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## Moral Relativism and Equidistance in British Attitudes to the War in the Former Yugoslavia

The causes of the war in the former Yugoslavia are multifarious, and have been discussed in detail by several authors. Most of these causes are internal and relate to the shape taken by postcommunist politics in Belgrade.<sup>1</sup> However, international factors that are not always encountered in other ethnonational conflicts have also played an important role in the breakup of Yugoslavia and subsequent developments in the region.

Few countries, if any, had an interest in the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, and since the beginning international efforts were concerted in preserving its unity. Even Germany began pressing for recognition at a relatively late stage. For many, this resolve to preserve the status quo constituted a form of direct interference in Yugoslav politics, to the point that it heavily influenced political decisions in Belgrade. In a nutshell, the Serbian leadership felt secure and protected enough by the international “community” to press first for its idea of a recentralized Yugoslavia, and then, failing this, an enlarged and ethnically pure state to reunite all the Serbs.

Within the European Community, Greece, France, and Britain were the most fervent supporters of a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia. In Greece, the memory of a common tradition of struggle against the Turk was revived. France had traditionally maintained an alliance with the Yugoslav

government. The focus of this chapter will be limited to the British case. The choice of Britain is significant for three reasons: first, a crucial role has been played by British academics and governmental institutions in legitimizing the impasse. Second, Britain held the EC presidency through the most critical period of the war (July to December 1992, participating in the “troika” from January 1992 to June 1993) and tried to secure the maximum advantage offered by this role. Finally, Britain was—and is—in a privileged position as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Any study trying to fathom why the West has been so reluctant to intervene in Bosnia at a time when its help has been most urgently needed must focus on British attitudes and rationalizations.

I would like to argue that, overall, British attitudes toward Yugoslavia in general and toward events that have occurred since the breakup have been characterized by a certain degree of Serbophilia. In analyzing the reasons for this Serbophilia, I will lay emphasis on two main sets of factors: historical and contingent. Obviously the two overlap, and, in the absence of any credible interpretive and decision-making competence, Britain’s Foreign Office has often fallen back on historical determinism. Historicism provided an easy track on which to funnel and subdue confusion, as a vacuum of ideas became evident. As we shall see, pseudo-academic rationalizations helped inform British foreign policy throughout the war.

At least two forces have contributed to a Serbophilic tendency in Britain: one, a small elite of pro-Serbian activists, the other an amorphous mass of minor scholars and key politicians ready to be lured by the propaganda of this minority and hence swept by the tide of revisionism. After weighing the historical roots of Serbophilia, I will analyze the main tool of legitimation of noninterventionist choices.

The main characteristic of British official—and elite—discourse on Bosnia will be identified as *moral relativism*. Moral relativism, as it emerged in Western reactions to the Bosnian War, can be best identified as an underlying current of public opinion that, even at the peak of Serbian atrocities and ethnic cleansing, was determined to view all parties in the conflict as “warring factions” engaged in a “civil war.” The basic attitude was one of “equidistance,” which assured us that all the parties in the conflict were “equally to blame.” Hence this became a war without victims and aggressors, as if the hundreds of thousands of Bosnians who were massacred as a consequence of the Serbian invasion were themselves to blame.

The concept of relativism is often opposed to that of universalism. For the sake of precision, we should also distinguish moral relativism from cultural relativism.<sup>2</sup> Moral relativism reflects a belief in the non-universality of human values, including human rights. Cultural relativism does not necessarily result in moral relativism. Moral relativism is the claim that there is no superior moral judgment and human beings should not adhere to the same values; cultural relativism is the claim that there is no superior culture and all cultures should be treated equally. One may espouse universal values (normally a selection of them) while at the same time propounding that each culture has the right to survive and none is intrinsically superior to any other.

Opposing relativism to objectivism, Ernest Gellner provides a good recapitulation of my argument:

    Scepticism or the inversion of truisms by now has an inverse or boomerang effect: by undermining the criteria of all rational criticism, it confers *carte blanche* on any arbitrary self-indulgence. Total relativism ends by underwriting cheap dogmatism. If anything goes, then you are also allowed to be as utterly dogmatic as you wish: the critical standards, which might once have inhibited you, have themselves been abrogated. What could there be to check you? He who tries to restrain you, in the name of fact or logic, will be castigated as positivist, or imperialist, or both: after all, objectivism was at the service of domination. Total permissiveness ends in arbitrary dogmatism.<sup>3</sup>

Gellner does not distinguish between moral and cultural relativism, yet his refutation can be applied congruously to my conception of moral relativism. The latter is not necessarily about cultural traits as much as it is about values. But the overall opposition remains between relativism and universalism (or universal objectivity).

In general the kind of moral relativism I am talking about is not a constant in Western politics and thought, but rather an *ad hoc* attitude that is conveniently espoused when it best suits the interests of a particular elite. I will argue that moral relativism has prevailed in British intellectual and governmental elites' reactions to unfolding events in the former Yugoslavia. I will consider the effects, the consequences, and in particular the aims of such a politics of moral relativism as practiced by the British government.

## The Curse of Cultural and Historical Determinisms

The first part of this chapter will focus on the historical dimensions of pro-Serbianism in the United Kingdom. Yet history offers only part of the explanation. It would be against my general argument to assert, as historical determinists do, that there are unshakable alliances that endure over the centuries. Historical determinism has plagued academic endeavors, governmental rhetoric, and popular discourse on the Balkan conflict. There have been repeated references to a supposed tradition of relentless bloodletting and endemic warfare in the Balkans. This has served to create an aura of historical inevitability that has in turn been used to justify current events. The resurgence of historical determinism is an indication that many scholars and politicians, as well as ordinary people, are moving in an interpretive vacuum. Lacking more rational and convincing explications, they fall back onto primordialist accounts of the war.

Yet there is also a difference between cultural and historical determinism. Cultural determinists argue that national conflicts are cultural in origin and substance, then focus on supposedly unbridgeable “fault lines.” Their main soothsayer is Samuel Huntington who has formulated a theory of the “clash of civilizations.”<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the new post-Cold War world order is reshaping itself no longer along ideological cleavages, but along cultural fault lines. In other words, now that the two blocs have dissolved, we are entering an era in which being Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, Confucian, or Shinto matters more than ever before. This is occurring despite increasing secularism and modernization—perhaps precisely as a result of that: religions are not to be taken as they were in the past, that is, as belief systems, but rather as civilizational aggregates. Huntington has applied this approach to, and was probably inspired by, the Yugoslav War. All the “warring” parties of the Yugoslav drama are merely reenacting ancient civilizational alliances and obeying the edicts of primordial loyalties. Thus, for instance, Greece is viewed as unshakably tied to, say, Serbia and Russia by virtue of its Christian Orthodox heritage. An avalanche of criticism has already submerged this thesis, and I do not wish to add my dissenting voice.<sup>5</sup> Cultural determinists often overlook many exceptions. For instance, Serb nationalists have not always been pro-Greek, and different versions of pan-Serbianism claim the region of Greek Macedonia, including Thessalonika, as part of southern Serbia.<sup>6</sup>

The myth of innate antagonisms and perennial hatred rests on the idea

that people of different religious convictions decimated each other for thousands of years. However, most historical research demonstrates rather the contrary. In Bosnia, for instance, there was a heritage of tolerance, and this heritage has been shattered only during the last few years. Robert Donia and John Fine have argued that in Bosnia a rich tradition of diversity, pluralism, and toleration evolved over many centuries and flourished until very recently. This tradition in everyday life was echoed in politics by coalition building and a habit of pragmatic compromise.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, thought-provoking research by Christopher Bennett shatters the idea that Yugoslavia's collapse was the result of atavistic ethnic tensions.<sup>8</sup> Cultural determinism is a kind of "big lie" that was both a cause and an effect of Western inaction: it served the interests of noninterventionists by strengthening governments and politicians who opposed intervention, and it was also an effective strategy aimed at pulverizing the multiethnic fabric of Bosnian society. Its greatest "success" was to turn neighbors and friends into mortal enemies, almost overnight.

Historical determinists differ from cultural determinists in that they rely on historical memories rather than culture or religion as causal factors. Thus, people sharing the same religion and "grand civilization" may collide simply because they have already collided in the past. The conflict is explained as a recurring pattern of historical alliances or enmities: for instance, Bulgaria clashing with Serbia and Greece, or Germany allied with Croatia. Historical determinists are often nationalists themselves, and pretend to explain the current conflict as a *longue durée* epic battle, rooted in age-old hatreds. Thus, Greece has "always" been an ally of Serbia and Russia, but has also been an antagonist of Bulgaria, despite sharing a common Orthodox faith. Accordingly, the mildly anti-Serbian attitude in Bulgaria today merely revives old-time alliances dating back at least to the Second Balkan War.

But alliances in the Balkans have shifted over the centuries in unpredictable ways. Some more enduring coalitions may be discernible, but there is scarcely an unchanging relationship that has been able to withstand the vicissitudes of history. For instance, the traditional alliance between France and Serbia may have been radically altered by recent developments.<sup>9</sup> There is much to dispute even about the most discussed one, the nearly mystical bond between Russia and Serbia, originally conceived in the framework of Pan-Slavism. As for pro-Russian sentiments in Serbia, Stephen Clissold defined it as *ignorant admiration*. He recalled that during World War II "Moscow did not . . . lift a finger to

help her new ally [Serbia] during the latter's ensuing ordeal [the German invasion], and withdrew recognition from the government of the dismembered state with cynical promptness. Yet when, on June 22, 1941, the Soviet Union was invaded, these things were forgotten in Serbia in an upsurge of popular emotion."<sup>10</sup>

The West's historical determinism recapitulates the dominant discourse in the Balkans. In the Serbian case, the crucial date was 1389, when the Serbs were defeated at the hands of the Turks in Kosovo Polje. Contemporary massacres against Bosnians, Sandjak Muslims, and Kosovo Albanians were invariably referred to as the latest chapter of an epic struggle against the Turk. David Rieff recounts, "When one went into a village where fighting had taken place, it was often easier to get a history lesson than a reliable account of what had occurred earlier the same day."<sup>11</sup> As casualties mounted, history came to the fore and gave major impetus and justification to an endless chain of revenge and counter-revenge. This discourse has been reproduced abroad and has percolated into Western public opinion. It is the clearest evidence of what Stjepan Meštrović calls the "Balkanization of the West."<sup>12</sup>

Not only has public opinion been swayed by this vision of enduring hatred, but the leaders of the main Western powers have tended to reproduce the same pattern among themselves whenever they have dealt with Yugoslavia. Thus, the only "contagion" that could be discerned was not the purported domino effect of expanding separatism, but a far more ominous one: the fragmentation of Western political elites within all the main international organizations—the EC, the UN, NATO. This division in blocs and counterblobs, this desire to carve up spheres of influence out of Bosnian flesh, paralyzed all possible solutions to the war.

