyism, its criticism of the then system was not substantial. The central argument of the *Memorandum* was that the Yugoslav decentralization was the root of both the Yugoslav crisis and the problems of the Serb people. According to the authors, the ‘republicanization’ of the economies brought about the disintegration of the economy and the state.

⁵ Radomir Lukić, ‘Značaj boja na Kosovu’ (the importance of the Battle of Kosovo), *Pravni život*, 6-7/89 vol. 39, p. 961.

During the 1980s Serbia in fact reverted to the early stages of its modern state founded on patriarchal values, the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) and all the 'elements of mass and elite nationalism'. The articulation of the Serb national strategy began as far back as 1981, that is, a year after Tito's death. The Albanian demonstrations in Kosovo triggered a propaganda war employing a 'rhetoric strategy' focusing on alleged 'ethnic cleansing' of Serbs from Kosovo and leading to repression in the province. Dobrica Ćosić regards the events in Kosovo as a direct outcome of the political liquidation of Aleksandar Ranković in 1966. He accounts for the radicalization of the situation in Kosovo as follows: 'In politically liquidating Aleksandar Ranković and denouncing the depravities of the Udba [State Security Service] in 1966 grave and not always substantiated accusations were made against Serb hegemony and Serb terror against Shqipetars [Albanians] in Kosovo and Metohija. There followed a persecution of Serb cadres and a vicious campaign against Serb nationalism and greater-state centralism. This campaign against the Ranković legacy emboldened Shqipetar chauvinism leading to real terror against Serbs on a massive scale and to their emigration and flight from Kosovo.'⁶

The resistance of other Yugoslav peoples to the re-centralization of Yugoslavia, which Serbia desires and tries to effect through pressure to amend the 1974 Constitution (with the help of the JNA), is looked upon in Serbia as an aspiration to break up Yugoslavia. In 1989, however, Serbia received support from other Yugoslav republics to amend its Constitution. The amendment of the Serbian Constitution essentially meant the abandonment of the policy of decision-making at Yugoslav level and a radical policy turn towards Serbian domination of Yugoslavia that ended in genocide. At the same time preparations were in progress to implement the second option, that is, the creation of a Serb state. As this move raised the issue of borders, the thesis was launched that the AVNOJ borders were not legitimate because they were of an administrative nature and drawn by the communists.

The chief ideologue of the revived national project, Dobrica Ćosić, and his circle had 'never recognized the AVNOJ borders'. He advocated 'plebiscite, with the right of self-determination of peoples' rather than of republics, because the AVNOJ borders were 'communist, provisory, because they are ill-founded (except in the case of Slovenia) either ethnically, or geopolitically, economically, communicationally'. He espoused a 'democratic principle of self-determination and peaceful separation'. He demanded the same rights for the Serbs in Croatia and was prepared, in his own words, to 'give the same rights to the Shqipetars in Kosovo' because he considered that principle universal. This very formulation of the right of self-determination carried the seeds of conflict because, according to such thinking, the Serbs had that right not only in their mother country but in five other cases, namely in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia. The chief argument in support of the Serb right to redraw the borders was the thesis that during the First World War Serbia could have chosen between a greater Serbia including almost all Serbs living in the Balkans – an arrangement guaranteed by the Allies' 1915 Agreement of London (which was never signed) – or a joint state of southern Slavs including Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

⁶ Dobrica Ćosić interview to *Glas javnosti*, 30-31 May 1998.

The *Memorandum* merely brought into the open the preparations being carried out by most of the Serbian elites. The academicians who wrote the *Memorandum*, the Writers' Union and other prominent cultural and public figures became promoters of the *Memorandum* programme. Historians were moved to the forefront in interpreting every topic being raised and played a decisive role on the eve of the break-up of Yugoslavia. Their assignment was to set the stage for the destruction of yesterday's neighbours through an elaborate campaign of dehumanizing the 'enemy'. Thus the Croats were referred to exclusively as *Ustashe* and the Muslims as *balije*. At the same time it was suggested that 'life in every multi-national and multi-religious community is politically and psychologically very complicated and taxing, especially if nationality and confession are not confined within the framework of human and civil rights alone.' Čosić also said that 'Yugoslavia is a multi-national state without a single, voluntarily accepted, historically vital and enduring conceptual cohesive basis'. His belief that Yugoslavia was an untenable community dates from the 1970s, that is, from the birth in 1974 of the Brioni Yugoslavia, in respect of which he says, 'It is my conviction that the events in which we are caught and those about to happen betoken the breakdown of the present order and the collapse of the Brioni Yugoslavia. In this century, we stand at a historic crossroads for the third time.'⁷ Čosić warned that the fundamental, historical causes of the Yugoslav drama were to be found 'in the disparate motives for and unfavourable conditions of the unification of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in the joint state at the very end of the First World War... That unification, accomplished across the trenches, was not motivated by the same goals among the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, nor was it the result of equal stakes.'⁸ Unfavourable circumstances were in evidence again during the creation of the second, AVNOJ Yugoslavia which, 'following a period of deceptive unison and shared memories of the horrors of the war just ended, went into an even greater vortex of misunderstandings and conflicts that could call into question its very survival as a joint state.'⁹

It was stressed that Serbs alone had accepted Yugoslavia as their country. Čosić pointed out that 'Serbs died in their masses for the joint state', 'seeing in the creation of Yugoslavia the accomplishment of their national goal – the life of all diaspora Serbs in one state', whereas 'the Croats and the Slovenes saw in Yugoslavia above all the preservation of their ethnic territories... a requisite for the creation of independent nation states by evolution'. In view of the opposition of the other Yugoslav peoples to the Serbs, Dobrica Čosić thought it imperative to 'rethink one's social and national consciousness with Yugoslavism at its core' in order to 'disburden oneself of the traditional, national fallacies and illusions which have seriously jeopardized our national integrity, used up our historical time...'¹⁰

⁷ Quoted from Kosta Čavoški, 'Treći put na raskršću' (for the third time at a crossroads), *Borba*, 12-13 August 1989, feuilleton 'Jugoslavija i jugoslovenstvo u delima Dobrice Čosića' (Yugoslavia and Yugoslavhood in the works of Dobrica Čosić).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, Kosta Čavoški.

