

CROATIA AND CROATS IN 'THE NEW YORK TIMES'

Following is a booklet entitled "Croatia and Croats in 'The New York Times'" by the Croatian Anti-Calumny Project, and transcribed here with their kind permission.

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Introduction

Former 'New York Times' columnist Leslie Gelb wrote in 1991 that "Croatia is known more for its fascists than for its democrats". Ironically, 'The New York Times' may be contributing more to the promotion of the idea of Croats as fascists than any other Western medium. Its narrow focus on Croatia's history, repeated emphasis on the negative elements and exclusion of the positive, has become an issue of serious concern to the Croatian Anti-Calumny Project.

'The New York Times' has consistently reported on Croatian history in a simplistic manner, portraying Croatia within the framework of its World War II Nazi puppet regime, exactly in the way that Belgrade's war propagandists would have it portrayed. 'The New York Times' consistently refers to the traditional Croatian checkered coat of arms as a fascist symbol, just as Belgrade propagandists do, knowing very well that the letter "U", and not the checkered shield, was the unique symbol of the Nazi puppet regime.

'The New York Times' has not written about the anti-fascist movement in Croatia, even though the Croatian people may have been the only European nation to liberate itself from the Axis occupation without direct Allied assistance. When the former Yugoslavia's anti-fascist movement is mentioned, it is usually mentioned as the domain of the Serbs. The anti-fascist movement in the former Yugoslavia, however, began in Croatia, was led by Croats, and its fighters were over-proportionately Croatian.

The negative image of Croats projected by 'The New York Times' may be affecting the quality of its reporting from the field. The number of Croatian sources quoted or referred to in 'The New York Times' comes into a distant third place after Serb and Bosnian Muslim sources, as shown in a survey of recent reporting from the region. Croatian points-of-view are, by comparison, almost excluded from public debate in 'The New York Times'. When Croats are quoted, they are typically outside the mainstream of Croatian political life.

The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project believes that the problems discussed in this booklet raise serious questions about the quality and reliability of 'New York Times' reporting on Croatia and Croats today. We believe that a major newspaper should be particularly wary of generalizations, misrepresentations and narrow historical perspectives that tend to promote prejudice against a people.

The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project initially prepared this booklet as a means to inform and sensitize the editors and reporters of 'The New York Times' to issues of critical importance not only to the Croatian-American community but to the long-term credibility of 'New York Times' reporting on Croatia and about Croats. The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project is grateful to the foreign desk of 'The New York Times' for its professional consideration and

concern for the issues raised in the first edition of the booklet, prepared especially for 'The New York Times'.

While this booklet focuses on 'The New York Times', the same analyses could be made of many other media in which similar generalizations and misrepresentations have appeared. The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project has printed this second edition of "Croatia and Croats in 'The New York Times'" with the aim of improving the quality of writing about Croatia and educating a larger group of readers about problems that are common in the media. Your questions and comments are welcome.

The New York Times, Croatia and History

by John Kraljic
March 1994

A review of 'The New York Times' has shown that when reporting on the history of Croatia its correspondents have consistently presented Croatia's past in a simplistic manner. This is particularly true with respect to descriptions concerning Croatia's role in World War II. Almost without fail, Croatia and Croats have been portrayed as allies of the Nazis, ruled by the pro-fascist Ustashe who killed hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Gypsies and Jews.

The misperceptions about Croatia during World War II predate the outbreak of the war. In his memoirs, Cyrus L. Sulzberger, The New York Times correspondent to the Balkans prior to, during and after World War II, writes that in 1939 he observed the words "Zivio Zbor" written on walls in Zagreb: "Zbor was the Fascist Party of a man named Ljotic. I noted, 'You can smell which way the wind is blowing. Zagreb is much more European than Belgrade and the influences of Hitlerian Europe are creeping in.'" "A Long Row of Candles", New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969, p.42. Sulzberger, though, fails to note that Zbor was a Serbian fascist group which subsequently collaborated with German troops in Serbia.

Such misperceptions have continued until today. At no point has The New York Times advised readers that Croats formed the backbone of the anti-fascist movement in the former Yugoslavia and were a major factor in the ultimate victory of the Partisans. By overlooking this fact, The New York Times unjustifiably portrays the Croats in general as pro-fascist and ignores the contributions Croats made to the defeat of the Nazis and their fascist allies.

At the same time, The New York Times has overlooked extensive collaboration with the Nazis in World War II Serbia. See e.g. Philip J. Cohen, "Holocaust History Misappropriated," Midstream, November 1992, pp. 18-20.

The Croats: First Victims of Fascism

The Croats of the Istria region, Rijeka, Zadar, and certain islands off the Adriatic coast felt the full brunt of fascism while Hitler was still in prison for his role in the Munich Beer Hall Putsch.

Following World War I, as a reward for entering the war on the side of the Allies, Italy received the entire Istrian peninsula as well as the city of Zadar and the islands of Cres and Losinj, areas where Croats were by far the largest ethnic group. These annexations did not satisfy the desires of the more radical Italians, among them the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio who, with an armed force, in 1920 seized the port city of Rijeka establishing an independent city state.

D'Annunzio's actions, which eventually led to Rijeka's outright absorption into Italy in 1924, have been viewed by many as the precursor to Fascism's rise to power in Italy. Indeed, Mussolini, who looked upon D'Annunzio as a hero, telegraphed D'Annunzio asking him to "march on Trieste - declare Monarchy invalid - nominate a government Directory ... with you as President - prepare elections - declare, naturally, the annexation of Fiume (Rijeka) - send reliable troops to disembark at Ravenna and Ancona and in the Abruzzi to help republican uprising."

D'Annunzio did not heed Mussolini's call, and Mussolini soon afterwards brought himself to power. In the mid-1920's the Fascist government instituted legal measures to wipe out the Croats, numbering over 200,000 people, who found themselves within Italy's borders. All Croatian speaking schools were closed in these areas. Most of Istria's Croatian priests, who played the role of the intelligentsia in this essentially rural region, were expelled from Istria.

Croatian social organizations and surnames were banned. Tens of thousands of Croats were forced into exile, their property handed over to Italian colonists.

The Ustashe

Almost immediately after the establishment of the Yugoslav state in 1918, the Croatian Peasant Party, under the leadership of Stjepan Radic, took the lead in opposing Serbian hegemony. By 1924, Radic had the near universal support of the Croatian people. Tragically, his work was cut short in 1928 after he died from wounds suffered from an assassination attempt by a Montenegrin delegate in Yugoslavia's parliament. The Yugoslav king used the ensuing political turmoil to impose a royal dictatorship in early 1929 and embarked on a vigorous campaign to suppress the Croats.