The Balkanization of the Balkans, then, has resulted in the Balkanization of all forms of Western politics. The left-right divide can no longer help predict positions in relation to the war. Advocates of Western intervention and Serbian expansionism loom everywhere along the political spectrum, from neo-Nazis to unrepentant Marxists. Pro-Serbian propaganda has affected all political parties and ideologies, cutting across all sort of alliances in virtually every Western country, from Canada to Israel. We will examine how this has occurred in Britain. The following sections will chart the historical antecedents of British Serbophilia and analyze its consistency over the years. Subsequent sections will describe how this attitude manifested itself in the form of both legitimating discourse and political practice.

## An Archaeology of British Serbophilism

British Serbophilia commenced well before World War II. In most of Europe, a certain sympathy for the Serbs emerged after their uprising against Ottoman rule at the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, a specifically British Serbophile trend can be traced back at least to the 1870s, when the liberal William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898) openly declared his admiration for the nationalist rebellions shaking the Ottoman empire. Gladstone, a critic of imperialism, fought against the pro-Turkish policies of the Crown, which, according to him, were indifferent to the flagrant excesses perpetrated by the Turks in the Balkans.<sup>13</sup>

It may be difficult to identify a British uniqueness in these attitudes, which were quite widespread among “progressive” intellectuals of various Western countries. Throughout the entire European continent, the Greek struggle for independence evoked a wave of enthusiastic support. It struck a chord not only in Britain, but also in Germany, as can be seen in the Philohellenic passages of Goethe’s *Faust* and in virtually all Classical and Romantic authors. A Romantic current of sympathy for the Serbs also developed in Germany, where the foremost historian, Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), wrote a well-known *History of Serbia*, in which he recommended “the necessity to separate the Christians from the Turks.”<sup>14</sup> Significantly, Ranke’s book was promptly translated into English and became influential in British academia. The English translator outdid Ranke in her pro-Serbian fervor as she called for “foreign intervention”:

in these days of enlightenment, when missionaries are diffusing the doctrines of Christianity among the heathen in the remotest parts of the world, . . . it is surely not unreasonable to hope that the condition of a Christian people so near to us as Serbia, will excite the sympathy of their brethren in faith in this free country. . . . It is only by foreign intervention—not the less effectual for being of a peaceful nature—that the means and opportunities so earnestly desired by the Christian population of these countries can be afforded them. The Turks have been intruders in Europe from the first; . . . we should all unite in hoping that the Mahomedian religion and the obstructive despotism of the “Sublime Porte” should yield to the now swiftly-advancing tide of Christian civilization.<sup>15</sup>

Another crucial angle, which deserves fuller appreciation, is the Protestant-Orthodox connection. Since at least the nineteenth century, prominent Anglican clerics spoke out in defense of a chimerical, fictive image of Christian Orthodoxy conceived as being in opposition to Rome. Despite

an evident lack of deep knowledge of Orthodox religion, these theologians and clerical writers put a great deal of effort into promoting a notion of affinity between the two religious traditions. The basic idea was that Eastern Christendom, by virtue of being called “Orthodox” and being apart from Rome, had kept intact the original spirit of Christianity, which the papacy had corrupted. Post-Reformation Anglicans were exhorted to restore this purity on a worldwide scale with the help of, and in alliance with, Eastern Orthodoxy. Several nineteenth-century clergymen underscored such imagined affinities. The priest John Mason Neale (1818–1866) translated several works from Balkan theologians and intellectuals, and published a book on the Orthodox Church in Serbia and other Balkan countries.<sup>16</sup> A generation later, Harold William Temperley (1879–1939) still posited a similarity between Protestantism and Christian Orthodoxy that bore scarce resemblance to any existing reality.<sup>17</sup>

Nationalists all over Europe heralded the heroic feats of the Serbs fighting against the Ottomans. As in the case of Greek nationalism, Serbian nationalism was touted as an epic deed in defense of Western civilization. The title of a book by Robert George Dalrymple Laffan, *The Guardians of the Gate*, suggests that the Serbs represented an outpost of white civilization in perpetual opposition to the loathed and feared non-Western world.<sup>18</sup> The “gate” was conceived as an imaginary cordon sanitaire against Islamic, Eastern, and other barbarian threats. In conjunction with this role, the Serbs assumed a military function of defense of the West—even though they also bedeviled Austria.

A more robust and less Romantic strain of sympathy for the Serbs developed in the wake of World War I. The Serbian struggle was so popular in England that several English nurses went to assist the Serbs in their fight against the Austro-Hungarians. Some of these idealists even enlisted in the Serbian army’s ranks and went on to fight in the war.<sup>19</sup>

Not all Balkan specialists supported Serbia, but the few who did not were disliked by the British government. The case of Mary Edith Durham (1863–1944) was quite remarkable: although she was initially anti-Austrian and favored the creation of Yugoslavia, Durham turned increasingly anti-Serbian in the wake of the Sarajevo assassination. In particular, she became a fierce critic of Aleksandar Karadjordjević’s dictatorship (1880–1934). An eccentric personality, she wrote letters to newspapers, magazines, and M.P.’s in which she routinely attacked Belgrade. Her lobbying activity was eventually unsuccessful, as she was abhorred by the Foreign Office.<sup>20</sup>



The Foreign Office preferred to consult other experts on the Balkans. The most sought after was R. W. Seton-Watson (1879–1951), who participated actively in the ongoing debate on the new shape of the Balkans during the first decade of the century.<sup>21</sup> Before and during World War I, Seton-Watson firmly believed in the principle of a South Slav confederation.<sup>22</sup> Only after the war did he begin to criticize Belgrade and show any disillusion with its antidemocratic turn.<sup>23</sup>

But best-known and most influential British Serbophile was certainly Dame Rebecca West (1892–1983). In the 1930s, she traveled throughout Yugoslavia accompanied by government officials. In her travels, she picked up a great deal of pro-Serbian sentiment. Her travelogue *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* became a best-seller in Britain and was one of the first works to acquaint the British public with this area of the Balkans.<sup>24</sup> The dedication to the 1941 edition reads, “To my friends in Yugoslavia who are now all dead or enslaved.” As it molded a first image of the country, it may be viewed as a key source for British and American attitudes to Yugoslavia.

In her dialogues, which are permeated with anti-German sentiment, West treats non-Serb subjects with a blend of condescension and superciliousness. All sorts of rationalizations are put forward to press the Serbian viewpoint. The same concoction about the dangers of Islam we encounter in contemporary media is discernible in West’s work: praising her mentors, she points out that without people like them—that is, Serbian ultranationalists—“the Eastern half of Europe (and perhaps the other half as well) would have been Islamized, the tradition of liberty would have died for ever under the Hapsburgs, the Romanoffs and the Ottoman Empire, and Bolshevism would have become anarchy.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, West was viscerally anti-Catholic, as well as anti-Italian. The Roman Catholic Church was described as “the greatest stimulus to anti-Serb feelings lain outside Croatia.”<sup>26</sup> And, after demonizing Croats and Slovenes time and again, she unwittingly reproached the Italian government for its treatment of the Slovenes in Istria.<sup>27</sup>

The book became very popular in English-speaking countries, particularly in America, where it scored three reissues in only two months. In short, the first great public introduction to Yugoslavia was provided by Rebecca West’s best-seller, which remains perhaps the best-written of pro-Serbian accounts of Yugoslav history, politics, and lifestyles. Even a recent eulogistic biography of West concedes that “she had become a

stooge for the government press bureau in Belgrade and had naively transmitted its propaganda for a unified and centralized Yugoslav state.”<sup>28</sup>

## The Legacy of World War II

In their search for allies against the Axis, the British were divided between the advocates of an alliance with the Yugoslav communists and those contemplating a partnership with Serbian nationalists.<sup>29</sup> The former were led by Marshal Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980). The latter were guided by Draža Mihailović (1893–1946) and his Chetnik movement. Although the Serbian Chetniks were nearly as nationalist as the Croatian Ustashe, they were also potential allies against the Germans. Yet there had been Serbian-Nazi collaboration, the extent of which only recently has been investigated in depth.<sup>30</sup>

In brief, my argument is that there have been two main pro-Serbian traditions in Britain: one was monarchical, pro-Chetnik, and anti-Titoist and was highlighted during the short period (September 1941–May 1943)<sup>31</sup> in which British intelligence tried to underscore the extent of anti-Nazi resistance among the Serbs; the other was pro-Partisan and pro-Titoist, and emerged after British liaison officers were parachuted into Partisan-controlled areas to fight the Axis powers. In its Balkan campaign, London was faced with three options: support for the Chetniks, support for the Partisans, and the possibility of forging an unlikely alliance between the two against the Nazis. There were also proposals to divide the country into political areas.<sup>32</sup> Thus “Mihailović should be supported in Serbia where he was thought to be strong, and the Partisans would be supported over the rest of the area. This remained SOE’s idea . . . until the end of 1943.”<sup>33</sup> The Special Operation Executive (SOE) was an agency instituted in July 1940 with the aim of exploring all possible resistance against the Nazis in the Balkans and the Middle East, including support for guerrilla movements there. The SOE’s first mission in Yugoslavia was headed by Captain Duane Bill Hudson in September 1941. When the SOE was still attempting to co-opt the Serbs, the BBC was already campaigning for the Partisans, a fact that revealed deep divisions within Britain’s higher echelons. Before taking any decisions over which side to support in the war, Winston Churchill (1874–1965) appointed Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean (b. 1911) for a special surveillance mission in Yugoslavia “to go in and find out who was killing most Germans and how

we could best help them to kill more. Politics were to be a secondary consideration.”<sup>34</sup>