¹⁰ Dobrica Čosić, 'Jugoslavija - država izneverenih očekivanja i neizvesne budućnosti' (Yugoslavia - a state of dashed expectations and an uncertain future), *Književne novine*.

The Serb intellectual elites, particularly the academicians involved in the *Memorandum*, preferred Yugoslavia but not at all costs. Antonije Isaković, one of the authors of the *Memorandum*, believed that historically Serbs were better off living in a federation and that therefore the battle would be fought chiefly over the federal and confederal options. In the event of the other peoples rejecting a federation, he said, the ‘Serbs will agree to a confederation, but [those other peoples] are very mistaken if they think that a confederation can exist within the present borders, because they do not reflect the situation on the ground.’¹¹ Vuk Drašković too warned that the Serbs ‘can’t be for a Yugoslavia in which God knows how many statelets have come into existence on Serb land and God knows how many nations have sprung from the Serb nation – the Serb people can’t forever pay with their territories, with their being for the survival of that entity.’¹² Otherwise, Vuk Drašković is the author of a number of controversial books, notably *Nož* [The Knife], which is replete with stereotypes of Muslims as traitors and cold-blooded murderers. The book, first published as early as 1982, has gone through several editions owing to its great popularity.

The anti-Muslim campaign

Serb orientalists were given a special assignment first and foremost because the ‘Muslims were a particularly vulnerable community on account of the specific geopolitical situation, given that their distribution prevented the establishment of a Greater Serbia.’¹³ This was a crucial consideration in the policy of their physical extermination and displacement. It was long before the outbreak of the war that the authors of the *Memorandum* began to compose negative stereotypes of Muslims as an alien, inferior and pernicious factor. Much was made of the allegation that with sheer numbers on their side they threatened to displace the Serbs and turn them into a minority on their own territory. At a *Round Table on Scientific Research in Kosovo* in 1988, Miloš Macura, one of the authors of the *Memorandum* and Yugoslavia’s foremost demographer, put forward the thesis that ‘the demographic objectives, which are not essentially different from those of past times, evidently stem from certain modern aspirations. The pre-Islamic, pronatalist ideology enjoys Islam’s strong support’, which means ‘that the pronatalist consciousness is upheld by the clan leaders, khojas and parents, so that the profuse and uncontrolled procreation has the backing of the three most important institutions of traditional society: brotherhood and tribe, Islam as the organized religious community, and family as a major institution of society.’¹⁴ Dr Miroljub Jeftić warned that in the Balkans the Muslim population can achieve its goal of living according to Allah’s word only if it gains the strength to do so through numerical superiority. A high birth-rate is therefore encouraged with a view to conquering land in the Balkans by settling Muslims from Turkey, that is, Turks. According to Jeftić, religion is one of the ways of promoting a high birth-rate because the Muslim is bidden by his religion to have as many children as he can. Jeftić

¹¹ *Intervju*, 1 September 1989.

¹² *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 11 January 1990.

¹³ Norman Cigar, ‘Uloga srpskih orijentalista u opravdavanju genocida nad muslimanima Balkana’ (the role of Serb orientalists in justifying the genocide of Balkans Muslims), Institute for Study of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo, and Bosnian Cultural Centre, Sarajevo, 2001, p. 21.

¹⁴ Miloš Macura, ‘Problem rađanja Kosova’ (the problem of births in Kosovo), *Zbornik Okruglog stola o naučnom istraživanju Kosova*, SANU, Belgrade, 1988.

believes that the global Islamic planners are intent on Islamizing the whole of Serbia as a first step in a penetration of Europe.¹⁵

In a series of articles published in daily newspapers and magazines, as well as in the Army weekly *Vojska*, Professors Darko Tanasković and Miroljub Jevtić regularly portrayed Islam as inferior, backward and violent. The treachery of the Bosnian Muslims who allegedly converted to Islam was a pet topic. At the height of the anti-Islamic campaign in late 1991 and early 1992, when it became clear that Bosnia and Herzegovina was not going to remain in Yugoslavia, Darko Tanasković interpreted the Muslim population's appeal to Turkey for help as a 'tacit reversion to the role of renegade as of yore', noting that to a Serb 'a renegade is the worse enemy'. Tanasković pointed out that 'Threatening a Serb with a Turk is archetypally worse and more ill-omened than threatening him with Germans.'¹⁶ Much was made of Islamic fundamentalism as a much greater threat to Yugoslavia than Serb-Croat relations. Instances of the realization of Islamic ideas in Sandžak and Bosnia were pointed out, though the emphasis was on the Albanians. An Albanian threat was repeatedly warned against because it meant certain Islamization. Albanization means the disappearance of Christian churches, cemeteries, population and the building of mosques and the spreading of the Islamic way of life.¹⁷ The works of Ivo Andrić, the only Nobel Prize winner from the former Yugoslavia, were often cited and popularized abroad, especially his reference to the 'controversies and afflictions of the Dark Regions' and *Pismo iz 1920* [Letter from 1920] which states that 'Bosnia is a land of hatred and fear'. Emphasis was often placed on a passage asserting that 'there are more people in Bosnia than in other Slav or non-Slav countries with much larger populations and territories who are prepared, in fits of blind hatred, on various occasions and under various pretexts, to slay and be slain'. As part of the preparations for war the orientalist dealt at length with the subject of lay fundamentalism, alleging that it had power in its hands and "was pursuing its aims in a perfidious way, under the guise of the interests of the Muslim community within the framework of the Yugoslav community."¹⁸

