The Killing Fields, Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide in Europe: Yugoslavia as a Case Study

by Hal Elliott Wert

The Bloodlands: An Historical Overview

Ian Kershaw, in The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler’s Germany, 1944-1945, recounts in great detail the horrific slaughter accompanying the end of the World War II in Europe, a tale told as well by Antony Beevor, Richard J. Evans, Max Hastings, and David Stafford, among others. Timothy Snyder in Bloodlands, a groundbreaking book about the atrocities committed by Stalin and Hitler between the World Wars and during World War II, broadens the perspective and the time frame. An especially forceful chapter recounts the massive ethnic cleansing of Germans and other ethnic groups that occurred near the end of that war under the auspices of the Soviet Red Army in order to establish ethnically pure nation states, for example, Poles in Poland, Ukrainians in the Soviet Ukraine, and Germans in a truncated Germany. The era of Stalin and Hitler was captured in the lyrics of a hit song recorded by Leonard Cohen entitled The Future: “The blizzard of the world has crossed the threshold, I see the future brother—it is murder.”

For millions in Stalin’s grasp the “truth of Marxist dialectics” was brought home to them by the cold steel barrel of a pistol that parted the hair on the back of their heads. Momentarily each of those millions understood the meaning of being “on the wrong side of history” as they were rounded up, executed, and buried in mass unmarked graves just for being a member of a despised ethnic group. For millions of others in the clutches of the Nazis a similar fate awaited them. The men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, struggling with their atrocities, absurdly rationalized that it is more humane to shoot children after shooting their mothers lest the children become orphans who would not survive. Murder by both the Nazis and the Soviets was most often up close and personal. Unlike...
Odysseus, the people of the Bloodlands could not steer a safe passage between the Scylla and the Charybdis.⁵

Although histories of killings and ethnic cleansing in Europe over the last several hundred years abound, far too often these reports suffer a particularistic approach that only describes portions of what is a much wider phenomenon.⁶ The Holocaust, for example, was not an anomaly, not some aberration thought up by madmen, though Hitler and his ideological henchmen were surely mad. Importantly, the murder of millions in the middle of the last century does not stand outside European history or philosophy. For all of the glories and achievements of Europe, the dark side—ethnic strife compounded by murder, supported by a bevy of philosophies, ideologies, and intellectuals—progressed unabated. The calamity, a *Danse Macabre* as Franz Masereel portrayed in his startling woodcuts, was overseen by the best and the brightest. Killing and ethnic cleansing in Europe largely begins in the early nineteenth century and is tied to the rise of nationalism and the dissolution of the Ottoman, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German empires.⁷

Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands*, is in reality much larger than the area indicated on his introductory map. He intentionally focused his study on portions of Central and Eastern Europe and clearly revealed the problems involved in the standard perception of genocide under Hitler and Stalin.⁸ Insightful European leaders like Thomas Masaryk, the first President of the newly independent Czechoslovakia in 1919, understood this and bluntly remarked: “Europe is a laboratory built on a vast graveyard.”⁹ The further east and southeast you travel in Europe, the deeper the strain of historical antecedents of the European blood sport of genocide. Traveling back in time still further one reaches the Enlightenment and the conclusions that were drawn by some of the best minds in Europe—“that problems could be finally solved by utopian revolutions”—a solution that nearly guaranteed a calamitous outcome, a persistence in thought despite historical experience, that resulted in the triumph of logic over empiricism.¹⁰ The mass murder and rape that unfolded in Yugoslavia is emblematic of what occurred generally throughout Central and Eastern Europe beginning in the early nineteenth century.¹¹

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**An Effort at Pluralism**

Understanding the nightmarish war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s depends upon an understanding of the complex and twisted history of the Balkans. In fact the words, “Balkans” and “Balkanization” have come to mean baffling, convoluted, and perhaps irresolvable. Churchill’s characterization of the Soviet Union as “a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma” is just as apropos of Southeastern Europe.¹² But why does this area of Europe seem so “inscrutable”? Unless we attribute to its denizens special characteristics not shared by others on the planet, the explanation is to be found in the details of Balkan history, not in the reductive myth of some ancient blood feud. Questions about the characteristics of Yugoslavia and the Slavic culture are fascinating in their complexity and a subset of the larger questions about characteristics of the European continent as a whole.
Framing answers to these questions begins in early nineteenth century Europe, a century swept by change. Historical forces were unleashed by the Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, the scientific revolution, the French revolution, the industrial revolution, the rise of capitalism, and the rise of the middle class. However, most importantly, romanticism, especially German romanticism, tied irrational, explosive ideas such as “a people, the nation, the fatherland, a race, a religion,” to the concept of the state. Within liberal democratic capitalist states, two ideas surfaced to qualify individuals for membership in the state. One idea embraced open and inclusive pluralism, while the other embraced exclusiveness and homogeneity based on race and ethnicity (ancestry, language, religion, history, tradition). The idea of pluralism prevailed in some modern states, but Germany and Japan’s rejection of pluralism as the basis of citizenship, coupled with their very success as modern states, ensured that other states would attempt to follow their example. The struggle between these two concepts continues to afflict many societies. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the idea of race and ethnicity gained momentum in the decentralized 1990s. Witness the problems that repeatedly trouble Belgium, have on occasion threatened to break up Canada, and contributed to the breakup of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Rwanda, and the former Soviet Union. The momentous changes that swept nineteenth century Europe intertwined and were politically concentrated in the demands of the burgeoning middle class on an entrenched aristocracy. The bourgeoisie representing these changes were in greater numbers and more successful in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe, the ancient regimes, though weakened, prevailed, and the result was uneven economic, political, and cultural change—Europe was divided. It is significant that within this historical climate a different form of nationalism developed in different parts of Eastern Europe.