As we can see, British policy in the Balkans was plagued by hesitancy and irresolution from the beginning, not the least for the contradiction between Britain’s strategic interests and pro-Serbian lobbying. This internal mischief led the Foreign Office to be particularly susceptible to manipulations by each side. The pro-Chetnik side, represented by the monarchy-in-exile, was more established and had a better foothold in British society.<sup>35</sup> As the pre-war king of Yugoslavia was exiled in London, a strong pro-Chetnik diaspora congregated around his person and from there exerted a certain influence. When London’s decision to support Tito became irrevocable, this nationalist diaspora became a permanent critic of British foreign policy.<sup>36</sup> Far from being isolated, its propaganda effort was directed to the left as well, the “natural” ally of Tito. The anti-Stalinist left was particularly vulnerable to the nationalist appeals. Thus, George Orwell expressed some superficial sympathy for the Chetniks and against the Titoists, whom he perceived as blatant Stalinists.<sup>37</sup>

Tito and his Partisans captivated both Marxist scholars and Cold War strategists. In the immediate postwar period, the reconstruction of Yugoslavia magnetized communist volunteers from all over the world, including 450 British, for the building of the Samac-Sarajevo “youth” railway.<sup>38</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s, interest in Yugoslavia increased among left-wing economists and Marxist political scientists concerned with the labor unions or genuinely intrigued by the Yugoslav experience of workers’ self-management.<sup>39</sup> Their sympathies went exclusively to Belgrade, rather than to the opposition. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the quarterly journal *Praxis* became the main conveyor of this neo-Marxist thought, publishing Yugoslav and international theorists, pro-Titoists, and critics of the regime.<sup>40</sup> Yugoslavia’s neo-Marxists claimed to be, and some probably were, antinationalist and thus enjoyed a formidable aura of respect in the West, where they were hailed for their attempt to create a new and more “liberal” form of Marxism.<sup>41</sup> One of the founders and leading figures of *Praxis* was Mihailo Marković (b. 1923), a future proponent of Greater Serbia.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, during the Cold War, Yugoslavia was perceived as a potential ally in the West. Tito’s regime received enormous benefits by playing the role of bridge between East and West. With its enlightened politics of nonalignment, Belgrade provided no serious reason for concern for the Western bloc, and we already noted that postwar British politics was

staunchly pro-Titoist beyond ideological cleavages. Like Enver Hoxa's Albania, Yugoslavia remained at the margins of the strategic interests of NATO and the West. The roots of Western indulgence toward Serbian crimes is to be found in the Cold War assumption that Tito had to be wooed as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism. "Yugoslav authorities counted much on the tolerance of Western official circles, which, for fear of weakening Tito in front of the USSR, preferred to close both eyes before human rights violations perpetrated by his regime."<sup>43</sup>

### Post-Yugoslav Serbophilia

After the collapse of Titoism and especially since the rise of Slobodan Milošević, the two strands we have so far described, the pro-Titoists and the pro-Chetniks, have slowly merged. In the beginning it was relatively easy to mold such an alliance through the expediency of anti-Croatianism, which ended up becoming a British obsession. Indeed, thanks to the works of Rebecca West and many others, Serbophilia was conveniently "balanced" by equivalent doses of Croato-phobia. Memories of Ustashe atrocities played a crucial role in this perception. As is known, Milošević and his nationalists rose to power by reviving a series of imaginary threats to the Serbian nation, but the most effective tactic in mobilizing support was the "fear" of a revived Ustashe movement in Zagreb. Franjo Tuđman was depicted, quite effectively, as an unlikely reincarnation of the Ustashe dictator Ante Pavelić (1889–1959). This paranoid speculation achieved some instant popularity among senior commentators in the British media,<sup>44</sup> where Serbian accusations of a new "Zagreb-Berlin axis" were reinforced by Germany's increasing sympathy for the Croats and the Slovenes at a time when the latter were being bombed by the Yugoslav Federal Army.

For a while, accusations of neofascism directed toward Croatian nationalists became common currency in Britain, even after the atrocities of the Serbian-led JNA became evident. Anti-Croats swallowed Belgrade's battle cry that all Croats were Ustashe.<sup>45</sup> Croatian protestations that Franjo Tuđman had been a Partisan fighting the fascists and that the ruling Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ), the Croatian Democratic Union, was simply a center-right coalition were ignored. This is astonishing in view of the relative silence surrounding British reactions to the ascent of right-wing movements in other countries, notably in Italy, where a center-right coalition dominated by the far right—in several respects

more to the right than Tadjman's—achieved power in Rome. Curiously, eminent figures in this Italian rightist coalition also included staunch anti-Croats in the guise of ultranationalist irredentists.<sup>46</sup>

As we mentioned, the Yugoslav War does not respect traditional right-left divisions. Indeed, there are signs that an ideological alliance between the far right and the far left is taking shape under the auspices of moral relativism, if not outward sympathy for “ethnic cleansing.” In the conclusion of his film *Bosna!* Bernard-Henri Levy has pointed to that chilling prospect. In Britain, this right-left entente has already been capitalized on and trumpeted by extremists.<sup>47</sup> As a recent Students against Genocide (SAGE) report and other research have disclosed, one group distinguished itself for its all-pervasive and well-funded propaganda combining Marxist dogmatism and the defense of exclusivist ideologies under a veil of trendy liberalism.<sup>48</sup> This group, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), is organized in several fronts and subsidiary groups, but its discourse can be best analyzed in the monthly review *Living Marxism*.<sup>49</sup> Data from this magazine appeared in an article in the influential journal *Foreign Policy* by El Paso journalist Peter Brock.<sup>50</sup> According to Roy Gutman, “members of the Serb delegation were seen passing out copies of [the] article to mediators David Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg.”<sup>51</sup> The group consistently tried to deny that genocide was occurring, defined the siege of Sarajevo as a media “invention,” and disseminated in strategic places images of alleged “Muslim atrocities” against the Serbs, kindly provided by the Belgrade official news agency Tanjug.<sup>52</sup> These few but well-organized militants may have been easily forgotten had their programs and slogans not resonated so well with the Foreign Office's interests. Interestingly, *Living Marxism's* former assistant editor Joan Phillips has been working since 1995 for the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) under the name of Joan Hoey.<sup>53</sup>

The more the pressures for Western intervention grew, the more the voice of Serbophiles was insinuated into mainstream political discourse. On May 31, 1995, emergency debates on the situation in Bosnia took place in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. While discussions in the latter were characterized by their usual composure, the debate raged in the Commons. There, it was possible to hear from Ulster Unionists, Conservatives, and the Labour's left the same arguments popularized by Serbian nationalists in their propaganda. All analytical attempts were diverted as Germany was blamed for its “hasty” recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, a leitmotif of anti-European isolationism. This was also a

tremendous way of sheltering English national pride and marshalling nationalist sentiments at the very moment when London was at the center of international attacks for its failures in Bosnia. Following are some quotes from the May 1995 emergency debates:<sup>54</sup>

It is now absolutely impossible to judge and say, “These are the people who ought to be supported for a particular reason.” (Former Conservative prime minister Edward Heath [col. 1018])

The Germans established a fascist Croatia during the war. Later, the German government recognised Croatia. The British Government went along with that decision, it is said because of a concession over the social chapter. [Hon. Members: “Rubbish.”] Whatever the truth is, there was some negotiation that took a reluctant British Government into recognition of Croatia. (Former Labour energy secretary Tony Benn [col. 1019])

I condemn without hesitation the bombing of the Serbs. I know that it was American inspired and I think that it was politically, militarily and diplomatically a disaster. . . . If the recognition of Croatia, Bosnia and the other states of the former Yugoslavia was wrong—if we were bounced into it—why is that now the basis on which we foresee a settlement being made? Recognition was wrong then and it is still wrong today. (Ulster Unionist M.P. John D. Taylor [col. 1043])

Political friends of many years have asked me, “How can you do anything that seems to endorse ethnic cleansing?” But is it ethnic cleansing? Are we quite sure about that, because the history of those particular Muslims is not ethnic? (Senior Labour M.P. Tam Dalyell [col. 1049])

It is no wonder that the American President—far more interested in New Hampshire than in old Sarajevo—advocates a Balkan policy of bombing Serbia back into the stone age from a very safe height. (Senior Conservative M.P. Sir Peter Tapsell [col. 1053])

If one third of the Bosnian population in the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict—the Serbs—are not interested in living with the other two thirds, how can we make them? (Senior Conservative M.P. Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith [col. 1058])

The Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs have attacked and counter-attacked each other. In doing so, both sides have violated the Sarajevo exclusion zone. (Leader of the House of Lords, Conservative Peer Viscount Cranborne [col. 1119])

As one can see, the same arguments appear across the political spectrum from the far left to the far right. But what is more tragic is that all

these relativist statements and instances of German-bashing were used as rhetorical devices to stave off any idea of firmer British commitment in Bosnia. In particular, moral relativism was the dominant discourse used by those opposing the lifting of the arms embargo that, at that stage, would have saved thousands of Bosnian lives.

Where did the British politicians take their wisdom from? Where did they obtain their briefings? At this stage, all possible answers are still at a speculative level, but there are several clues. Until at least February 1995, the Foreign Office was staffed by “experts” who indeed lacked any overall expertise on the Balkans. On the other hand, Noel Malcolm suggests a connection between people like Conservative defense secretary Malcolm Rifkind and Serbian lobbyists.<sup>55</sup> In both cases, an important repository of information was precisely the pro-Serbian tradition we have previously described.