The thesis was skilfully put across that the 'domestic Muslims have been the bearers of genocide from the "slaughter of the princes" to the present day' and that the intention had been to 'attribute [these crimes] to ethnic Turks, in order to "confuse the scent", so that the crimes and the blame should be forgotten.'¹⁹ Other than that, the allegation was launched that there was a connection between Islam and the activities of political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. It was alleged that Christian Bosnia had been destroyed in the name of Islam because those who 'embraced Islam betrayed Bosnia'. It was pointed out that 'Islam ensued in the wake of the occupation, that the conversion to Islam was an act of treachery'. While the present-day Muslims are not to blame for that,

¹⁵ Professor Dr Miroljub Jevtić, 'Turci (opet) žele Srbiju' (the Turks (again) covet Serbia), *Srpska reč*, 19 August 1991.

¹⁶ *Epoha*, 7 June 1992, p. 22.

¹⁷ Miroljub Jevtić, 'Islam bez maske' (Islam without a mask), *Intervju*, 15 September 1989.

¹⁸ Miroljub Jevtić, 'Alahove vojske' (Allah's armies), *Duga*, 9-22 September 1989.

¹⁹ Miroljub Jevtić interview, *Duga*, 9-22 September 1989.

it was said, the blame attaches to those ‘seeking not only to revalorize but fully to justify that treachery’.²⁰

Admittedly, during the anti-Muslim campaign, which gained momentum in the 1990s, Muslims were warned that any ‘formation of a coalition [on their part] with Ustashe Croatia and Ustashe parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to help them gain the upper hand in Herceg Bosna on paper, will be considered illegal and a declaration of war to all Serbs.’²¹ At the same time, however, warnings were uttered that “there will never again be any room in these parts for Turkey, for Asia’.²² It was pointed out that ‘Muslims are genetically a corrupt people which converted to Islam and, of course, this gene now simply condenses from one generation to the next. It is getting increasingly worse, it manifests itself in simple terms and dictates like thinking and behaviour. It is all in the genes.’⁶⁵ Leaders and prominent intellectuals in their public utterances argued for war and ethnic cleansing as a legitimate means for the accomplishment of just goals. Biljana Plavšić will be remembered for the following statement: ‘I’d rather we cleared Eastern Bosnia of Muslims completely. Now, having said *cleared*, I wouldn’t want anyone to take this literally to mean that I’m speaking about ethnic cleansing. As far as we are concerned, however, they have subsumed a quite natural occurrence under the term ethnic cleansing and classified it as a war crime.’⁶⁶ Biljana Plavšić, of course, had in mind the numerical superiority of the Serbs and reckoned that only the Serbs could win a Bosnian war, because ‘there are twelve million of us, so if six million die, the remaining six million will live decently.’ In the SANU circles it was rumoured that Dobrica Ćosić had made a similar remark in 1990 when he said that ‘eighty thousand Serb casualties is acceptable for the accomplishment of the national goals.’

The SPC played an active role in mobilizing the Serb people: it went out to the people, carrying the bones of Prince Lazar from place to place and following a minutely elaborate code of religious and national propriety, all in support of the thesis that the Serbs are the ‘soul of heaven’ and the only emissaries chosen by God. The church processions and the display of the bones of Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović were part of the run-up to the commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo. The event in Kosovo took place simultaneously with a commemoration at Lazarica Church in Dalmatian Kosovo, an occasion used to rehabilitate the Chetnik movement. As far back as 1982 the SPC became highly involved in interpreting the events in Kosovo in the country and abroad. An appeal to ‘protect the spiritual and biological being of the Serb people in Kosovo and Metohija’ was signed by 21 priests.²³ At the end of 1983, Atanasije Jeftić published a feuilleton entitled ‘From Kosovo to Jadovno’ dealing solely with the suffering of the Serb people in Yugoslavia. The SPC Assembly requested the competent authorities in 1990 to permit the exploration of pits into which Serbs were thrown during

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Vuk Drašković’s speech at Gacko, 19 August 1990.

²² Ibid.

⁶⁵ *Svet*, 6 September 1993, Biljana Plavšić, one of three top Bosnian leaders charged with war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

²³ *Pravoslavljje*, 1982.

the Second World War in order that their bones may be buried properly. Funeral services commemorating the victims of the genocide were held in Bosnia and Croatia throughout 1990 and 1991. The events were widely covered by all media establishments, especially electronic. The object of the campaign was to agitate the Serbs in Croatia by serving them a stereotype of Croats as a genocidal nation. The SPC stressed that a new, up-to-date *Načertanije* was needed to determine, in no uncertain terms, the frontiers of the new Serb state within its ethnic borders, so that no one could make concessions and thus betray the national interests.²⁴

At the beginning of 1991, a time when the international community still supported the integrity of Yugoslavia, Dobrica Ćosić suggested in interviews to *Politika* (in January and July, both published prominently) that the ‘survival of Yugoslavia is a utopia’ and that trying to ‘save Yugoslavia by political blackmail and economic pressure on the part of foreign factors in the name of a fictitious anti-communist ideology and European constellation will bring no lasting good either to the Yugoslav peoples or to Europe.’ Ćosić said that the ‘Serbs have no national and democratic cause and right to prevent the Croats and Slovenes from seceding from Yugoslavia and establishing their independent states’, adding that ‘they can establish independent states only on their own ethnic territories’ and that if they were to ‘establish states also by annexing Serb ethnic territories, they will become aggressors and provokers of war.’²⁵