After the imposition of the dictatorship, Ante Pavelic fled to the West where he established the Ustashe (rebels, insurrectionists). Pavelic and the Ustashe scorned the peaceful methods advocated by Vladko Macek, Radic's successor in the Peasant Party, who later earned the title "Croatian Ghandi" after suffering imprisonment by the Belgrade regime in the early 1930s. The Ustashe believed such peaceful methods to be evil 'because it is the best ally to the well-armed enemy.' Pavelic sought to establish an independent Croatian state through violence which he believed to be the only course available to Croats after the failure of the peaceful efforts of the Peasant Party.

The Ustashe, though, were financed by Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Hungary. None of these powers had ever been supportive of Croatian independence, and all of them had aspired to control Croatian territory. The Ustashe's association with these powers caused the overwhelming majority of Croats to continue to look to the Peasant Party for leadership; indeed, the Ustashe never numbered more than 3,000 members in exile, with only a few thousand sympathizers in Croatia prior to World War II.

The Peasant Party eventually reached an agreement with the central Yugoslav government granting a measure of autonomy to Croatia just days prior to the outbreak of World War II in 1939. The agreement, though came too late for Yugoslavia. Internal dissension had so weakened the state that it fell in less than two weeks after the Axis invasion in 1941.

Though the Ustashe's lack of general popularity is well documented, one article appearing in The New York Times gives a completely different impression: "The majority of Croats, fearing Serbian domination, fell under the spell of narrow nationalists demanding a separate Croat state ... Croats turned increasingly to a secret organization called the Ustashe." David Binder. "The Serbs and Croats: So Much in Common, Including Hate," May 16, 1991.

Since the outbreak of the current war, The New York Times has failed to mention Stjepan Radic even once, although he is recognized as Croatia's most popular and influential leader of this century. Vladko Macek, Radic's successor, has only been mentioned in a handful of articles and only in connection with the Cvetkovic-Macek agreement which, as mentioned above, gave Croatia a certain amount of autonomy. Such references in The New York Times, however, mention the agreement not with respect to its primary purpose (Croatia's autonomy) but with respect to its provisions concerning the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Croats and Serbs.

By contrast, The New York Times has referred to the Ustashe scores of times, and, in fact, the Ustashe have been mentioned in at least 9 articles since August of 1993 alone. The Croatian anti-fascist movement has not been mentioned even once.

The Croat Contribution to the Defeat of Fascism

The German and Italian invaders called upon Pavelic to take over the new state they established, the Independent State of Croatia, known by its Croatian acronym as the "NDH". The reaction to the establishment of the NDH was initially positive. As Vladko Macek wrote in his memoirs, "a wave of enthusiasm pervaded Zagreb at this time, not unlike that which had swept through the town in 1918 when the ties with (Austro-Hungaria) were severed. Many people thought it a great advantage to be freed from Serbian domination." Enthusiasm for the NDH was short-lived, however. Pavelic allowed Italy to annex almost all of the coast while Hungary annexed portions of northern Croatia. In addition, the territory under NDH jurisdiction was divided into occupation zones, one Italian and one German.

Pavelic and the Ustashe added to their unpopularity by enacting anti-Semitic and anti-Serb laws, and instigating mass killings of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. Croatia's Jews were soon herded into several concentration camps along with the Serbs. Croats opposed to the Ustashe found themselves interned in the camps as well.

The first Croat victims of the Ustashe, however, were members of the Croatian Communist Party, a branch of and by far the strongest section of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The Party had been illegal in pre-war Yugoslavia. As a result, many of the Party's leaders previously jailed by the pre-war authorities were simply handed over to the Ustashe. In early July 1941 the Ustashe had ten of them executed, including several members of the Croatian Communist Party politburo. Several days later, a desperate attempt by scores of communists to escape an ustashe concentration camp failed. The Ustashe caught and executed 44 leftists, including Croat poet August Cesarac (on the walls of his cell awaiting execution, Cesarac wrote "Long Live Soviet Croatia!").

The most infamous of camps was that at Jasenovac which became "home" to numerous anti-Ustashe Croats, both Communists and democrats. Indeed, soon after Pavelic's arrival "approximately a hundred of the most devout followers of the Croat Peasant Party had been among the first arrested ..." Macek was soon arrested himself and sent to Jasenovac.

It is not surprising that the Ustashe, who at their height numbered only approximately 28,500 members, quickly found themselves isolated from the population. This was recognized as early as two weeks after the establishment of the NDH by German envoy Glaise v.

Horstenau: "If our troops would be completely withdrawn, there would certainly be a war against all here ... The Peasant Party of Dr Macek, who has been confined to his homestead, is incomparably stronger than the Ustashe movement." By mid-July 1941 the situation for the Ustashe had deteriorated substantially. As reported to Horstenau by his intelligence agent in the field: "For the Germans it is a pity that one must state that the policy pursued by the Reich toward this nation has led to the complete disappearance of the enthusiasm with which they were greeted by the Croat people in early April upon the arrival of the German troops, so that today there is here a deep suspicion towards Germany because it supports a regime that has no right to existence, either morally or politically, and which is seen as the greatest misfortune which could have happened to the Croat people. This regime supports itself only on the recognition it has received from the Axis, having no roots among the people ..."

In addition to the dissatisfaction of the Croats in NDH- controlled areas, the Croats who found themselves in territory annexed or occupied by Italy were subject to persecution. Italian forces executed Croats and herded thousands of Croats into concentration camps. Italian forces also committed mass executions, the most infamous occurring in the village of Podhum in July 1942 where, out of a population of 1,330, 104 men from age 13 to 60 were executed, all buildings in the village (totalling 500) were razed, and the remainder of the population was interned.

While the Partisans grew in strength, the Ustashe did not refrain from attacking Croat villages. Thus, in early 1942 Ustashe forces set fire to two Croat inhabited villages in the Croatian Zagorje region, north of Zagreb.

The lack of popularity of the Pavelic regime was clearly reflected among the NDH's regular armed forces, known as the Domobran (home guard). A report of the General Command to the Ministry of the Croatian Domobrans noted in 1941 the "poor moral standing and warlike spirit among our Domobrans, and there are more and more instances of cowardice and panic among entire units. Recently there have even been instances of armed uprisings and the desertion of both individuals and entire units." As noted by Fitzroy Maclean, a British intelligence officer attached to Tito's forces from 1943 through 1945, the Domobrans were regarded by the Partisans "with good-natured toleration. They were for the most part miserable troops ... and generally took the first opportunity of deserting or letting themselves be taken prisoner."

Many Domobrans who did not desert secretly worked for the Partisans. For instance, Veceslav Holjevac who after the war became mayor of Zagreb, was directed to remain in the Domobrans for a certain period of time prior to joining the Partisans in order to smuggle arms and other necessities, as well as to gather intelligence.