The journalist and part-time historian Nora Beloff deserves special mention here. A militant anticommunist and implacable critic of Tito,<sup>56</sup> she relied on the Serbian émigré community in London for her information. As expected, Beloff’s interpretations are routinely filtered through the prism of Serbian nationalism. In one article, published well after Croatia and Slovenia started to mobilize for independence, she stated, “Reports on the death of Yugoslavia are . . . exaggerated.”<sup>57</sup> This was in line with the upholding of Milošević’s diplomatic pretense that Yugoslavia should be preserved as a single state, while stressing that “the concept of Yugoslavia was conceived in the 19th century by romantic Croats.”<sup>58</sup> Echoing Belgrade’s views, Beloff upheld the popular Tanjug picture of newly independent Croatia as a fascist laboratory: “Laws of citizenship favour patrial [*sic*] Croats, extortionate taxes are levied against Serb-owned properties, and no Serb can hope for redress in a Croat court against arson and assault. In these circumstances, constitutional guarantees of minority rights should not be taken more seriously than the whole array of human rights promised in Stalin’s 1935 constitution, at the height of terror.”<sup>59</sup> These arguments, mixing facts with fiction, are mirror images of Serbian propaganda that emanated from Belgrade since the late 1980s and prepared the ground for the war. Although Beloff’s true allegiances were evident, she was still apparently consulted by British politicians and her views reported in the media. In her lobbying activities, Beloff mentions a correspondence with foreign secretary Douglas Hurd in which she argued against the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. According to

Beloff, Hurd agreed with her, while contending that “he needed to placate Helmut Kohl.”<sup>60</sup>

The same rationale and justification for Serbian propaganda are included in a monograph written by John Zametica and published in the London International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Adelphi Papers series.<sup>61</sup> In this pamphlet, which in the British political environment was then accorded the status of an “objective” report, Zametica identified the causes of the war in the “incompatible national aspirations” of the peoples of Yugoslavia.<sup>62</sup> He also blamed the current war on Titoist politics and especially the “deeply divisive” 1974 Federal Constitution, which decentralized—or attempted to decentralize—the country to an unprecedented extent. But the main blame for the current tragedy was put on the Albanians as a people. It was their revolt that “provided the catalyst for the subsequent rise of Serbian nationalism”—that is, “Kosovo made Milošević.”<sup>63</sup> He repeated the popular cliché that Serbs risked oblivion as a result of Albanians’—and other Muslims’—demographic increase.<sup>64</sup> As is well known, the author, who holds an M.A. from the London School of Economics and a Ph.D. from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, became the mouthpiece of Bosnian Serb war criminals Radovan Karadžić and General Ratko Mladić (after Serbianizing his name into Jovan Zametica).<sup>65</sup>

Zametica’s work provides us with the rare opportunity to see an important piece of moral relativism at work: his ideas were used directly to justify both the politics of ethnic cleansing and Britain’s pro-Serbian line. We can also see how deep the influence of such inferences was on British academic and political circles. What is more revealing is that Zametica’s public pronouncements had been readily and seriously taken by both politicians and academics.<sup>66</sup> Noel Malcolm advances the hypothesis that Zametica’s public pronouncements condoning British politics in the Balkans had a convenient impact, since he “was still giving lectures to British military training courses as an ‘independent’ expert long after the start of the Yugoslav war.”<sup>67</sup> British politics had been moving in a vacuum that was filled by Serbs, who controlled the most sophisticated propaganda machine in the Balkans, which they had inherited from the Yugoslav state (Croatian propaganda has been much more ineffective, due to internal divisions and lack of expertise; Bosnian propaganda was virtually nonexistent during the whole initial phase of the war).

Noel Malcolm also recalls the role of Belgrade-born Jovan Gvozede-



nović, whose used the name John Kennedy and is associated, through the Conservative Council on Eastern Europe, with Conservative M.P. Henry Bellingham. The latter was then parliamentary secretary to Malcolm Rifkind, a particularly staunch opponent to the lifting of the arms embargo. Another pro-Serbian advisor to Rifkind was the right-wing activist David Hart.<sup>68</sup>

I have mentioned here only a few examples of pro-Serbian activists, in both the Government and academia. The list is much longer, and there are works dealing with the subject in more detail.<sup>69</sup> With such a distinguished lineage of London-based authors ready to condone the Serbs' worst atrocities, the Belgrade government and its allies in Bosnia have felt immensely protected in carrying out their monumental onslaught in the 1990s.

A more tacit form of support for Serbian policies came not only from "intellectuals," but also from the highest echelons of the British government. Indeed, the appointment of Lord (Peter) Carrington as chairman of the European Union's Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, chairman at the peace conference in the Hague (September 7–December 12, 1991), and, finally, chief negotiator at the London Conference (August 26–27, 1992) may be conceived of as relating to this pro-Serbian tradition.<sup>70</sup> After the failure of his plan, Carrington had been strongly opposed to any German initiative in the Balkans. His pro-Serbian bent was probably due to the influence of Fitzroy Maclean, the same leading advocate of German-bashing who had been Churchill's envoy in the Balkans.<sup>71</sup> Lord Carrington was eventually replaced by Lord (David) Owen as a representative of the European Union in the August 1993 International Peace Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), which took over from the London Conference.<sup>72</sup>

Prime Minister John Major, foreign secretary Douglas Hurd, and defense secretary Malcolm Rifkind (Hurd's protégé and his successor in the Foreign Office job) are among those most commonly singled out for their mismanagement of the Bosnian crisis.<sup>73</sup> This verdict is realistic in view of the fact that, as Adrian Hastings from Leeds University stresses, "Britain also effectively seized the control of the issue even before it began its Presidency [of the WEU] by getting Lord Carrington appointed as chief negotiator and ensuring that he represented the viewpoint of the Foreign Office."<sup>74</sup> This role was reinforced by the fact that Britain is also one of the five members of the UN Security Council. The French historian Jacques Julliard offers a similar assessment: "In the image of Carrington's European plan, which consecrated the victory of Serbian ethnic cleansing

in Croatia, the Vance-Owen plan, which carries the double stamp of the European Community and the UN, has officialized and legitimized ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”<sup>75</sup>

As critics of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have disclosed, the latter listens carefully to its own officials. Yet, “while several have had long experience in the embassy in Belgrade, none has any experience of Bosnia where Britain did not even have a consulate. . . . Hence the basic Foreign Office perception has been a Serbian one.”<sup>76</sup> The fact that Belgrade inherited the diplomatic and bureaucratic apparatus of the Yugoslav state meant that it enjoyed the upper hand in the diffusion of its views abroad. This explains why most of the Foreign Office connections came indeed from Serbian propagandists diffused throughout many British institutions, including the academy.

Again and again, the things which Mr. Hurd has said, and the way he says them, actually derive from Serbian propaganda. . . . The initial lie was that this was a civil war between Bosnian villagers in which any outsiders would be quickly attacked from both sides. Once this calculated misreading of the war was accepted by Britain without question, everything else followed. It was, intellectually, already a siding with Serbia, because it was quite untrue. It simply provided the base line for the Serbian argument that they should be left to get on with their campaign of annexation. In much the same way, even at the time of the London conference, Mr. Hurd spoke of president Izetbegović not as a president of Bosnia but as a “leader of the Muslims”—exactly the way Karadžić described him.<sup>77</sup>

Also at stake has been the reputation of the former UN commander in Bosnia, the British Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, who in May 1995 warned that Sarajevo might soon resemble Grozny, Chechnya.<sup>78</sup> Rose’s best-known refrain was “we cannot bomb our way to peace.” Robert Wright recalls an ABC News special on the UN’s failure in Bosnia which “featured videotape of an unguarded conversation with a subordinate in which Rose basically calls the Muslims lazy bums who want the United Nations to do their fighting for them.”<sup>79</sup> Rose ended his assignment on January 24, 1995, to be replaced by British Major-General Rupert Smith, of much more moderate and acceptable views.<sup>80</sup>

Amid the chorus of British appeasement, there have been three notable exceptions. The philosopher Sir Karl Popper (1902–1994) in one of his last public statements, called for air attacks on Serb artillery positions to end the fighting. At age ninety-one, he boldly claimed, “[Serbian aggression] has to be stopped now, because the murder is going on now. It has

to be stopped because of the future of mankind, not only of Europe.”<sup>81</sup> Only his disciple, former Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher, seems to have heeded the call, responding with her characteristic rhetorical prowess.

The third exception comes precisely from the opposite end of the political spectrum, the former Labour Party prime minister Michael Foot.<sup>82</sup> Foot produced a film for BBC called *Two Hours from London* in recognition of the geographical and cultural proximity of Sarajevo to Britain.

### The Exaggeration of the Serbian-Croat Confrontation

Explanations of the war have characteristically appeared in a Russian *matrioshka* format, in which wider explanations contain derivative explanations in a concentric pattern—as bigger dolls contain smaller ones. One explanation saw the conflict as basically a Serbo-Croat clash. A derivative account saw Croatian independence as the catalyst. Within the latter, a smaller variant appeared that saw Germany’s recognition of Croatian independence as the cause of the war. Yet a smaller doll—in fact, the least plausible explanation—became common currency: Germany was to blame for virtually all misdeeds in the Balkans. In the smallest doll, a Fourth Reich conspiracy thesis purported to explain the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the desire to carve the Balkans into separate spheres of influence.

However, the German recognition thesis is relatively easy to demolish. Since the first postulate of the thesis, namely, the definition of the conflict as basically Serbo-Croat, was wrong, all the subexplanations contained within it had to tumble like dominoes. Germany’s recognition of Croatia was not relevant because the independence of Croatia was not the central issue and the war was not essentially a Serbo-Croat confrontation. Nevertheless, the inertia of prejudice has enticed many politicians, as well as academics, to stick to older and easier mental habits.