That war was in the offing was augured by the increasingly frequent debates on the republic borders and their groundlessness. In view of the new international situation, and the collapse of communism in particular, allegations were made that Serbia had always been anti-communist. Predicting the creation of new borders, Ćosić said that ‘with the downfall of the communist regime and the collapse of communism the AVNOJ borders are divested of any historical basis, at the same time not being regular in any way under international law.’ It was pointed out that one could not dismantle the social order created by the Communist Party without ‘dismantling its historical-political determinant – the AVNOJ borders.’ Ćosić also believed that the ‘Serb people cannot accept a confederation of the present republics because their borders are not legitimate either in historical or in international law terms, for those borders were dictated by the political objectives and criteria of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and of the Brioni Constitution.’²⁶ The historian Milorad Ekmečić said at the time that a ‘Yugoslav confederation is possible only subject to a redistribution of territory, from the Hungarian border to the Adriatic Sea. Heaven forbid that, for we would have to sacrifice at least another million lives for that.’²⁷

The SPC has never recognized Serbia’s borders within Yugoslavia since the Second World War. At the beginning of 1992, with the redrawing of borders in progress, the SPC Assembly adopted a Declaration repudiating the AVNOJ borders, with Bishop Atanasije Jeftić pointing out that their revision was vital to the Serb people. A few years later the

²⁴ Miroslav Radovanović, M.A., *Glas crkve*, 19-VII, 1991.

²⁵ Dobrica Ćosić interview, *Politika*, July 1991.

²⁶ Dobrica Ćosić interview, *Politika*, 21 January 1991.

²⁷ Milorad Ekmečić, TV Studio B, 14 December 2002 (rebroadcast of statement made before the war).

Assembly urged the competent authorities not to recognize the states of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina because that would ‘officially recognize the inferior status of the Serb people relative to other southern Slav peoples including those who were newly-created on an ideological basis, with the Serb people and its states – above all Serbia and Montenegro – having to shoulder all blame for the outbreak of war and all its terrible consequences. A just and defensive war of the Serb people would automatically be treated as an aggression.’²⁸ The SPC spoke of the pressure of a burgeoning Islamic fundamentalism which had found its staunchest adherents in the ranks of our Islamized brothers, a bitter experience which bears out the veracity of Njegoš’s words that ‘the renegade is the worse enemy’.²⁹

After it became clear that Yugoslavia’s survival was untenable or, in the words of Milorad Ekmečić, after ‘civil war destroyed the Yugoslav idea for which the Serbs had fought the most determinedly and the longest’, Serb intellectuals proclaimed another goal – the unification of the Serb people. In this case too the SPC leaders put their shoulder to the wheel, with Amfilohije Radović declaring, ‘The spinal cord of these united lands – in spite all the difficulties – is again taking shape as Serbia, Montenegro. Further, Herzegovina, a good part of Bosnia and Bosanska Krajina, Srpska Krajina, also belong there.’³⁰

Negative stereotypes of Muslims were to be found at all levels and in all media. The academic circles took the lead in this propaganda drive. Warning against a possible wave of religious delirium in the Balkans, the academician Milorad Ekmečić said that ‘within a few months one can notice in Bosnian Muslims a radical change of collective mentality, because they are a people who follow the winner.’³¹ This thesis was supported by the writer Vojislav Lubarda, who said that the Muslims ‘as a group are susceptible to any warmongering from abroad and are easily pushed into religious hysteria and uncontrolled actions. In the present century alone they have participated on a massive basis in the crime of exterminating Serbs, their next-door neighbours (1914, 1941 and 1992).’ According to him, this is due to ‘irrational impulses stemming as much from religious exclusiveness as from certain genetic traits they have developed over the centuries, habits that have become instincts. In the presence of the stronger they become meek as lambs and indescribably obedient, but their character changes as soon as they feel stronger, that might is in their hands, in which case they turn implacably cruel.’³²

Shortly before the outbreak of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serb participants in the Congress of Intellectuals in Sarajevo on 30 March 1992 passed a Declaration urging ‘the justest possible division and delimitation in order to eliminate the causes of hatred and killing’, and calling for the ‘unity of Serbs’ which requires ‘that all Serb authorities, where they exist, and all Serb states, where they have already been established, the Serb

²⁸ *Svetigora*, No. 38-39, 1995.

²⁹ Dragomir Ubiparipović, priest from Sarajevo, *Glas crkve*, 19 July 1992.

³⁰ *Duga*, 18 April 1992.

³¹ Milorad Ekmečić, ‘Srbija između Srednje Evrope i Evrope’ (Serbia between Central Europe and Europe), *Politika*, 1992.

³² *Vreme*, 13 December 1993.

church and the Serb intellectuals should formulate and lay down minimum Serb national interests which at this historic moment are not at all in dispute and which must never anywhere be backed down from.’³³

The implementation of the programme

The realization of the Serb national program was from the first overseen and approved by the Serb elites gathered round the academicians Dobrica Ćosić and Milorad Ekmečić. As president of the FRY (1992–1993) Ćosić took a direct part in the negotiations on delimiting the peoples. This is borne out by his many public utterances from the period. Delimitation was, after all, one of the publicly proclaimed aims of Serb politics.