As the war continued, the occupation forces attempted to strengthen the Domobrans by incorporating them into Ustashe or even German Army units. One unit of approximately 500 men was incorporated into an S.S. division and sent to southern France where, on September 1, 1943 in Villefranche de Rouergue near Lyon, they revolted against German forces, supposedly the only revolt among German forces during the war. Villefranche became the first town liberated from German occupation. The revolt was quickly suppressed however, and most of the Croats were executed. (Villefranche holds an annual commemoration of the event and a street is named "Avenue des Croates" in honour of those killed.)

Despite the clear dissatisfaction with the Ustashe among the Croats, Macek made no attempt to organize resistance. He advocated a passive policy of waiting for Allied victory. As a result, the Peasant Party was soon eclipsed in influence by the Croatian Communist Party. The Communist Party had a strong following among Croatian intellectuals. The Party's program openly advocated the federalization (decentralization) of Yugoslavia. In 1937 the Party created separate Croatian and Slovene Communist Parties in order to capitalize on popular opposition to the central government in Belgrade.

Even prior to the war, the Croat Communists played an active role in organizing anti-fascist activities. In particular, under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, a Croat and secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Party, the Communists organized a network of volunteers to send to Spain to defend the republicans against the forces of Franco. Indeed, out of approximately 1,600 Yugoslav volunteers, over forty percent were Croats! One of the most well-known was Vladimir Copic. In his youth Copic was a Croatian nationalist. As an Austrian soldier captured by the Russians in World War I, Copic chose Marxism during the Revolution. Upon his arrival to Spain he became commander of the XVth International Brigade, who battalions included the Abraham Lincoln Battalion composed of American volunteers.

When the Communists organized resistance in Croatia in 1941, the Partisans were led by Croatian Communists. The bulk of the original Partisan forces was Serb peasants fleeing from the Ustashe. The Croat masses, though, soon found the Communist political program attractive. In addition to their calls for a federalized state, the Communists called for respect among all South Slav nations, a policy embodied in the phrase "Brotherhood and Unity". Moreover, while the Peasant Party called for restraint, the Communist-led Partisans engaged in immediate armed resistance against the Axis.

Another ostensible resistance group, known as the Chetniks, also gathered momentum in certain Serb-populated districts of Croatia and Bosnia. The Chetniks called for the restoration of the monarchy and were championed by the Yugoslav government-in-exile as the true resistance fighters. The Chetniks often collaborated with the Axis and, especially, Italian forces. Moreover, the Chetniks espoused an openly anti-Croat philosophy, calling for the expansion of Serbia to include most of Croatia. According to the instructions of Chetnik leader Draza Mihailovic, the goal of Chetnik forces was to "cleanse the Sandzak of its Muslim population and Bosnia of its Muslim and Croat populations." Chetniks in Croatia and Bosnia carried out these instructions. The reports of Mihailovic's commanders in the field almost mimic the atrocities being committed today in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Serb forces: "I returned from my trip from Herzegovina. Four of our battalions, approximately 900 people, set off on August 30 (1942) via Ljubuski, Imotski, Podgora and ended up near Makarska. 17 Ustashe (i.e. Croat) villages burned, 900 Ustashe (i.e. Croats) killed, several Catholic priests skinned alive."

It goes without saying that, caught between a rock and a hard place, between the pacifist policies of Macek and the genocidal policies of the Chetniks and Ustashe, pro-Allied Croats entered the Partisans in droves, especially in 1942 and 1943. Among them was the Croat poet Vladimir Nazor who joined the Partisans at age 66.

Nazor and others viewed the Partisans as the liberators of the Croats. Speaking on his arrival at the Bosnian city of Bihac, Nazor analogized the role of the Partisans to that of the medieval Croatian kings whose first palace was in a locale also named Bihac (or Bijaci, bear Trogir) on the Adriatic coast: "When I finally reached my destination, I was happy to learn that it was Bihac. I was happy not only because Bihac is known as being a beautiful town ... and that in it I found comrade Tito, but also because our new future is being built in a town called Bihac. That name has an ancient, magical meaning for Croats ... It cannot be mere coincidence that our unified future and our new state is being established in a place which has the exact same name as that of the cradle of our first free state!"

Nazor's sentiments were also expressed in official Party documentation: "Do not forget that you are not Communists, or Chetniks, but a Croatian national-revolutionary army, part of the liberation forces of our peoples and the heroic armies of our brother nations: the Serbs, the Czechs, the Poles, the Russians, etc."

Nazor was joined by numerous other prominent Croat intellectuals including the young poet Ivan Goran Kovacic and the sculptor Antun Augustincic. Augustincic's statue, "Peace," graces the gardens of the United Nations in New York. Countless members of the Peasant Party, ignoring Macek, also joined the Partisans.

Under the leadership of secretary Andrija Hebrang and commissar Vladimir Bakaric, the Croatian Communist party organized the most effective fighting force among the Partisans.

As early as May 1942, Croats were entering the Partisans in droves. As noted in one report at the time from the Gorski Kotar region of Croatia: "We have as many Croat Partisans as we need, but they need weapons. We simply do not know how to use such a tremendous mass of people and how to arm them since there was such a quick rise ... We are of the belief that if the General Command (of Croatia) would only take into account this fact and assist us with weapons, we will be in a position to transform our method of battle into a truly popular revolt against the occupier in these, our Croat areas."

By the end of 1944, there were approximately 121,000 Partisans in Croatia, of whom over 60% or approximately 73,000 were Croats. At the same time, five of the nine corps of the Peoples Liberation Army of Yugoslavia were under the command of the Supreme Command of Croatia.

Furthermore, Croatia had the most developed Partisan-led institutions of any of the remaining republics of Yugoslavia. So-called National Liberation Committees, organized on a county level, were established throughout Croatia. Croatia had close to 4,600 such county committees by the end of 1943, more than any other Yugoslav republic. The Countrywide Anti-Fascist Council for People's Liberation of Croatia (known as ZAVNOH by its Croatian initials) held three sessions during the war, attended by representatives of the Communists, the Peasant Party and Serbs living in Croatia. ZAVNOH exercised sovereign power in Croatia, even declaring Croatia's return of Croat-inhabited regions of Italy at its second session in 1943 before the same declaration was made by the Anti-Fascist Council for the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (known as AVNOJ), which played the role of a provisional parliament for all of Yugoslavia.

Croats also played a prominent role in AVNOJ and other Yugoslav-wide Partisan groups. At least 169 Croats received the highest decoration possible, the designation of a "People's Hero" for their role during the war. Significantly, Croats from Dalmatia were instrumental in the Partisans ability to escape encirclement by German forces at the battles of Neretva and Sutjeska, battles which formed the centre of Partisan mythology.