Because since its beginning the conflict was presented as basically a Serbo-Croat tug-of-war, several other assumptions followed. Therefore it is imperative to consider briefly this predominant position, which has been made popular by the journalist Misha Glenny.<sup>83</sup> If we were in search of monocausal explanations, the conflict may better be explained as being primarily between Albanians and Serbs,<sup>84</sup> since the initial targets were the Albanians rather than the Croats.

At a much later stage, when the pattern and plans of an unprecedentedly aggressive nationalism were laid out, Slovenia and Croatia became the targets. Since Slovenia was the richest region of Yugoslavia, it has been suggested that the Serbs were punishing the rebellious republic as a form of “revenge” for its effrontery. To credulous and uninformed international audiences, the conflict was presented as the poor south against the arrogant north, a classic role reversal of the Serbs’ own conflict with the Albanians. But the Slovenes had also shown an unparalleled solidarity with the plight of the Albanians, who were the poorest ethnic group in Yugoslavia.<sup>85</sup> It was indeed the abolition of the provincial autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina (the latter inhabited by Hungarians, Slovaks, and other minorities) that, by revealing the regime’s intentions, induced most Slovenes, hitherto staunch supporters of Yugoslav unity, to ponder openly for the first time the possibility of secession.<sup>86</sup>

Yet the conflict was commonly painted as Serbo-Croat at the core. Such a view has been repeated ad infinitum in several derivative interpretations of the conflict, but especially by British and American mainstream politicians. Until well after the siege of Sarajevo began, this cliché was the daily staple of the U.S. government’s official interpretations of the war.

In their futile attempts to maintain the unity of Yugoslavia against powerful centrifugal trends, most Western governments de facto wedded themselves to a pro-Serbian line. Implying that the conflict was basically Serbo-Croat meant denying the harassment and persecution suffered by the other minorities. Persecution against all sorts of minorities has been well documented since before 1991.<sup>87</sup> In the south, Albanians, Bulgarians, Macedonians, and others were living in terror between the hammer of Serbian persecution and the anvil of their own reactive nationalisms. In the north, up to the border with Hungary—in Vojvodina, a land rich with minorities—Ruthenes, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Romanians, Hungarians, and others were subjected to increasing harassment.

Hence, the trouble did not simply stem from Croat-Serbian rivalry. The trouble lay elsewhere. It did not rest in Serbia as a whole either, but rather in Belgrade, where the destiny of Yugoslavia was mapped out many years ago. Perhaps it did not even dwell in Belgrade as such, but in that small elite of military cadres, populist politicians, organic intellectuals, and diaspora propagandists who laid the foundation for the war. Since these elites had abundant connections with the West, both in mainstream political circles and in the academy, it was not easy to attack them. Against all

evidence, the Croats—and the other minorities as a corollary—were presented as “the problem” instead.

### Post-Maastricht Anti-Europeanism and the Resilience of the Nation-State

Britain’s attitude blended a customary British obsession over the maintenance of international borders, with an anti-European, particularly anti-German, slant. British mistrust and uneasiness over the process of European unification intervened to frame a high-handed pro-Serbian foreign policy. The belief that a strong, centralized Yugoslavia—or Serbia in its place—could restrain Germany’s strength has been the pivotal concept of this ill-starred inclination. The British government “wished to maintain a large, Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. When that collapsed, it fell back instead on supporting a ‘Greater Serbia’ because it saw a powerful enlarged Serbia, achieved with a good deal of underhand British support, as a counterweight to German influence in the Balkans.”<sup>88</sup>

Britain has indeed been using the Balkan War as a stepping-stone to impose its own European politics. To the cynics in Whitehall and the Foreign Office, the hundreds of thousands killed by Serbian expansionism mattered precious little. What mattered most was to coordinate the different factions of Conservative politicians, trying to keep a balance between anti- and pro-European elements, but basically sending the world a signal that the lives of Europeans killed in Bosnia were meaningless. As Hastings pointed out, “The Foreign Office remains farcically preoccupied with maintaining a ‘balance of power’ in central Europe and ‘containing’ Germany.”<sup>89</sup>

Another fault line is the one separating the apologists of the nation-state from the defenders of supranational political aggregations which, by their nature, need to include a strong component of pluri-nationalism and multiculturalism. The former claim that national sovereignty is inviolable; the latter say that human rights, including the right to self-determination, are priorities. The former, the state-centered group, is exemplified not only by British and French attitudes, but especially by the United Nations, whose very existence is tied to the concept of state sovereignty. The United Nations is nothing more than a powerful coalition of purported “nation-states” and their ruling elites.

Bosnia and other crises have shown that the United Nations is ready to trample on the right of small peoples and small groups in the name of the

principle of state sovereignty. When one of its members is attacked, the United Nations has demonstrated stern ability to react: for instance, when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq in August 1991, the United Nations, led by a firm American leadership, stood up as a single entity in the defense of the sovereignty of one of its members. Why has this been possible in Kuwait and not in Bosnia? One answer must be found in the United Nations' worship of state integrity, inviolability, and unity, more than in the popular perception of the Gulf War as a war for oil. Rather paradoxically, the issue of vital oil supplies was used to justify the war and to mobilize an international public opinion for which economic issues were far more important than territorial and humanitarian ones. In contrast, Slovenia, Croatia, and Kosovo were not full members of the United Nations when they were invaded and subjected to ferocious repression; this may explain the so-called international community's reluctance to intervene. Bosnia was attacked on its first day of independence, but the invasion plan had been drawn up long before. Bosnia was confronted with the denial of its own sovereignty as a sort of punishment for having dared to secede. The idea of a multinational Bosnia was incompatible with the prototype of the nation-state for which Serbia was fighting.

Inefficiency and indecision over Croatia and Bosnia have led to deep and perhaps irreparable splits within the European Union. There are signs of an emerging Anglo-French alliance, not only with respect to the former Yugoslavia, but also over a wide spectrum of French initiatives (support for corrupt central governments in Africa, nuclear testing in the Pacific, arms sales to client states in the Third World, resurgence of colonial ties, European economic and legislative policy, and so on). If this is the case, the very idea of European union may be threatened, since the risk of being dominated by France is no more palatable to most Europeans than the prospect of being dominated by Germany.

Moreover, the Yugoslav crisis has dealt a heavy blow to the legitimacy of the European idea. To many non-Europeans the very mention of Europe evokes complicity with and tolerance of ethnic cleansing, especially since the primary victims are Muslims. As Jean Baudrillard has pointed out, Europe now evokes spite and repugnance among ordinary Bosnians, who were previously committed to European ideals of tolerance and multiculturalism. Islamic intellectuals have denounced the ominous choice of 1992 for the celebration of Maastricht and the Act of European Union as heavily charged with symbols of genocide: five hundred years before, in 1492, the Islamic Kingdom of Granada was destroyed, while

the Jews were expelled from Spain or forced to convert to Catholicism. Was not this also a historical case of ethnic cleansing? Was not this also the beginning of the genocide for hundreds of nations in the Americas? How could European leaders be so shortsighted as to discount the deep moral implications of such symbolic errors? Indeed, 1992 was the first great leap forward of European revisionism. Many raised their voice in protest but were ignored.<sup>90</sup> The year 1992 may well be the year that history marks as the beginning of the collapse of the moral foundation of the European Union. While ethnic cleansing moved from Croatia to Bosnia and became a widespread practice, Europeans—and Americans—were witnessing the unfolding tragedy from the comfortable opulence of their armchairs. While they were told that all sides were to blame, they became finally saturated with images of violence to the point that no emotional reaction could be discerned and no will was left to comprehend the sequence of events.<sup>91</sup>

### Moral Relativism in Action: Equidistance and Holocaust Denial

One of the first headlines dispensing the official Serbian story that the crimes were committed by the victims, rather than the aggressors, came from the respectable London newspaper the *Independent*. The author was the daily's correspondent from the UN headquarters in New York, Leonard Doyle. Among the article's contentions was that several slaughters committed in Bosnia, including the gruesome televised one known as the bread line massacre in Sarajevo, were carried out by the Muslims "as a propaganda ploy" to win international sympathy.<sup>92</sup>

Like rumors and gossip, misinformation related to wars can travel far. Once something has been said to prove or disprove a particular point, even without evidence to back it up, it will indubitably be used by propagandists. Nationalists, populists, and warmongers do not need to corroborate their assertions with data. They rely on the simple authority of their position to authenticate and validate their insinuations. All they need is a name, a signature on a declaration or a statement. If the latter comes in support of their strategy and viewpoints, they will use it as evidence at any suitable time. In the end, the propagandists themselves will firmly believe in it. In the case of Bosnia, any small lie, insinuation, or innuendo was used by Serbian lobbies in the West to press their case for moral relativism. Doyle's reports in the *Independent* were later

dismissed, but, as Tom Gjelten recalls, “his point has been made. Serb media still cite the *Independent* story” with great bombast in order to prove that all that fuss about the bad Serbs is pure fiction and rests only in other people’s imagination.<sup>93</sup>

This practice of pinning the blame on the victims has found a major promoter in the United Nations. One of its most notorious exponents there has been Sarajevo’s first UN commander, the Canadian Major General Lewis MacKenzie.<sup>94</sup> UN bureaucrats commonly repeat that the Bosnian Muslims are willing to stage attacks on themselves in an effort to grab the world’s attention and trigger a military intervention on their behalf. “The argument, of course, has an appealing ring to Western government ministers always ready for reasons not to get involved in Bosnia: if the Muslims are this conniving, they don’t deserve to be helped.”<sup>95</sup> According to Gjelten, MacKenzie’s case is simply the tip of the iceberg. He “merely reflects what UN service instills in its peacekeepers.”<sup>96</sup> Bosnia has been a test case of international complicity in attempted genocide. Unfortunately, there are several signs that Bosnia’s fate may not remain exceptional, that the Bosnians may share their destiny with other unfortunate peoples. During the culmination of Serbian aggression, another attempted genocide was unleashed against the Tutsi minority in Rwanda. As in the Bosnian case, genocide was accompanied by all sort of denials and connivance, as the interests of neocolonialism coincided with that of the church and various missionary groups. When in June 1994 a group of journalists tried to contact some eminent Anglican prelates, they received a chilling response:

The two churchmen were asked if they condemned the murderers who had filled Rwanda’s churches with bodies. They refused to answer. They dodged questions, became agitated, their voices reaching an even higher pitch, and the core of Rwanda’s crisis was laid bare. Even the most senior members of the Anglican church were acting as errand boys for political masters who have preached murder and filled the rivers with blood. “I don’t want to condemn one group without condemning the other one,” Archbishop Mshamihigo said, immediately after he had condemned the RPF [Rwandan Patriotic Front, now in power]. “Our wish is not to condemn, but to show the situation that is happening in the country.” The journalists walked out.<sup>97</sup>

This emblematic case of moral relativism shows up the most powerful nonstate organization in Africa, the church. But the occurrence was not



limited to the churches. As soon as some doubts concerning the nature and extent of the Tutsi genocide were rumored about, they rapidly spread and were picked up by international government leaders. The more these leaders were in a position to do something about it, the more they tried to deny what was occurring. Denial first occurred in the main African capitals and in the Organization for African Unity (OAU). Then it inevitably reached Washington. President Clinton and his administration openly refused to use the word “genocide” in relation to Rwanda. And as if this were not enough, they also warned their staff to avoid using that word, fearing its political implications.<sup>98</sup> An entire population was systematically eliminated at the hands of a recognized government by a precise plan of biological homogenization, yet the U.S. administration was putting all its weight into denying what was occurring. An acknowledgment of the facts would have triggered excessive pressure for action at a moment when both Britain and the United States were trying not to get involved in international “adventures.”

Similarly, British elites have repeatedly tried to deny that genocide was occurring in the former Yugoslavia. At the beginning, even the media tacitly accepted official Serbian lore. Then, forced by the tide of events and also by the sheer number of their colleagues executed at the hands of Serbian snipers, media professionals chose to reveal the tragedy in its entirety. This helped to inform the world, but not to devise new international strategies or propel major governments into action.

### Bosnia: Our Future

As stated at the outset, the Bosnian conflict has often been presented as an atavistic contest in an orgy of primordial instinct. Not only is this view misleading, but the opposite prospect is far more plausible, namely, that Bosnia represents a kind of futuristic war. Bosnia *is* our future for two reasons: first, because it was a multiethnic society displaying a supreme degree of assimilation; second, because diasporas have played a central role in the conflict.

Several scholars and journalists have drawn parallels between the makeup of Bosnia and the makeup of multiracial or multiethnic societies, particularly those resulting from immigration.<sup>99</sup> But few have noticed that Bosnia represents an extremely advanced stage of a multiethnic society. It is a multiethnic society based on radical assimilation, where all constit-

uent ethnic groups have lost their cultural traits and marks of distinction but have *not* lost their identities. Hence, the parallels between contemporary plural societies and prewar Bosnia are abundant.

Secularization is just an ultimate form of assimilation. Since Bosnia is (or was) one of the most secularized societies in Europe, the most commonly quoted “distinctive” marker, religion, is no more than an empty shell. Most “combatants” were secularized to the bone, and many had been for at least four generations. The conflict can be better described as one between Muslim atheists, Catholic atheists, and Orthodox atheists.<sup>100</sup> All existing data indicate that the level of church or mosque attendance in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia was low, and in Serbia even lower.<sup>101</sup> Hence, descriptions of the war as a religious or ethnoreligious phenomenon are tendentially specious.

Moreover, the Bosnian War represents a particular version of a general upsurge of group identities at a time of global homogenization. As the world is rapidly becoming more integrated and interconnected, old values and principles of stability crumble. At the same time, globalization bids for planetary homogenization and the spread of a context-free and spaceless transculture.<sup>102</sup> Like communism and national socialism, globalism results in cultural assimilation. Assimilation may lead to the destructions of all forms of distinctiveness, but it does not have the power to erase memory and descent, which make up the pillars of ethnic identity. In other words, assimilation does not lead to an undoing of ethnonational identities. On the contrary, it may lead to their radicalization: identities remain dormant behind a smoke screen of homogeneity, until they find the opportunity to spring back with a vengeance. Identities may be assisted and rendered more evident by cultural relics and artifacts: historical buildings, places of worship, and other signs of a now blurred cultural heritage. Yet memories may linger even if outward signs of identity fall into oblivion. In other words, ethnonational identity is primarily about memories and putative descent, more than about facts and artifacts.

In a homogenized world, political violence has an aim and a function of its own. Violent conflagrations are perhaps the most effective way to remold and revitalize quiescent identities. For every assimilated group in the world there is a potential Milošević waiting to use aggression as a tool for reviving dormant identities while building up his own following. Though the Bosnian War has resulted in further destruction and homogeneity, it has been a boundary-building process. Among its most powerful

results was to instill and reshape a sense of community among victims as well as among aggressors.

Few have noticed how the most appalling massacres increasingly occur between similar rather than radically distinct peoples. In Rwanda, barely any cultural divergence distinguishes the Hutus from their Tutsi victims, yet the slaughter has been one of the most vicious in this century. It has drawn a permanent line between the two groups that statesmen, alleged peace negotiators, and Rwandan “nationalists” may ignore only at their own risk. In the future, they had better not disregard this manmade chasm if they wish to avoid a repetition of the tragedy.

Bosnia is the war of the future also because of the central role played by diasporas. Diasporas reflect the ultimate stage of assimilation, yet their involvement in radical politics is undeniable. It could be said that the more diasporas are assimilated and the more they are distant and unrelated to their respective trouble spots, the more they are radical and ultranationalist. The targets of their xenophobia are not usually their immediate neighbors of ethnic competitors within the “host” country, but rather the primarily unknown antagonists of “their” distant homeland. Hence diasporas move in a double cognitive vacuum: on the one hand, the concealed ignorance of the homeland; on the other, the arrogant unfamiliarity with the enemies of the homeland. This does not deter them from expressing their group identity in more radical and fanatical terms than most “hyphenated” groups and individuals. Writing and rewriting histories and selecting and sifting all kind of data are intrinsic parts of their agenda.

## Conclusion

Moral relativism is not an ideology, but a practice. In relation to Bosnia, its consequences are immediately discernible and in view of the entire world. It is a blueprint for genocide in an age of mass communication. As Thomas Cushman and Stjepan Meštrović have pointed out in the introduction to this volume, at one time we could justify our unresponsiveness by asserting that “we did not know.” Today, lacking any such excuse, we see our hypocrisy revealed in its nakedness: since the media have propagated images of the Bosnian genocide on television screens across the world, we can no longer say, “we did not know.” The most we can utter is “we *did not want* to know,” or “we *deliberately ignored* what was going on there.” In order to legitimize nonintervention, we found a face-saving

rationale, suitably provided by the stratagem of moral relativism: apportioning blame to all sides became the most convenient device to justify noninvolvement. Since everybody was to blame, as a result of “Balkan savagery,” the conflict became “intractable,” and no clear goal was discernible ahead. Those Balkan savages are outside the realm of universal human values, and perhaps are really inhuman at heart, so peoples in the Balkans do not even deserve the most elementary human rights. Or so the story went.

In this chapter, I have attempted to show why these views prevailed in Britain, a country that exerted a crucial influence when the fate of Bosnia was at stake. If the Bosnian Muslims had been promptly and adequately armed, the situation might have produced a stalemate, which in turn might have yielded a cease-fire and then a peace agreement in a reasonably short time. The British policy of denying the Bosnians the means to secure their survival resulted from the joint pressures of two factors: pro-Serbian lobbying and the inability to recognize the consequence of British errors since the inception of the crisis.

It may be claimed that there were also objective strategic interests among Western powers to avoid any visible show of force in the settling of disputes within Europe. But French and British attitudes reflected something much stronger than apathy. In Britain, the ferocity and pervasiveness of pro-Serbian propaganda among well-identifiable groups, including the far left, suggest the presence of a factor deeper than mere indifference.

Perhaps the most important “contingent” factor has been the firm belief in a thorough Serbian victory. At the beginning, there was the belief—challenging all rationality—that Yugoslavia could survive as a unitary state. Germany’s recognition was hence greeted with cries of high treason. After Germany was castigated and any further German move was prevented, the belief remained that Serbia could win militarily and reduce Bosnia to a collection of “bantustans” in the framework of a recentralized rump Yugoslavia. Both Britain and France fervently supported this option. A perspective shared by these two countries was the conceit that Yugoslavia’s disintegration was a “disease” likely to “infect” their neocolonial satellites, particularly in Africa. If the international state system is naturally conservative and on guard against secession, such is particularly the case among those countries that thrive on (neo)colonial liaisons.

## NOTES

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1. Some valuable interpretations of the war can be found in Mark Almond, *Europe's Backyard War: The War in the Balkans* (London: Heinemann, 1994); Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences* (New York: New York University Press, 1994; London: Hurst, 1994); Branka Magas, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracing the Break-Up, 1980–92* (London: Verso, 1993); and Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 213.

2. The standard opposition in the philosophical sciences is however between moral and cognitive relativism (Ernest Gellner, personal observation). See also Ernest Gellner, *Relativism and the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

3. Ernest Gellner, “Anything Goes,” *Times Literary Supplement*, June 16, 1995, 6–8.

4. Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 21–49.

5. For a critique of Huntington’s thesis, see Fouad Ajami, “The Summoning,” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993): 2ff. The articles were republished as Samuel P. Huntington and Fouad Ajami, *The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate*, Foreign Affairs Reader (New York: Foreign Affairs, 1993). Ajami argues that “civilizations do not control states, states control civilizations.” See also Fouad Ajami, “In Europe’s Shadows,” *New Republic*, November 21, 1994, 29–37. The front cover is dedicated to “Europe’s long, vicious war against Islam in the Balkans.”