As the redrawing of borders, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, could not be achieved by voluntary resettlement, drastic measures including intimidation, expulsion and mass killings of Muslims were used to ‘liberate’ imagined Serb ethnic territories and attach them to Serbia. In the heady days of building an ethnic state, Velibor Ostojić, president of the Serb Democratic Party Executive committee, said: ‘Every corner of Serb land and Serbs are a heavenly wonder, an inspiration and an example to all peoples and countries, in particular to those that have lost democracy in the name of democracy.’³⁴ The genocide of the Muslims was carried out on the premise that it was precisely the Muslims who were preparing a genocide of the Serbs. It was stressed that the ‘secessionist struggle of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Muslims for the creation of a Muslim state draws impulse first from the Islamic way of life, which has no points in common with the European civilization, then from the Islamic centres and Islamic fundamentalist forces bent on breaking up the former SFRY.’ This thesis banks on sympathy from a Europe which itself is not quite sure what to make of Muslims. Nada Todorov felt a need to explain ‘Islamization and its manifestations in our parts in order to draw attention to the root of evil.’ She attributed this to Islamic upbringing, among other things, pointing out that tales such as those contained in *‘The Book of One Thousand and One Nights* glorify Islam at the expense of other religions, accordingly influencing the behaviour of children and other in regions under strong Islamic influence.’ For ‘Islam looks down on other religions, especially on Orthodoxy... The messages stay embedded in the consciousness or the subconsciousness.’³⁵

That a colossal ethnic engineering project was afoot was no doubt borne out by the following statement made by Ćosić: ‘Tuđman and I have agreed that it would be sensible and humane for states to lend a hand in organized population transfers and exchanges. People can no longer return to their homes. We may have to set up special institutions and agencies to regulate the exchange of property, flats, houses. We must solve the conflict between the multi-national and multi-confessional communities.’³⁶ In his capacity as President of the FRY, in his contacts with Alija Izetbegović he proposed a

³³ *Borba*, 30 March 1992.

³⁴ *Borba*, 22 March 1994.

³⁵ Nada Todorov, *Vojska*, 8 April 1993.

³⁶ *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, 27 October 1992, Jozef Riedmiller.

similar solution in Bosnia. He said: 'I talked with Izetbegović as a representative of a neighbouring state which is prepared to help, above all on a humanitarian level. By all means we favour demilitarizing and raising the blockade of Sarajevo and other towns, we wish to care for the refugees together. We certainly wish to appeal for an end to all kinds of ethnic cleansing and discrimination.' Čosić said this at a time when Serbs were holding 70 per cent of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the international community casting about for a peaceful solution. Its offer was grist to the mill of the Bosnian Serbs because it dovetailed into their war objective of ethnic division. The only problem for the Serb side was the percentage of territory offered them. Čosić considered 50 per cent as a 'satisfactory' offer by the international community and therefore urged the Bosnian Serbs to sign the Vance-Owen plan. He believed that the 'Serbs have occupied more than they need. They ought to make a compromise to let the Muslim population consolidate as an ethnic whole. The Serbs and the Croats will reach agreement on territorial issues all right. Very soon. Regarding the Muslims, we'll make a go of it too because they will give up the idea of not negotiating directly with the Serbs. Izetbegović is no longer talking of waging war until final victory either.'³⁷

At the same time, the historian and a chief ideologue of the war in Bosnia, Milorad Ekmečić, publicly advocated the unification of all Serbs. He said that the 'readiness to actually do something also for the benefit of the Serbs must constitute the sound basis for the beginning of future peace. They want their national unification with their national brothers in Serbia and Montenegro.' He believed that the 'time has come for us to present our objectives publicly at an appropriate venue appointed by history – a session of representatives of all four Serb parliaments.'³⁸

The closing stages of the Plan

The Serb ideologues had plenty of reason to be satisfied with the developments in Bosnia once it became clear that the international mediators aimed for its ethnic division. The Serb army in Bosnia and Herzegovina was already demoralized and facing an increasing threat from the Croat-Muslim coalition chiefly on account of the latter's superior morale. The international community's policy of appeasement towards Serbia worked to the advantage of the Serb goals. At the time, namely, the international community believed that the only solution possible should be based on ethnic principles, that is on separation and division, just as the Serb ideologues had planned.

In spite of being sacked at the height of the Bosnia war for undermining the power of Slobodan Milošević, Čosić stuck to his objectives. Owing to the international isolation of Milošević, however, Čosić became a key interlocutor of the international community.³⁹ He was evidently regarded as wielding some influence especially among the Bosnian Serbs. Čosić tried to impress on his interlocutors the necessity of a division of Bosnia, being 'convinced that the break-up of Yugoslavia necessitated the break-up of Bosnia.' He made no secret of the fact that he had played a very prominent role in organizing the

³⁷ *Duga*, 16-29 January 1993.

³⁸ *Večernje novosti*, 29 April 1993.

³⁹ None of the major international mediators who visited Belgrade failed to see Dobrica Čosić.

Bosnian Serbs and been in close liaison with Karadžić, effectively commanding him to accept the post of SDS president. Radovan Karadžić had meanwhile emerged as a key implementer of the Serb national programme. Čosić himself said that he ‘could not have guessed he [Karadzic] was going to become such a figure’ and rated him as the ‘most gifted Serb politician’. Regarding the outcome in Bosnia, Čosić said in retrospect that he had always ‘advocated a federation of Bosnia and Serbia’ and ‘insisted that the Muslims had every historical reason to be with the Serbs’. All the same, Čosić saw the situation on the ground in Bosnia towards the end of the war (1994) and the refusal of the Bosnian Serbs to accept the offers of the international community to solve the Bosnian question as reflecting their independence, for ‘no one understood that the Serb liberation movement in Bosnia had grown independent to such an extent that no one was able to exert a decisive influence on it: neither Slobodan, nor I.’ He suggested (apparently still backing every move of Radovan Karadžić) the inevitability of a ‘split in Bosnia, of ethnic division of Bosnia and of long-term disquiet, of unstable borders – a Palestine-like situation in Eastern Bosnia, along the Drina, in Sandžak, in those lines of communication. There can be no peace there. The partition of Bosnia must be a matter of compromise. It goes without saying that no one will be content, but all must fight for statehood.’⁴⁰ As far as Bosnia is concerned, the Serbs accomplished their plans. Of the six objectives they defined at the very outbreak of the war, nearly all have been attained and verified by the international community.