Individual Croats also played outstanding roles during the war. For instance, Ivo Lola-Ribar was secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Youth League while his father, Ivan, a pre-war politician, became president of AVNOJ. Joseph Smodlaka, who helped to establish the first Yugoslav state, also offered his services to the Partisans and led AVNOJ in its negotiations for power sharing with the Royal Yugoslav government-in-exile. The Royal Government was in turn represented by another Croat, Ivan Subasic, a member of the Peasant Party who became the first and only Croat prime minister in the Royal Yugoslav government. Subasic and Smodlaka eventually reached an agreement on the Croatian island of Vis in June 1944 which led to the international legitimization of the Partisans as an allied force.

The Importance of History

The accuracy of Croatia's role during World War II is not merely of concern to historians but is also of importance in formulating current policy towards Croatia. The significance of how that historical record was to be interpreted was clearly recognized by Serbian hegemonists prior to the outbreak of the current war. As recently stated by Christopher Cviic, former Eastern European correspondent for The Economist and member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs: "In the fight against Belgrade ... Croatia was politically handicapped by the appalling heritage of the wartime Pavelic regime. There was an element of irony in this in view of the Croats' massive participation in the wartime anti-fascist struggle.

Nevertheless, the embattled centralists ... found it politically convenient to undermine the position of the Croats by not only harping on but even exaggerating the numbers of the Pavelic's regime victims ... The exaggerations had a clear political purpose: they were meant to prove that Pavelic and his Ustasha movement enjoyed mass support among the Croats. The advantage of this tactic was that it made it possible to characterize various anti-centralist demarches from Zagreb - whether political, economic, or even cultural - as 'separatism', 'national extremism', and a threat to the official 'brotherhood- and-unity' policy."

The continuous references in The New York Times to Croatia's Ustashe past, paint an unfair picture of actual events during World War II and provide a distorted basis for formulating policy toward Croatia today. The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project urges The New York Times to remain cognizant of Croatia's role during World War II - as shown above, the Croats overwhelmingly rejected the Ustashe and their policies.

The New York Times and the Croatian Government

*by John Kraljic
March 1994*

The New York Times has a tendency to mischaracterize the present democratically elected Croatian government as having ties with the Ustashe regime.

The Anti-Ustashe Background of President Tudjman

President Franjo Tudjman has come under particularly fierce criticism as being an anti-Semite and working to rehabilitate the Ustashe regime. However, Tudjman and his father Stjepan, a Peasant Party member, both fought in the Partisans during World War II, against that same Ustashe regime. Tudjman became a general in the Yugoslav Army after the war, but he was expelled from the Communist Party in 1967 for expressing his Croatian nationality. In the 1980s he spent several years in jail for continuing to express publicly his political beliefs.

Tudjman's party, the Croatian Democratic Union, has espoused the Croatian left. Tudjman has relied upon the decisions of ZAVNOH as the basis for Croatian sovereignty. Importantly, the new Constitution, adopted by the Republic in December 1990, in keeping with Tudjman's political philosophy, notes in its preamble that Croatia's rights to full sovereignty were manifested in the 1943 decisions of ZAVNOH, not the 1941 declaration of the Ustashe NDH.

The Coat of Arms

Probably the most absurd charge leveled against the Croatian government has been that it has adopted the symbols used by the Ustashe regime, in particular Croatia's checkerboard historical coat of arms which replaced the Communist red star on Croatia's flag. The New York Times has written that President Tudjman's "ordered that the new national flag contain Croatia's traditional red-and-white checkerboard emblem, which had been used by the Ustashe." S. Kinzer, "Croatia's Founding Chief is Seen as a Mixed Story," Aug. 5, 1993. See also S. Kinzer, "History is Another Recruit in the Balkan War," Nov. 15, 1992 ("Croatia's new Government has adopted a flag that closely resembles the one used by [the Ustashe] regime ..."); S. Kinzer, "Pro-Nazi Rulers' Legacy Still Lingers for Croatia," Oct. 31, 1993 ("Mr. Tudjman decreed that Croatia should adopt a red-and-white checkerboard coat of arms that closely resembles the symbol of the Ustashe state."); and, Editorial, Nov. 13, 1993 ("Croatia's new coat of arms closely resembles the symbol of the Ustashe state.")

Contrary to these reports, there is nothing "new" about Croatia's flag. Since its adoption in 1848, the flag has always contained three equal bands of red, white and blue. The only change has been to the emblem in the center of the flag. After the Communist takeover, the Communist red star was placed in the middle of the flag where it remained until 1990. The red star has been replaced not by an Ustashe symbol but by Croatia's traditional coat of arms which may have had its beginning in Croatia as far back as the 11th century. Indeed, the same coat of arms was incorporated into the coat of arms of the Royal Yugoslav state between the two World Wars.

Of the above cited references to the coat of arms, only one story in The New York Times stated that the coat of arms was centuries old, (Oct. 31, 1993). However, even then it was noted that "to many Jews, Serbs and others it is a symbol almost as hateful as the swastika." Such analogies are completely inappropriate. The swastika was never a traditional German symbol but was imported from German history by the Nazis as a unique symbol of their ideology.

The Ustashe too, had their own symbol and their own flag. Their symbol was the letter "U" and their flag was the Croatian national flag with the letter "U" placed in its upper-left corner with the checkered shield in the middle). That the letter "U", and not the checkered coat of arms, is an Ustashe symbol is common knowledge to any Serb or Croat. Stephen Kinzer ("The Nightmare's Roots: The Dream World called Serbia." The New York Times, May 16, 1993) discussed the fact that a member of the parliament of the rump Yugoslavia had proposed that the use of the letter "U" be banned since it was the symbol of the Ustashe. These distinctions were recognized by Croatia's Communist government. The same red-and-white checkerboard formed the central feature of the coat of arms of the Socialist Republic of Croatia under the Communists for 45 years. During all of that time, this supposedly swastika-like symbol was found on all public buildings and indeed on all public documents in Croatia, including stationary, report cards, birth certificates, marriage certificates, etc. Yet during all of

that time no one was heard to say that Croatia's Communist government had adopted an Ustashe symbol.

Anti-Semitism

The New York Times has on several occasions claimed that the current Croatian government is anti-Semitic. See e.g. S. Kinzer, "Pro-Nazi Rulers' Legacy Still Lingers for Croatia," Oct. 31, 1993 ("... Mr. Tudjman has made no clear effort to disassociate himself from ... sentiments of anti-Semitism.") Charges of anti-Semitism are without any substance. The Croatian government provided financial assistance for the rebuilding of the synagogue in Zagreb and further offered, prior to the outbreak of war, the use of Zagreb Airport as a transit point for Jewish emigres from the Soviet Union. Moreover, the cabinet included a Jewish minister, Andrija Hebrang Jr., the son of the Croatian Communist Party's World War II general secretary, as well as several other Jewish lower-ranking officials.