6. A quote from a Serbian “propagandist,” Dr. Radovanovitch, then (in 1932) director of the Press Bureau of Belgrade’s Presidency of the Council, should help clarify this point: “Salonica has never been Greek; it was a Serb city peopled with Southern Serbs. Its affiliation to Greece has been its death sentence! It will not revive, it will not find again its lost prosperity, until it becomes again the great commercial port of the Balkans towards the Mediterranean and the Orient.

And it cannot become this great port unless it returns to Yugoslavia, of which it is a natural and historical dependency. It is the same with Drama, Seres, Janina, Kastoria, which have been of no importance since they were delivered to the degenerate Greek nation.” Cited in Henri Pozzi, *Black Hand over Europe* (London: Francis Mott, 1935), 101; originally published as *La guerre revient* (Paris: P. Berger, 1933). In one thing Radovanovitch agreed with Greek nationalists, although his conclusion was different: “There is no Macedonian question. There isn’t one because there are no Macedonian people. The regions which the Turks called ‘Macedonia’ are in reality purely Serb” (94).

7. Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Hurst, 1994). Bosnia’s pluralist heritage in terms of syncretic movements and “religious bridge building” dates back at least to the late Middle Ages and is well documented by H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst, 1994), 263–68.

8. Bennett, op. cit.

9. For France’s special ties with Serbia, see Ernst Birke, *Frankreich und Ostmitteleuropa im 19. Jahrhundert* (Köln: Bohlau, 1960).

10. See Stephen Clissold, “Occupation and Resistance,” in *A Short History of Yugoslavia: From Early Times to 1966*, ed. Stephen Clissold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 212.

11. David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 69.

12. See Stjepan G. Meštrović, *The Balkanization of the West: The Confluence of Postmodernism and Postcommunism* (London: Routledge, 1994).

13. Robert William Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question* (London: F. Cass, 1962; New York: Norton, 1972 [1st limited ed., London: Macmillan, 1935]).

14. Leopold von Ranke, *A History of Serbia and the Servian Revolution* (London: John Murray, 1848), 435 ff. (reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1973). German original ed., Leopold von Ranke, *Die Serbische Revolution: Aus Serbischen Papieren und Mitteilungen*, 2. Ausg. (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1844). See also Leopold von Ranke, *Serbia und die Türkei im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1879).

15. Mrs. Alexander Kerr, preface to von Ranke, *History of Servia*, x-xi.

16. See John Mason Neale, ed., *Voices from the East: Documents on the Present State and Working of the Oriental Church*, translated from the original Russian, Slavonic, and French, with notes (London: Joseph Masters, 1859; New York: AMS Press, 1974). The collection includes translations by Neale of Andrei Nikolaevich Murav’ev (1806–1874) and Innokentii, archbishop of Kherson and Taurida (1800–1857). His main work is in John Mason Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church*, 5 vols. (London: Joseph Masters, 1847–73; New York:

AMS Press, 1976). For a good introduction to the works of Neale and on the relations between the Orthodox Eastern Church and the Anglican Communion, see in particular Leon Litvack, *John Mason Neale and the Quest for Sobornost* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). On a more eulogistic level, see A. G. Lough, *John Mason Neale: Priest Extraordinary* (Newton Abbot: Lough, 1976). Neale's fascinating research also includes a copious collection of hymns and carols, biographies of Christian saints, commentaries on the Psalms, essays on liturgiology and church history, studies on the so-called Jansenist Church of Holland, the Brothers of the Common Life, the Gallican Church, the Church of Malabar, the Roman, Ambrosian, Mozarabic, Gallican, Greek, Coptic, Armenian, and Syriac rites, and the liturgies of Saints Mark, James, Clement, Chrysostom, and Basil.

17. Harold William Vazeille Temperley, *History of Serbia* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1917; New York: AMS Press, 1970 [1st U.S. ed., New York: H. Fertig, 1969]).

18. Robert George Dalrymple Laffan, *The Guardians of the Gate: Historical Lectures on the Serbs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918).

19. Monica Krippner, *The Quality of Mercy: Women at War, Serbia, 1915–18* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1980). These English women fighters began a long-lasting tradition that has provided the most celebrated accounts of unrestricted Serbophilia. Krippner mostly wrote guidebooks, on Greece, Africa, the Camargue, and, naturally, Yugoslavia. Monica Krippner, *Yugoslavia Invites: A Guide Book* (London: Hutchinson, 1954). On civilian relief during the Serbo-Turkish War, see Dorothy Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers* (London: Hutchinson, 1968).

20. Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1920); idem, *The Sarajevo Crime* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1925). Durham's previous work was more "impartial": see idem, *Through the Land of the Serb* (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), 205. In her search for information, Durham narrates that she could overcome the initial mistrust only with letters of introduction from powerful notables: "Once gained some letter of introduction, I . . . received so much hospitality and kindness that Serbia and the friends that helped me on my way will ever remain in a warm corner of my memory. I changed my plans from day to day and went wherever the police captains and the district engineers advised me" (205). Her views, however, changed dramatically after World War I.

21. Hugh Seton-Watson and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981).

22. Seton-Watson's initial pro-Serbian sympathies can be discerned in his rare manuscripts and pamphlets such as *Serbia, Yesterday, To-Day, and To-Morrow: A School Address* (London: Vacher and Sons, 1916); *The Spirit of the Serb* (London:

Nisbet, 1915); and *Serbia's War of Liberation* (London: Women's Printing Society, 1916). See also idem, *Absolutism in Croatia* (London: Constable, 1912); idem, *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy* (London: Constable, 1911; New York: H. Fertig, 1969).

23. For this criticism, see especially Ljubo Boban et al., eds., *R. W. Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespondencija, 1906–1941* (R. W. Seton-Watson and the Yugoslavs: Correspondence, 1906–1941) (Zagreb: Srećiliste, Institut za Hrvatskv Povijest, 1976). This is a collection of documents and correspondence by and to R. W. Seton-Watson in Serbo-Croatian, English, German, French, and Italian. See also R. W. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo: A Study in the Origins of the Great War* (London: Hutchinson, 1926; New York: H. Fertig, 1973); idem, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans* (London: Constable, 1917; New York: H. Fertig, 1966). Seton-Watson was conscious of the high political implications of his research, as can be seen in a thirty-six-page pamphlet, *The Historian as a Political Force in Central Europe* (London: University of London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, King's College, 1922).

24. Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: The Record of a Journey through Yugoslavia in 1937* (London: Macmillan, 1941; New York: Viking, 1941).

25. *Ibid.*, 67.

26. *Ibid.*, 99.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Carl Rollyson, *Rebecca West: A Saga of the Century* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995) 180.

29. See Mark C. Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia, 1940–1943* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1980).

30. See Philip J. Cohen, *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).

31. Churchill had been supporting Mihailović at least since April 1941, when Yugoslavia was attacked, and until January 1944.

32. George Taylor considers the consequence of such a compromise idea in *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece*, ed. Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg (London: Macmillan, 1975).

33. *Ibid.*, 232.

34. Statement by Brigadier Sir Fitzroy Maclean, in Auty and Clogg, *op. cit.*, 222. Maclean also blamed the Chetniks for collaborating with the Nazi enemy (227). His classic account of his adventures with the Partisans can be found in Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (London: J. Cape, 1949; 1st U.S. ed., New York: Atheneum, 1984).

35. The Italian historian Gaetano Salvemini pointed out that monarchic institutions in the Balkans were conceived as instruments of British dominance. This was indeed Churchill's overall policy, except that he decided in the end to



support Tito. See Gaetano Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1954).

36. Most of the lobbyists were not Serbs themselves. As examples of this propagandist line, see Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power, 1943–1944* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990); David Martin, *The Web of Disinformation: Churchill's Yugoslav Blunder* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990); and idem, *The Selling of Josip Broz Tito and the Tragedy of Mihailović* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990). It is probably interesting to note here the central role played by the large American publishing house Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in publishing pro-Serbian propaganda.

37. See George Orwell, *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1995), 164.

38. There are too many names to mention here. On E. P. Thompson's (1924–1994) own experience as a volunteer, see E. P. Thompson, ed., *The Railway* (London: British-Yugoslav Association, 1948). See also Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 118–20.

39. Again, the literature on this topic is too vast to be cited here. On self-management, see Hans Dieter Seibel and Ukandi G. Damachi, *Self-Management in Yugoslavia and the Developing World* (New York: St. Martin's, 1982).

40. *Praxis. Ed. Internationale*, 10 vols. (Zagreb: Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 1965–74). The “tradition” was continued in Britain in the 1980s by *Praxis International = Praxis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981–94). Both were written in English, French, or German, the latter with summaries in other languages.

41. Mihailo Marković and Gajo Petrović, eds., *Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. Joan Coddington et al. (Dordrecht and Boston: D. Reidel, 1979); Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977); Mihailo Marković and Robert S. Cohen, *Yugoslavia: The Rise and Fall of Socialist Humanism: A History of the Praxis Group* (Nottingham: Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and Spokesman Books, 1975); Julius Oswald, *Revolutionäre Praxis: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Position der Grunder der Zeitschrift “Praxis” unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Religionskritik* (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1982). The best critical analysis of *Praxis's* role in the breakup of Yugoslavia is in Magas, *op. cit.*

42. Marković, a former dissident and ardent antinationalist, at least in front of Western audiences, was entrusted by Milošević with the task of directing the purge of antinationalist opponents in the University of Belgrade. The reasons for his apparent “conversion” to ultranationalism seem, at the very least, enigmatic (Walker Connor, personal comment). On Marković's search for an “ethnically exclusivist state,” see Norman L. Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 192.

43. Jozе Pirjevec, *Il giorno di San Vito: Jugoslava 1918–1992: Storia di una tragedia* (Torino: Nuova ERI, 1993), 457.

44. The three most notable cases were Edward Pearce, Richard West, and Sir Alfred Sherman.

45. As Paul Garde has efficaciously pointed out, “The Serbian press affirms that the Croats are a “genocidal people” (*genocidan narod*) and speaks of the “genocidity of the Croatian people” (*genocidnost hrvatskog naroda*). . . . It goes without saying that a “genocidal people” is at every moment inclined to commit a new genocide, and that each one of its acts can be interpreted in this sense by default. There is no need for proofs.” Paul Garde, *Vie et mort de la Yougoslavie* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 347.