Participants in the Second Congress of Serb Intellectuals in Belgrade (1994) nearly unanimously approved the creation of a Serb ethnic state and the unification of all Serbs. The Serbs had accomplished their aims by war. Biljana Plavšić, the vice-president of Republika Srpska, said on the occasion that she expected the Serb intellectuals to lend their support to the unification because a decision to the contrary could ‘create a wrong impression about the desires of the majority of the Serb people and disappoint our fighters, who do not spare their lives in order to realize the centuries-old dream of the Serbs to live in one state, to exercise their universal talents and to create a democratic, progressive and integral Serb country.’ Addressing the gathering, the academician Milorad Ekmečić said that ‘following its destruction through no fault of our own, Yugoslavia is now subordinated to the unification of the Serb people in its national state, at least until we have all of us licked our wounds clean. If Yugoslavia is fated again – it will be created in a more propitious day and age...’⁴¹ The academician Pavle Ivić said that there was a ‘positive side to the war in that it had reinforced among the Serbs the awareness of the need for Serb unity and awakened dormant energies. The total unification of the Serbs, not only political but also economic, cultural, linguistic, has become the ideal of the people who have come to realize that there is no survival without reliance on the mother country to the east of the River Drina. What has been achieved in Republika Srpska is possible only in such exceptional occasions. We are talking of a unique historical chance.’⁴² In the opinion of another academician, Miodrag Jovičić, the secession of Croatia on the one hand and of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other jeopardized the very core of the Serb national being. ‘For this reason, the way it was carried out, it was unacceptable to the Serb people... At the beginning of 1992 the Serb

⁴⁰ *Duga*, 9 April 1994.

⁴¹ ‘Srpsko pitanje danas’ (the Serb question today), Second Congress of Serb Intellectuals, Belgrade 1995.

⁴² *Ibid.*

people made the decision to establish a separate Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, later renamed Republika Srpska, and up till now it has managed, under constant fighting, in most cases to secure for it borders coinciding with the distribution of the Serb people in about 61 per cent of the total territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina has de facto succeeded in realizing its right to self-determination. At this stage, its choice is Republika Srpska, which is a reality and which the international community must volens nolens recognize as a separate international entity. The unification of the Serb people and the creation of a powerful state based, of course, on democracy would constitute, in view of the geopolitical position of that state, a veritable bulwark against both the German and the Islamic-fundamentalist menace. Europe, which is treating the Serb people in such a shameful manner at present, ought to be grateful to it for this some day.⁴³

The homogenization and consolidation of Serb ethnic space in Bosnia took place after the July 1995 massacre in Srebrenica, abolishing de facto all Muslim enclaves in the Serb ethnic area save Goražde. *Liberasion* likened the fall of Srebrenica to Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815. At long last, the international community forced the Serb side and the other parties to sign an agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina laying down the 'entity' borders, an electoral system, human rights protection instruments, the return of refugees and displaced persons. Bosnia and Herzegovina or the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska was to have joint institutions, a two-chamber parliament, a three-member Presidency, a Council of Ministers, a Constitutional Court, and a Central Bank. Sarajevo would remain undivided.

Serbian President Slobodan Milošević had reason to be satisfied with the success achieved in Dayton, from which he returned as 'guarantor of peace in the Balkans'. He said at the time: 'In a civil war like the one in Bosnia there are no winners, there can be no winners. All are losers, only peace is victorious. The arrangements made here implied painful concessions by all sides, but without such concessions it would not have been possible to succeed here, and peace would not have been possible. For this reason none of the parties should regret the concessions it made.'⁴⁴ President of Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Izetbegović, loser in both war and peace, said: 'The peace agreed at Dayton may not be just, but it is juster than war.'⁴⁵

Although the Bosnian Serbs were not satisfied with the Dayton Accords, they had no means of challenging them. They considered that parts of the Serb ethnic space had unjustly been lost (with 20 per cent of territory added). One should not overlook a statement made at the time because it still remains valid as far as Serbia's policy towards Republika Srpska is concerned. Vojislav Koštunica, the DSS president, said: 'I don't believe that the Dayton Accords, such as they are, will lead to further war and instability. But I am sure that in the wake of Milošević's defeat in 1991 and Milošević's peace in 1995 the position of the Serbs has never been worse in the two centuries since they began creating their state.' Koštunica pointed out that from his room in Dayton the Serbian

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Večernje novosti*, 22 November 1995.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