After the outbreak of the war, a terrorist attack occurred on the Jewish Center in Zagreb as well as the local Jewish cemetery. A massive candle-light demonstration condemning this attack took place soon thereafter in Zagreb. Recently, Stephen Kinzer in The New York Times mentioned the bombing of the center and noted that the government had offered funds to rebuild it (10/3/93). However, more importantly, Mr. Kinzer failed to state who was responsible for the attack.

A highly-publicized trial in Belgrade, apparently taking place because of Milosevic's attempts to purge his army of men he considers to be unreliable, revealed that the bombing in Zagreb was in fact carried out by two Serbs working with the Yugoslav secret police. The reason was obvious: to discredit Croatia's reputation as a democratic state and yet again portray Croatia as anti-Semitic. Though this trial commenced early last year and had been reported on by the international press, Mr. Kinzer chose to ignore its implications.

Condemnation of the Ustashe

The New York Times has reported on a number of occasions that President Tudjman and the Croatian government have failed to condemn the Ustashe regime. See e.g., S. Kinzer, "History is Another Recruit in the Balkan War," Nov. 15, 1992 ("Rather than condemning the actions of Croatia's World War II regime, their new Government has adopted a flag that closely resembles the one used by that regime ..."); S. Kinzer, "Pro-Nazi Rulers' Legacy Still Lingers for Croatia," Oct. 31, 1993 ("... Mr. Tudjman has made no clear effort to disassociate himself from ... the Ustashe ..."). This is disinformation. Among other things, President Tudjman has publicly stated the following:

A) In a statement issued on July 8, 1991, President Tudjman, among other things, addressed the following to Croatia's Serb citizens:

"The democratic government of sovereign Croatia considers all of you citizens, with all the rights and privileges guaranteed all citizens ... I take full responsibility for this, in my name, as President of the Republic and in the name of Parliament and the Government of Croatia. We will do everything possible to prevent any chauvinistic manifestations and activities among the Croatian population which might remind Serbs of Ustashe war atrocities."

B) In a letter dated January 21, 1992 to members of the United States Congress, President Tudjman wrote:

"I am unalterably opposed to oppression from the right and the left, and I condemn in the strongest terms possible the evil genocide which the Nazis and their puppet collaborators in Croatia and other countries perpetrated against the Jews, Gypsies, Croats and Serbs. The systematic process the Nazis developed and implemented to exterminate the Jews of Europe made it, understandably, one of the greatest crimes in history against mankind. In this regard, the Ustashe regime of the Independent State of Croatia committed countless war crimes and crimes against humanity."

C) In a March 1992 letter to Edgar Bronfman of the World Jewish Congress, President Tudjman noted:

"[T]he Ustashe regime committed countless war crimes and crimes against humanity. That was a regime which, under the protection of the Nazi and Fascist occupation forces, persecuted Jews and members of other nationalities as well as Croatian political opponents in the most brutal manner. With these crimes, it irrevocably joined its patrons, sharing their historical fate. On the other hand, a vast number of Croats, myself among them, took up arms against the Ustashe reign of terror and the Nazi and Fascist occupation forces. We

deeply regret the fact that the Jewish people in Croatia suffered the tragic fate of the Holocaust during World War II."

D) On June 22, 1993, at the Anti-Fascist Uprising Day celebration (a public holiday in Croatia marking the first military actions taken by the Partisans in 1941) held in Sisak, Croatia, President Tudjman stated the following in his address:

"At first the Croatian people accepted the NDH, the NDH in which the Ustashe, who did not have the wide support of the people, took the lead. The Ustashe who within Hitler's system also applied racist and pro-fascist laws and committed evil, but the Croatian people did not side with the Europe of Hitler and fascism."

E) On March 28, 1994, after the Zagreb premiere of the Schindler's List, and on the occasion of presenting a state award to Croatian-born co-producer of the film Branko Lustig, President Tudjman stated the following:

"As president of today's democratic state of Croatia, I take this occasion to apologize to you and all members of the Jewish community on behalf of those who took part in the Holocaust and enforcement of the Nazi-fascist racist laws in the NDH. At the same time, it is with pride that I stress the historical truth that the large majority of the Croatian nation condemned this type of criminal policy and many Croats took an active part in the anti-fascist struggle, including myself, who, as a young man fought for four years."

The New York Times and the Croatian Opposition

*by John Kraljic
March 1994*

The New York Times ignores Croatian opposition leaders when citing criticisms of Croatian government policies. Instead, The New York Times relies on the opinions of a handful of intellectuals, on the extreme left or on the extreme right, who have minor roles in the daily political process in Croatia.

Our review of The New York Times reveals that its correspondents have quoted the following individuals in discussing criticism of Croatian government policies: Zvonimir Cicak, Slavenka Drakulic, Davor Glavas, Zarko Puhovski and Milorad Pupovac.

Of these five individuals, the writer Slavenka Drakulic has by far received the most attention by The New York Times. In addition to the reviews of her books, The New York Times has published excerpts from one of her works (The New York Times Magazine, Sept. 13, 1992), has published two op-ed pieces written by her in less than two months ("Croatia Sacrifices Its Patriots", Oct. 26, 1992, and "Rape After Rape After Rape", Dec. 13, 1992), and most recently has had an article written about her (S. Kinzer, "Feminist Gadfly Unappreciated in Her Own Land", Dec. 11, 1993).

Yale's Ivo Banac, top historian of the Balkans and a harsh Tudjman critic, calls Drakulic, in the Winter 93-94 issue of Foreign Policy, "[y]our American daughter from Choate who has wandered into muddy Pannonia during a recent massacre," and becomes perplexed. He concludes that her comments on matters Croatian are made "with an air of a child or an uninformed outsider," and that her lack of popularity in Croatia is explained not by Zagreb policy, as some would have it, but because "her studied ignorance of history [does not] help her engage the attention of readers back home." When Drakulic comments on national identity, which she often does, Banac concludes that her comments "are ambiguous, flat, and will disturb no browser at Brentano's."

Further, Asja Armanda of Kareta Feminist Group [a coalition of Croatian and Bosnian feminist groups] and Natalie Nenadic of the University of Michigan Rape/Genocide Law Project wrote to the Editor of The New York Times on December 29, 1993 with serious objections to some claims in the December 11, 1993 article on Drakulic, and on the content of her December 13, 1992 op-ed piece "was according to our records of the incident sensationalistically altered from its original[.]"