46. The contacts between the Italian far right and Belgrade authorities have been systematically disregarded by the British press. In May 1991, at a loud neofascist gathering in Trieste before his glorious entrance to power, the new right leader Gianfranco Fini reclaimed the return of Istria and Dalmatia to Italian sovereignty. In August 1991, he visited Belgrade to meet key figures of the regime, whom he praised for their unitarist efforts. He declared that, in case of a breakup of Yugoslavia, “Istria and Dalmatia must be handed back to Italy” (*Il Secolo d’Italia*, August 2, 1991). In Italy, the two main revisionist newspapers are the far-right *Il Secolo d’Italia* and the far-left *Il Manifesto*, which compete with each other in their anti-Croat hysteria. But the focus of the new fascist-Marxist understanding has been the neo-Stalinist and radically pro-Serb *Liberazione*, recently born with the help of conspicuous financial aid from the right. On this connection see Paolo Sylos-Labini, “Atroce demagogia,” *L’Espresso*, May 26, 1995, 55–56; and Carlo Gallucci, “Insisto, quanto costa *Liberazione*?” *L’Espresso*, June 2, 1995, 59.

47. This unprecedented alliance between the British far right and the far left concretized in the Committee for Peace in the Balkans, a think tank founded in 1995.

48. I owe thanks to several people for this information. In particular, see Brad Blitz, “The Serbian Unity Congress and the Serbian Lobby: A Study of Contemporary Revisionism and Denial” (Stanford: Stanford University Students against Genocide), unpublished document. See also Charles Lane, “Washington Diarist: War Stories,” *New Republic*, January 3, 1994, 43.

49. The “parallel” groups include the supposedly “pacifist” Campaign against Militarism (CAM) and People against War (PAW), as well as several local variants. Despite their agenda of denying ethnic cleansing and genocide, they also have an “antiracist” section, called Workers against Racism (WAR).

50. Peter Brock, “Dateline Yugoslavia: The Partisan Press,” *Foreign Policy* 93 (winter 1993–94): 152–72.

51. Quoted in Lane, op. cit., 43. This has been confirmed to me personally by Roy Gutman.

52. A particularly chilling display of gruesome pictures of alleged atrocities committed against the Serbs was reproduced in an expensively formatted “special” issue of the magazine (dedicated to “The pictures they don’t want you to see”): Joan Phillips, “A Selective Silence,” *Living Marxism* 53 (March 1993): 19–29. Bojana Isaković, one of those responsible for the excavation of World War II mass graveyards before Belgrade’s television cameras, collaborated with *Living Marxism* for the exhibition *Genocide against the Serbs at Living Marxism’s* gallery, the Edge. Isaković is presented as working for “a project about Serbs killed in 1990, . . . [which] involved the excavation and disinterment of the bones of thousands of Serbs killed and thrown into pits by the Croatian Ustashe” (20).

53. See “Serbian Myths,” *Sunday Telegraph*, September 24, 1995, 7.

54. Great Britain, House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 260, no. 112 (May 31, 1995), cols. 999–1102. Great Britain, House of Lords, *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 564, no. 96 (May 31, 1995), cols. 1117–72.

55. Noel Malcolm, “The Whole Lot of Them Are Serbs,” *Spectator*, June 10, 1995, 14–18.

56. For an overview of her staunch anticommunist sentiments, see Nora Beloff, *Tito’s Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia and the West, 1939–84* (Boulder: Westview, 1985). The book is one of the many revisionist interpretations of the Allied war effort.

57. Nora Beloff, “The Third Way,” *New Statesman and Society*, March 27, 1992, 26–27.

58. *Ibid.*, 26.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. John Zametica, *The Yugoslav Conflict: An Analysis of the Causes of the Yugoslav War: The Policies of the Republics and the Regional and International Implications of the Conflict*, Adelphi Papers, no. 270 (London: Brassey’s for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992).

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, 75.

64. *Ibid.*, 25.

65. Zametica, who is of mixed parentage and was originally a Muslim, changed his name for the third time, as previously he had cast away his birth name, Omer, for the benefit of his English audiences and colleagues.

66. Zametica’s booklet has been cited again and again by supposedly unbiased Western scholars. A recent example is Susanne Woodward’s detailed and voluminous research in *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995), where Zametica’s comments are taken *à la lettre* at least four times (148 n. 4, 180 n. 96, 184 n. 113, 334 n. 2).

Only after the third mention are we told, in a footnote (469), that Zametica was Karadžić's advisor. In the last mention (506), Zametica's work is described as "particularly informative." Impressively, the entire book's argument is constructed on the basis of Zametica's interpretation.

67. Malcolm, "Whole Lot of Them," 16.

68. *Ibid.*

69. See Brad K. Blitz's chapter in this volume.

70. On Lord Carrington as a champion of moral relativism, see Almond, *op. cit.*, 242–52, esp. 243.

71. *Ibid.*, 247.

72. The ICFY's cochairmen were Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance—the latter on behalf of the United Nations. In May 1993 Norway's Thorvald Stoltenberg superseded Vance as cochairman of the Peace Conference and the UN secretary-general's special representative in the former Yugoslavia.

73. The role of the British government has been denounced as the "most responsible for shaping and maintaining the policy of the EC and the UN towards Bosnia. No one else has a responsibility comparable to that of Mr Hurd and Mr Major. The destruction of Bosnia has in fact been in large part an achievement of the British government. Since the London Conference and Carrington's retirement from a role he had the sense to recognize as intolerable, exactly the same policy has been carried on through Lord Owen's position in the Geneva talk." Adrian Hastings, *SOS Bosnia* (London: United Kingdom Citizens' Committee for Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1993, pamphlet), 6.

74. *Ibid.*, 6.

75. Jacques Julliard, *Ce fascisme qui vient* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 137.

76. Hastings, *op. cit.*, 8.

77. *Ibid.*, 9.

78. David Fairhall, "Hard-Hitting NATO Troops Head Rescue Team," *Guardian*, May 10, 1995.

79. Robert Wright, "TRB from Washington: Who Lost Bosnia?" *New Republic*, May 29, 1995, 6.

80. When the shelling of Sarajevo was resumed in late May 1995, General Smith ordered NATO bombing of ammunition depots near Pale, a key military target that General Rose had cautiously avoided.

81. Charles Oulton, "Political Guru Urges Balkan Air Attacks," *Independent*, March 18, 1993, 6. Popper's anti-Marxist views helped frame the ideals of Britain's Conservative government in the 1980s.

82. Michael Foot, "VE Celebrations and a Few Unfinished Battles," *Guardian*, May 6, 1995.

83. Thus, referring to the "Serbian question" in the Krajina, Misha Glenny argues that "The issue which *provoked* the war in the first place remains a matter

of seemingly irreconcilable dispute” (emphasis added). see Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*, rev. and updated ed. (New York: Penguin, 1994), 112.

84. Bennett, *op. cit.*; Magas, *op. cit.*, 161, 181–89, 230–32. See also Glenny, *op. cit.*, 35.

85. Michel Roux, *Les Albanais en Yougoslavie: Minorité nationale, territoire et développement* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1992).

86. On this, there is now a general accord among most Yugoslavists. See Cigar, *op. cit.*; Garde, *op. cit.*; Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide: The 1993 Pulitzer Prize-Winning Dispatches on the “Ethnic Cleansing” of Bosnia* (New York: Macmillan, 1993); Magas, *op. cit.*, 214–15, 223–25; Malcolm, *Bosnia*; Rieff, *Slaughterhouse*; Hermann Tertsch, *La venganza de la historia* (Madrid: El País, Aguilar, 1993).

87. See Hugh Poulton, “The Hungarians, Croats, Slovaks, Rumanians and Rusyns/Ukrainians of the Vojvodina,” in Minority Rights Group, *Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Minority Rights Group/TWEEC, 1993); *idem*, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1993). On minorities in Macedonia, see *idem*, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst, 1995; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). There were also reports of sweeps and concentration camps meant to terrorize Vojvodina’s Croats, Hungarians, Ruthenes, Ukrainians, Slovaks, and Serb opponents of the genocide. See Fred Pelka, “Voices from a War Zone,” *Humanist* (March-April 1995), 6–10.

88. Hastings, *op. cit.*, 8.

89. *Ibid.*

90. See Fouad Ajami, “The Other 1492: Jews and Muslims in Columbus’ Spain,” *New Republic*, April 6, 1992, 22–25.

91. On this, see Stjepan G. Meštrović, “Postemotional Politics in the Balkans,” *Society* 32, no. 2 (1995): 69 ff.

92. Leonard Doyle, “Muslims ‘Slaughter Their Own People,’” *Independent*, August 22, 1992, 1.

93. Tom Gjelten, “Blaming the Victim,” *New Republic*, December 16, 1993, 14–16.

94. MacKenzie’s story about the Muslims who bombed themselves to attract international attention can be read in his war “biography,” Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1993).

95. Gjelten, *op. cit.*, 14.

96. *Ibid.*, 16.

97. Mark Huband, “Church of the Holy Slaughter,” *Observer*, June 5, 1994.

98. *International Herald Tribune*, June 10, 1994, 1.

99. See in particular Rieff, *Slaughterhouse*. Rieff had previously studied other immigrant societies, in particular the Cuban diaspora in Miami, Florida. See

idem, *The Exile: Cuba in the Heart of Miami* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); idem, *Going to Miami: Exiles, Tourists, and Refugees in the New America* (London: Bloomsbury, 1987; New York: Penguin, 1988).

100. See Jan Hjärpe, "Islam, Nationalism and Ethnicity," in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, ed. Helena Lindholm (Göteborg: Nordnes, 1993).

101. See Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: Politics, Culture, and Religion in Yugoslavia* (Boulder: Westview, 1992).

102. See Richard J. Barnett and John Cavanagh, *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).