President had sent the Bosnian Serbs a message 'congratulating them on Republika Srpska and wishing them peace and cooperation with the Muslim-Croat Federation. Now, mind you, not cooperation with the FRY, which means that he wrote them off once again and confirmed by his congratulatory message that they were going to live in another state' for 'if the RS was recognized formally in Geneva, the border between RS and the FRY was recognized in Dayton.' As later turned out, Koštunica was to announce Serbia's real policy towards RS. He said that the 'moment has come to consider strengthening ties between RS and the FRY, which ought to be strengthened in all fields.'⁴⁶ Vojislav Šešelj, the SRS president, also denounced the Dayton Accords as a 'Serb defeat which is the result of the disastrous national policy of the Serbian President supported by the official policy of the USA in particular'. Naturally it was Šešelj who aired the view which today predominates in the policy on 'Serb lands', namely that the 'Serb people will never be able to accept as final the results of this hysterically anti-Serb policy of Milošević and the international community, so a future democratic and nationally-minded government will surely know how to realize the aspirations of our people to enjoy a united and strong Serb state.'⁴⁷ Vuk Drašković, on the other hand, was more realistic in his assessments. He said that 'had the war not been brought to a halt through big power efforts, the whole of Republika Srpska would have fallen within weeks.' All the same, Drašković continued to regard Serbia as a big power in the Balkans because 'Serbia occupies such a geopolitical position as to constitute a bridge between Europe and Asia and between the West and Russia.'⁴⁸

Dissatisfaction with the Dayton Accords was also expressed by the entire opposition to Milošević above all over the loss of certain parts of 'Serb territories'. The Serb strategists have acknowledged in their calculations the international circumstances that were to frustrate the creation of an integral state of the Serb people for a long time to come. Therefore, in their view, the Dayton Accords were a reality to be reckoned with while retaining the same long-term goals. The union of Serbia and Montenegro with Republika Srpska was to be put off for a more propitious moment, that is, until the international constellation has changed, because 'there is nothing that stands in the way of unequivocally projecting such an objective as a strategic national interest.'⁴⁹

The round table 'Geopolitical Reality of the Serbs'⁵⁰ held in Novi Sad on 29-31 January 1997 discussed the changes in the general geopolitical picture of the world. The president of the Institute Executive Board, Milivoj Reljin, said in the inaugural address that the changes in question had 'imposed [on the Serb people as a whole] essentially different

⁴⁶ *Naša borba*, 23 November 1995.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Naša borba*, 11 December 1995.

⁴⁹ Slobodan Samardžić, member of the team negotiating on the status of Kosovo, Minister of Kosovo and Metohija in the new government, 'Evropska unija, raspad Jugoslavije i srpski nacionalni interes' (the European Union, break-up of Yugoslavia and Serb national interests), *Geopolitička stvarnost Srba*, Institute of Geopolitical Studies, Belgrade, 1997.

⁵⁰ The event was organized by the Institute of Geopolitical Studies, focusing on an analysis of the major crisis points in the Serb ethnic space. The Institute has many associates including nearly all the academicians signatories of the *Memorandum*.

conditions in which it will have to realize its state and national objectives and interests.’ Among the chief conclusions was the view that from the standpoint of Serb interests ‘Republika Srpska is the only bright spot in the process of breaking up the SFRY’, at the same time pointing out that ‘Annex 7 of the Dayton Accords, that is, the Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons’ poses the main threat to the survival of Republika Srpska. It was stressed that from the point of view of Serb national interests ‘that agreement is a double-edged sword because its implementation destroys the cohesive power of the RS and strengthens the hand of those forces which are “drowning” Republika Srpska in the integral state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, worse still, subordinate the interests of the Serb people to the interests of the Muslims.’ In the words of Rajko Gnjat, the ‘Muslim policy’ could be countered, among other things, with ‘return of Serb refugees to the RS and promotion of population policy measures.’ However, the optimism of the participants regarding the survival and overall progress, especially socioeconomic, of Republika Srpska was based on the belief that at this moment Republika Srpska and the Serb people inhabiting it will be needed for quite some time by a Europe furthering its own interests. Of primary importance in this regard is the role Republika Srpska plays in preventing the penetration of Islamic fundamentalism into the heart of Europe. In other words, Republika Srpska is made to play the part of the former Military Frontier. ‘When the reasons for its existence are no longer there our enemies, Croats and Catholicism, will destroy Republika Srpska and push the boundaries of Catholicism further east should an opportunity arise.’⁵¹

With like objectives in mind, the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Republika Srpska held a symposium in Bijeljina (29-30 October 1998) entitled *The Serb Spiritual Space*. The symposium was attended by the academicians who wrote the *Memorandum*. In his keynote report Milorad Ekmečić defined the notion of the Serb spiritual space as follows: ‘*The Serb spiritual space is the totality of cultural activities tending to come to fruition in a well-regulated state of the time, in all the provinces in which the Serb people and the ethnic groups as its offshoots have lived and still live, in all the forms in which they have manifested themselves.*’⁵² The philosopher Ljubomir Tadić told the participants that ‘our deepest spiritual and political interest commands us that we must never give up Kninska Krajina, Lika, Banija, Kordun, parts of Slavonia, Srem and Baranja in which Serb people have lived for centuries, nor the towns which have fallen under Croat and Muslim power: Grahovo, Glamoč, Drvar and Petrovac.’⁵³ The object of such gatherings is to let the national ideologues pronounce on future territories and to gradually translate their ethnic engineering into state frontiers. This is best summed up in the statement of Dobrica Ćosić that the ‘Serb people is coalescing in a living space which it can cover civilizationally and culturally and develop economically’; he also defines this process as ‘a territorial-ethnic rearrangement, perhaps, of a state-political consolidation of the Balkan space.’⁵⁴

⁵¹ Rajko Gnjato, lecturer at the Faculty of Science, Banjaluka, ‘Geopolitičke perspektive opstanka Republike Srpske’ (geopolitical prospects for the survival of Republika Srpska), *Geopolitička stvarnost Srba*, Institute of Geopolitical Studies, Belgrade, 1997.

⁵² Milorad Ekmečić, ‘Srpski duhovni prostor’ (the Serb spiritual space), Academy of Sciences and Arts of Republika Srpska, Srpsko Sarajevo.