Zarko Puhovski has been quoted on four occasions to present his oppositionist views (S. Kinzer, "A U.S. Envoy to Croats Uses Candor," Aug. 17, 1993; S. Kinzer, "Pro-Nazi Rulers' Legacy Still Lingers for Croatia," Oct. 31, 1993; and D. Binder, "In Croatia, Ruling Party Reflects a House Divided," Dec. 21, 1993; J. Kifner, "From Pizza Man in Canada to Croatian King Maker," January 16, 1994). Puhovski, though, like Drakulic, an interesting individual, represents hardly any one. He is a professor of Marxism. Puhovski is generally unpopular in Croatia because he openly supported the 1971 crushing of the "Croatian Spring" by

Belgrade. The "Croatian Spring" was a student movement for democracy and national expression. Its leaders are major political figures in the ruling party and in the opposition parties today.

Zvonimir Cicak is mentioned in one article by The New York Times (D. Binder, "Croatia Forced Thousands from Homes," Dec. 8, 1993). Cicak, though he had potential for developing into an opposition leader, has now been labelled an obstructionist in Croatian politics, because of his lack of consistent political orientation. A dissident during the years of Communist repression, Cicak became associated with no less than three political parties during the course of several months, including the ruling Croatian Democratic Union. While he currently presents himself as a Western liberal in his work on Croatia's Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, only a little more than one year ago he was associated with an extreme right-wing Bosnian Croat group.

Milorad Pupovac has been mentioned in one article (D. Binder, "In Croatia, Ruling Party reflects a House Divided," Dec. 21, 1993), and had an article written about him (J. Tagliabue, "Serbs in Croatian Cities are Quiet and Invisible," Sept. 6, 1991). Pupovac founded the Serb Democratic Forum. The Serb Democratic Forum is not a political party and has no seats in the Croatian parliament. Pupovac, like Cicak, is known in Croatia for making exaggerated claims, one of them being an accusation that the Croatian Government was forcibly baptizing thousands of Serb children.

Davor Glavas is a journalist. To our knowledge, he is active in no political parties.

Though Croatia has many opposition political parties, two of which, the Croatian Social Liberal Party (the "HSLs") and the Croatian Peasant Party (the "HSS"), have achieved wide popularity, The New York Times has failed to discuss the policies advocated by them and other mainstream opposition parties.

Their leaders, who represent a substantial portion of Croatia's population, have received almost no coverage in The New York Times. Indeed, in a recent article The New York Times went so far as to quote Davor Glavas as claiming that the opposition lacked leadership (D. Binder, "In Croatia, Ruling Party Reflects a House Divided," Dec. 21, 1993). While such criticism may be justified, it would have been helpful to have a response from an opposition leader.

Drazen Budisa, the leader of the HSLs and a fierce critic of President Tudjman's policies, has become very popular. Opinion polls published in the Zagreb weekly *Globus* show that his party is often more popular than President Tudjman's party, and that Budisa's popularity at times rivals that of Tudjman. Yet, The New York Times has mentioned Budisa only twice (S. Engleberg, "Croatian Leader on Defensive in Fight for Re-Election," Aug. 2, 1992, and "In Croatia Vote, UN Pressure is the Main Issue," Aug. 3, 1992), both times during the last general elections in Croatia.

Croatia's third largest political party, the HSS and its leader, Drago Stipac, and the Serbian National Party, and its leader Milan Djukic, have not been mentioned in The New York Times since Croatia's first democratic elections in May 1990. (C. Sudetic, "Croatian Republic Voting Today in a Test of Yugoslav Communism," April 22, 1990; and Associated Press, "Croats Vote in Final Round as Independence Party Leads", May 7, 1990).

The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project strongly believes that the readers of The New York Times would get a more accurate picture of Croatia and its politics through the eyes of its mainstream opposition.

Four Recurring Problems in New York Times Reporting on Croatia

by Zlatko Batistich

Revised version of an October 13, 1993 essay submitted to The New York Times

Four recurring problems in New York Times reporting on the situation in Croatia are: (1) implied acceptance of the Yugoslav government's explanation of the causes of the war; (2) unbalanced selection of quotations; (3) unbalanced reporting of recent attacks; and, (4) unbalanced presentation of relevant history. A recent New York Times article provides examples of each type of problem - "Croatia: The Once and Future Battleground?" by S. Kinzer, October 10, 1993 (referred to as the sample article).

1. Implied acceptance of the Yugoslav government's explanation of the war

Examples from the sample article:

- a. "In 1991... Serbs in Croatia rose in rebellion against the new Croatian government."
- b. "Their resolve to stay independent was stiffened last month after a Croatian Army attack near the town of Medak."

The above quotations suggest that the writer accepts the Yugoslav government's explanation of the causes of the current war. According to this explanation, Serbs in Croatia rebelled against the new Croatian government because of fear that they would be oppressed. They sought independence in reaction to an alleged threat from the Croatian government. In the Croat view and in the view of many in the international community, the war has different causes. In this view, through popular elections Croats lawfully rejected the communist system in favor of democratic reforms. The war began when Serb leaders in Belgrade sought to keep Croatia and the other former Yugoslav republics within a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. The attempt to hold on to Slovenia failed. In Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, they succeeded in taking large amount of territory often by means of genocide. Under this view, the occupation of one third of Croatia is not the result of a Serb rebellion "helped" by the Yugoslav Army, but of the Yugoslav government's failed attempt to keep Croatia within Yugoslavia by means of (1) local proxies and (2) the Yugoslav Army. The sample article implicitly rejects this view.

2. Unbalanced selection of quotations

Examples from the sample article:

Quotation of Slobodan Jarcevic

Quotation of Goran Hadzic (as told to a Belgrade newspaper)

Quotation of Slobodan Milosevic

Quotation of Cedric Thornberry

Quotation of UN report

Quotation of General Jean Cot

Quotation of un-named European ambassador

The article quotes three Serbian leaders, two UN officials, a UN report and un-named European ambassador. While the article is about the situation in Croatia, it does not quote even one Croat. As in previous articles, the story of the situation in Croatia is thus told principally in the words of non-Croats, often Serbs. The writer's assertions about the views and intentions of Croats or Croat leaders are not supported by any actual quotations, raising the possibility that the writer did not speak with any Croats in preparing the article, or simply decided not to quote them.

3. Unbalanced reporting of recent attacks

Examples from the sample article:

- a. Serbs refused to give up their tanks and artillery and have not allowed the return of a single refugee."
- b. "... U.N. investigators concluded that the Croats had followed a carefully planned scorched earth policy... Bodies were 'riddled with multiple bullet wounds or incinerated.'"
- c. "Serbian fears have been reinforced by the behavior of Croatian forces fighting in central Bosnia."