⁵³ Ljubomir Tadić, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Dobrica Ćosić, *ibid.*

The national ideologues have basically resigned themselves to the fact that the Serb state boils down to Serbia, Republika Srpska, and Montenegro. Nonetheless, ambitions remain alive to incorporate certain ‘Serb territories’, particularly those affording an outlet to the Adriatic Sea.

The importance of the role of Serb academicians and intellectuals in the implementation and apology of the national programme is borne out by the number of academicians, lawyers and historians who have appeared before the Hague Tribunal as witnesses for Milošević. They include Mihajlo Marković, Čeda Popov, Kosta Mihajlović, Ratko Marković, Smilja Avramov, Slavenko Terzić and many others. This shows that even Serbia’s military defeat in the implementation of the *Memorandum* objectives has not forced the authors of the *Memorandum* to resign publicly; on the contrary, they continue to defend their position.

The epilogue

In spite of the judgements passed by the Hague Tribunal, and especially the one rendered by the International Court of Justice concerning the genocide of Muslims in Bosnia, Serbia keeps insisting that Islamic fundamentalism was at the root of the break-up of Yugoslavia – a thesis of considerable influence on the interpretation of the Yugoslav wars in Serbian society. With Kosovo figuring prominently on the international agenda, Serbia is playing upon the West’s ambivalent attitude to this phenomenon and reviving the thesis by means of a highly aggressive media campaign. In order to lend this thesis maximum credibility, the Belgrade services have exploited the emergence of small groups of Wahhabites as evidence-in-chief of a ‘special war’ being waged against Serbia. The allegations are being revived (made by Vuk Drašković notably in his book *Nož*) about the ‘restoration of Sharia traditions and Jihad strategy with the object of creating an Islamic state in the Balkans.’ In spite of overwhelming evidence that Serbia’s greater-state project ended in crime for the third time in the 20th century, the Serbian elites keep up the illusion about the unification of all Serbs, specifically about Serbia’s union with the RS and parts of Kosovo. Although Montenegro’s independence dealt a heavy blow to the greater Serbia state project, Montenegro is still projected as Serb ethnic space.

Serbia’s state policy on Bosnia has not changed since Milošević’s removal. The national strategists attach great credit to Milošević for having succeeded through war in marking off the territories the new authorities intend to consolidate in time as Serb ethnic territories by ‘democratic means’ and ‘Ghandi-like resistance’. At present other means are being employed, largely relying on the West’s attitude to the Muslims. Shortly after 5 October 2000 Vojislav Koštunica let it be known that the ‘Drina is the spine of the Serb people’ and that ‘it is not normal that Serb towns should be abroad’. During his visit to Trebinje Koštunica was praised ‘not only as the first president who was christened but also as the first one who made the sign of the cross’.⁵⁵ Thanks to the victory of Vojislav Koštunica, the nationalist bloc for the first time received democratic legitimacy and support from the international community. After the amalgam of communists and

⁵⁵ *Borba*, 3 October 2000.

nationalists fell apart in the wake of Milošević's defeat, nationalism alone remained. This nationalism has spilled over and taken on, among other things, a virulent anti-communist rhetoric. Milošević's territorial legacy is the starting point in the implementation of the long-term strategic objectives as formulated by Serb ideologues.

Every now and then the circles of national ideologues dish up a proposal to rearrange the Balkans along ethnic boundaries. For example, Nikola Popović, historian and director of the Institute of Modern History, advocates an 'ethnic solution giving effect to land ownership rights as a way of demarcation and an exchange of population on the example of Greece and Turkey after the First World War.' With Yugoslavia no longer in being, Serb nationalists are now saying openly that Serbia waged 'war for a Serb state'; the trouble is, 'the West has so far opposed the creation of a Serb state', so the 'realization of the Serb national project is a matter for the future.'⁵⁶

The historian Milorad Ekmečić, who played a key part in defining Bosnia as a Serb land, continues to argue even today, on the occasion of the publication of the book *Dugo kretanje između klanja i oranja* (the long road between throat-cutting and ploughing), that Muslim fundamentalism was of crucial importance in the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1992. He insists that the Party of Democratic Action (of Alija Izetbegović) was successor to the Young Muslims of 1940 who asked Hitler to create an independent District of Bosnia with access to the sea along the valley of the Neretva. This demand is linked to Alija Izetbegović's Islamic Declaration of 1971 which, according to Ekmečić, has the same objectives. Ekmečić claims that American policy made a mistake in 'assigning that group and the religious community behind it the task of being the foundation of sovereignty and an independent state.'⁵⁷

The Islamic fundamentalism thesis was revived in the wake of 11 September 2001, after the US had branded so-called Islamist terrorism as the 'world enemy number one' and defined 'war' on terrorism as the 'decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century'; this has beclouded the debate about its historical, political and social roots, which are to be found largely in the contradictions, changes and conflicts within a Muslim world undergoing the globalization process.

Today only very few individuals in Serbia speak openly about the role of the Serbian elites in the definition of the war objectives and the perpetuation of that plan. This state of affairs is helped by the fact that the policy of crime against Bosnia has never been the subject of any trial in a court of law. The Hague Tribunal has so far convicted no one from Serbia of war crimes in Bosnia. The Šešelj case is a chance not to be missed.

The process of the creation of post-Yugoslav states is not yet over at least as far as Kosovo and Bosnia are concerned. This remains an acute problem and a source of tension. In such situations extreme ideologies easily come to the fore. For this reason it is necessary to find a new modus for unmasking and condemning the generators of such ideologies.

⁵⁶ *Otadžbina*, No. 1, 30 September 2002.

⁵⁷ Milorad Ekmečić, 'Nacionalizam sudnjeg dana' (doomsday nationalism), *Politika*, 5 May 2007.