From the above, it appears that while Serbs only failed to allow the return of refugees, Croats committed mass murder. The article makes no mention of the mass killing of Croat civilians by Serbs which led to the occupation of nearly one-third of Croatia, or of the frequent attacks by Serbs against civilian targets resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Croats since the ceasefire of January, 1992. The author makes it a point to highlight one alleged Croat attack on Serbs in a particular town, but seems to be unaware of any of the attacks against Croats in and around Serb-occupied areas of Croatia. While mentioning purported fears of the Krajina Serbs, the article gives little or no indication of the very real fears among people in the areas subject to their attacks, of the constant threat to Croatia's security, or of the resulting harm to Croatia's economy.

4. Unbalanced presentation of relevant history

Example from the sample article:

"And history is not comforting. Between 1941 and 1945, the pro- Nazi Ustashe regime that ruled Croatia was responsible for killing tens of thousands of Serb civilians."

The article finds atrocities committed against Serbs some fifty years ago to be relevant in explaining the present situation. Yet it does not find atrocities committed against Croats by the Serbian regime in the last two and half years to be worth mentioning. It also does not mention the fact that, during World War II, Serbian Chetniks and Serbia's pro-Nazi Nedic regime participated in the mass murder of Croats, Muslims and Jews. The article explains alleged Serbian fears of a democratically elected Croatian government partly by reference to a puppet government that existed during World War II. At the same time, the article fails to explain Croatia's desire to defend itself against the regime in Belgrade today, which has not only resurrected despicable ideas of ethnic purity, but has acted on them violently. These four types of problems occur regularly in New York Times reporting on the situation in Croatia. As in the sample article, such problems often result in a misleading or one-sided representation of current events in Croatia.

When Media Directs Policy: the Bosnia Case

by V. Miles Raguz

January 1994

The international community's remedies toward Bosnia and Herzegovina have been largely based on public pressure. The major powers say they have no vital interests in the area. So almost everything they have attempted has been done in order to placate public pressure; remedies in the form of humanitarian aid. Public pressure has come mostly through or because of media attention to the horrifying violations of human rights in the region.

For example, it has been reported that, when President Clinton was in Tokyo last year, he watched CNN reports about the worsening humanitarian situation in Sarajevo. The President was disturbed and, according to news reports, he telephoned Washington and ordered a review of policy options on Sarajevo. Note, Sarajevo, not Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Another example is from the United Kingdom also last year. British television reported on the tragic situation of a dear little girl, Irma Hadzimuratovic, in Sarajevo. Reportedly, Prime Minister Major quickly appeared on television and spoke about policy options on Bosnia. "Operation Irma" was the favored option. Britain would make 50 beds available for the critically wounded from Sarajevo and fly them to London. Media crews going along for the ride to pick up the wounded outnumbered the wounded.

No one worried much about Bosnia until August of 1992 when the West first saw picture of emaciated prisoners in the Omarska camp. But the Bosnia tragedy and the atrocities were well known to many governments much earlier. Yet no one cared to take appropriate action. Some government officials resigned in protest. Nothing much happened, however, until television screens exposed the shame.

In the spring of 1993, the Bosnian conflict entered a new stage: fighting between Muslims and Croats. In this new phase of the war, the Bosnian Croat community may have become the most victimized of the three communities in Bosnia. But media reports hardly hint that this may be the case. The September 12, 1993 article by David Ottaway in The Washington Post may have been the first report in the United States about this situation.

According to Bosnian Croat authorities, 44 percent of the Bosnian Croat population had become refugees or displaced persons and 1.5 percent had been killed through August 1993. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Army, which is in a reality a Muslim army, has overtaken close to four thousand square kilometers of the territory previously defended from the Serbs by the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), the army of the Bosnian Croats.

While Bosnian Croats defended this territory from Serb aggression and genocide, Muslims organized their army there. This territory was the only place in the world where Bosnian Muslims were protected. Everywhere else, they were either under siege and on the run, or refugees in a foreign country. Now, the Bosnian Muslim army, stationed in cities behind the HVO lines against the Serbs, has expelled some 120,000 Bosnian Croats from their homes. The Archbishop of Sarajevo, in the August 11, 1993 letter to the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the former Yugoslavia, wrote that his archdiocese of about 500,000 Catholics, almost all Croats, was "on the brink of extinction," first due to Serb aggression and then due to Muslim attacks. Nearly 70 percent of his archdiocese is destroyed: 46 percent by the Serb army and 23 percent by the Muslim army.

This latest Bosnian tragedy continued with little attention from the responsible bodies of the international community. The Security Council, which has passed more than 80 resolutions and statements on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has kept a stony silence with regard to the plight of the Bosnian Croat Catholics.

Could it be because the media has not reported the problem? Probably so. It has become quite apparent that in dealing with Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the lack of resources, the international organizations focus on those problems and areas that get media attention. A survey of New York Times reporting on the war during May- December 1993, the time period of major Muslim-Croat fighting, showed that Muslim sources were referred to or quoted almost three times as often as Croat sources [439 vs. 176]. Given what has been happening to Bosnian Croats in central Bosnia and northern Herzegovina since April, the lack of media attention to their plight was disturbing.

Croatian and Bosnian-Herzegovine bishops hold a similar opinion. Following the October 15, 1993 Synod in Split, they issued a sharply worded statement regarding the media reporting from the region: "Yet we must note with regret and decisively protest against all perfunctory, unconfirmed and unfounded reports from various media - even Catholic - which appear closer to the work of subjective propaganda than to the work of truth and fairness. Consequently, many are led to wrong ideas and conclusions about the situation in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

The leadership of the Catholic Church may have only once before reacted with such sharp-worded criticism, when it criticized the Bosnian Croat army for violations of international humanitarian law.

Jeri Laber, executive director of Helsinki Watch (op-ed, The New York Times, October 11, 1993), has also noted that "U.N. personnel and the news media have reported mainly on Croat abuses in central Bosnia."

About 150,000 Bosnian Croats have been surrounded by the Bosnian Muslim Army in the heart of Bosnia, in three territorial pockets centered on Zepce, Vitez and Kiseljak, with hardly any humanitarian assistance in months. The lack of media coverage of this stage of the war explains the silence of the international community with respect to the suffering of Croats in central Bosnia.

The media has taken on a larger role than usual in Bosnia: it directs international policy. Because of the impact it has on policy with respect to Bosnia, the media has assumed an even greater responsibility to report accurately and fairly. The Bosnian Muslims are victims of genocide because of Serb aggression, but Bosnian Croats have also suffered greatly, and need similar consideration from the media, in order to obtain comparable consideration from the international community.

Is There Bias?

*by V. Miles Raguz
April 1994*

One would require a laboratory environment to test interpretation bias in reporting, i.e., whether one side is favored over another. The same or similar event would have to occur twice, with the two sides exchanging roles. If the two actors would simply substitute roles, we would expect that the reporter would judge their behaviour in the same way.

It will certainly come as a surprise that an event could repeat itself. But it did. Four months apart. The first in mid-July and the second in mid-November, both near Fojnica, in central Bosnia. Both involved a mental institution caught in the middle of an offensive. Both events involved the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims, each time in different roles.

The first event was reported as "mentally handicapped children had been abandoned by its staff when the area had been attacked by the muslim-led Bosnian Army." (Bosnian Children's Hospital Cleaned Up by U.N. Troops, J. Burns, The New York Times, July 1993.) The focus was on abandonment of the patients by its Bosnian Croat staff, and concluded that the local Croatian officials and staff may have been negligent. The article read; "Croatian officials said they had ordered all staff members to leave the two hospitals when they came under fire from Bosnian Army forces advancing to the south of Fojnica,... but United Nations officials said there was little evidence of fighting in the immediate vicinity of the hospitals to support Croatian assertions that there was a mortal risk to the hospitals' staff."

Four months later, the second event was reported in The New York Times as "A Croatian and Serbian offensive [that] has forced medical workers to stop work at Fojnica and Bakovici[.]" ("Bosnia War Traps Patients in 2 Muslim Hospitals, Reuters, November 13, 1993.) The focus was on forced. The article is not clear as to whether the staff actually left or it just stopped working, but it does say that "where mental patients, unwanted children and the bedridden sick have been left without refuge[.]" Other reports of this event indicate that the staff did leave the hospital. It was not reported, however, whether they left when they became directly endangered or at some other time.

The History Case

The New York Times often makes reference to the Croatian coat of arms. Almost without fail, the Croatian checkerboard coat of arms is described as closely resembling the coat of arms of the Nazi puppet regime in Croatia during World War II. As pointed out earlier, the checkerboard is not a unique symbol of the Ustashe. The letter "U" is.

While it is true that the checkerboard was an element of the Nazi-puppet regime insignia, it is also true, that the present checkerboard coat of arms also closely resembles the Croatia state coat of arms during the post-war communist period, the Croatian coat of arms during pre-World War II period, the Croatian coat of arms under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Croatian coat of arms during the sixteenth century. The Croatian coat of arms dates as far back as the 11th century and is viewed by many as one of the oldest symbols of Croatian nationhood. Therefore, to associate the present coat of arms exclusively to World War II is not only misleading but incorrect.

Another issue related to the World War II period in Croatia that has been greatly misrepresented in the media is the question of Serbian fatalities during this period. Many Serbs, even in the highest academic circles, continue to claim that the Ustashe murdered from 750,000 up to two million Serbs during World War II. The New York Times has in the past treated such exaggerated claims without criticism. More recently, however, The New York Times has addressed this issue within the context of credible studies on the subject, with the exception of the April 17, 1994 Letter to the Editor from Michael Pravica, of the Harvard Serbian Cultural Club, "Holocaust Memories Make the Serbs Fear Their Neighbours." The author repeats the centerpiece of Belgrade propaganda that 750,000 Serbs lost their lives, primarily in Jasenovac, in the Croatian-perpetrated World War II holocaust. About 500,000 Serbs lost their lives from all causes, mostly from combat, hunger and disease, during WW II: about 300,000 Serbs lost their lives in the NDH (Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), and about 200,000 in Serbia. The Ustashe did not set foot inside Serbia.

The Use of Sources Case

Hearing all of the sides is the sacred principle of objective reporting. Regretfully, the Croats may be right in feeling slighted in this regard. The New York Times has shown inordinate reliance on Serb or Muslim sources in reporting about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A study of The New York Times reporting during May-December 1993, the period when the Bosnian conflict entered a new phase - the war between the Muslims and Croats, reveals numerous references and quotes from Serb and Muslim sources, while Croat sources came in a distant third. Between May 1 and December 31, 1993, The New York Times referred to or quoted Serb sources 3 times as often as Croat sources [528 vs. 176]. It referred to or quoted Muslim sources 2.5 times as often as Croat sources [439 vs. 176].

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is thus explained almost exclusively through the eyes of only two of the parties to the conflict. The Bosnian Croat side, which has at different times played very positive and very negative roles, is seldom heard. This is especially disturbing, not only because of its dual roles, but because it has become the most victimized side in the past year.

Untold Stories

i. Croatia and the Bosnian Croats have helped the Bosnian Muslim community more than anyone else: aid for refugees and military assistance. Croatia has spent almost twice as much as the United States for the care of Bosnian refugees (\$850 million vs. \$450 million in two years through year-end 1993) with an economy that is some 1/700 of the U.S. economy. Croatian military assistance to Bosnian Muslims prior to the spring of 1993 is an open secret.

- ii. The Croatian Defence Council (HVO) saved Bosnia from being completely overrun by the Serbs. The HVO, army recognized by the Bosnian Government, was the only organized army in Bosnia and Herzegovina carrying out actions against the Yugoslav Peoples Army and Serb militia until late summer of 1992, when the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina began forming.
- iii. Human interest stories with focus on Croats, and especially Bosnian Croats.
- iv. Position of the Catholic Church in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the war, and on local and international media reporting about the war.
- v. Position of Fikret Abdic who was the most popular politician in Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to the war, and stepped aside for Alija Izetbegovic to become President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- vi. Mainstream opposition in Croatia.

The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project

The Croatian Anti-Calumny Project (CACP) was founded in August 1991 as the American Croatian Society and later adopted its present name. Its mission is to stop the defamation (calumny) of the Croatian people in the media and public life and to promote justice and fair treatment of all people alike.

The CACP has developed materials that have focused on issues related to the war against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the media reporting on it. Some members of the CACP have worked in advisory capacity to both the Croatian and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian government. The CACP is financed solely by its members.

The main contributors to this work are Zlatko Batistich, John Kraljic and V. Miles Raguz. Mr. Batistich is an attorney with a real estate firm in New Jersey and a graduate of the University of Chicago and Cornell Law School. He was a legal advisor to the Bosnian-Herzegovine Mission to the United Nations, and represented the Mission in the Organziations of Islamic Conference's drafting committee for recommendations on the International War Crimes Tribunal for the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Mr. Kraljic is an attorney with a Wall Street law firm and graduate of Long Island University and Georgetown University Law School. He has been an intensive student of the region for over ten years, and has translated and written for the Bosnian-Herzegovine and Croatian Missions to the United Nations. Mr. Raguz is presently advisor to the Croatian Mission to the United Nations, and formerly to the Bosnian-Herzegovine Mission and the Bosnian Croat delegation at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia peace talks. He is a graduate of Bowling Green and New York University (MBA), and a former sovereign risk analyst with a Wall Street bank.