Many in Eastern Europe wanted the economic prosperity and political freedom of what the East Germans longingly termed the Goldenen Westen. Germany and Italy, nations that unified around language, culture, blood, and geography, were powerful examples to be emulated by ethnic groups in multicultural empires and people, like the Poles, who were trapped between or in several empires simultaneously. If, however, ethnicity was the criterion for nationhood, then Eastern Europe would be divided into a number of quite small states and this in itself was a serious political and
economic problem. Within the Austrian Empire, Hungary demonstrated another path to partial self-determination in which Magyars controlled an empire within an empire. Hungarians achieved near equality with Austrians in the Dual Monarchy (1867-1918) and ruled over Poles, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Jews, Gypsies, Muslim Slavs, Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats.18

But neither in the more traditional Russian and Turkish empires, nor in the new nations of Germany and Italy, nor in the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy were these powers quiescent toward their neighbors in lands in between or toward territories in other empires that they desired. Ambitious empires and ambitious new nations on their frontiers coveted those few remaining unabsorbed Eastern European people and their land. Two different phenomena drove this expansionism. The old empires sought to continue as they had in the past to hold on to what they already possessed and when possible to add new territory and peoples to their polyglot states.19 Other areas, notably Italy and Germany, were territories that rushed to organize as nation states and then rushed to become empires. Germany and Italy, however, were late modernizers and were largely forced to seek colonies, the necessary accoutrements of great power status, outside Europe.20

The Case of Yugoslavia and the Balkans

If Belgium and Northern France is the cockpit of Western Europe, then surely Yugoslavia and particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina is the cockpit of Southeastern Europe; territory historically disputed by the Orthodox Russian, Muslim Ottoman, and Catholic Austro-Hungarian Empires and now disputed by those vanished empires’ legatees, Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the nineteenth century, after the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna, power was reasonably balanced throughout most of Europe. The exception was the Balkans, where one of the three imperial players, the Turkish Ottomans, was considerably weaker than the other two. Turkey, often dubbed the “sick man of Europe,” offered Russians and Austro-Hungarians tempting opportunities. In 1878 the Austro-Hungarians, determined to maintain great power status after their defeat by the Prussians at Königgrätz in 1866, took Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Turks.21 A fierce contest between empires and religions was further intensified by the popular ideas of romantic nationalism.22

Serbia, a Slav state that owed its independence to Russia, could have played a role in organizing the Yugoslavs— a word coined by the Zagreb Diet of 1861—into a larger South Slav national unit.23 That is, Serbia could have played a role similar to that played by Bismarck and Prussia or by Cavour and Piedmont in the organization of the German and Italian states. However, the Austro-Hungarian Republic did not embrace this idea as a South Slav state would block further southward expansion and threaten the loss of Croatia and the Dalmatian coast, Hungary’s outlet to the sea and the site of its naval bases.24

To the problems of ethnicity were added...
the problems of empire and independence. In the 1870s, the Hungarians, using the tactic of divide et impera—divide, elevate one group over another, and conquer—indirectly and effectively opposed the idea of the South Slav state by favoring the disliked Serbian minority in Croatia. In fact, the Hungarians used the Serbs as the Austrians had used them. The Serbian Orthodox Church was favored over the Croatian Catholic Church; Serbs were given low-level administrative posts and were awarded a degree of freedom to determine educational policy.25 During a visit to Zagreb in 1895 by the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, Croatian students protested this blatant discrimination and rioted. They attacked Serbs, destroyed Serb property and Orthodox Churches, and burned both Serbian and Hungarian flags.26 Austrian administrative tactics were not without an immediate price, and in the future, as the historian Alan Palmer put it, “the seeds…. sown with such irresponsible mischief raised a crop of hatred which was harvested between the two wars by the Yugoslav Kingdom.”27 The crop of hatred was harvested again during World War II when Croats slaughtered Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies. In the 1990s the Yugoslavs went beyond harvesting and tore out the plants by the roots. The divide and conquer tactics of the Austro-Hungarian Empire increased ethnic hatred, set a precedent for ethnic violence, and prevented the formation of a South Slav state.

Subsequently, many South Slavs fervently embraced the notions of romantic nationalism. But the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s defeat in World War I and its dissolution by the peacemakers at Versailles gave the South Slavs an opportunity for statehood. Yugoslavia, originally named the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, was created by the South Slavs themselves as a pluralistic solution to nineteenth century imperial and nationalistic struggles in the Balkans.28 Well-meaning men in Paris sanctioned the new state, but determined the Kingdom’s frontiers.29 President Woodrow Wilson, British Prime Minister David Lloyd-George, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and Italian Premier Vittorio Emanuele Orlando crawled over a huge map of Europe unrolled on the floor of the mezzanine of the Hotel Crillon in Paris and with their pens attempted to end war forever by implementing the principles of self-determination. Wilson, a Southern segregationist, whose favorable attitude toward Plessey vs. Ferguson may have partially shaped his ideals on self-determination, was counseled by a bevy of leading academic experts, who upgraded ethnicity as the basis of the nation state. The President proclaimed, “Self-determination is not a mere phrase, it is an imperative principle of action,” and so it was.30 The idea was to draw borders around people; however, Eastern Europe had too many selves for self-determination to be possible, and hybrid multi-cultural, multi-ethnic states came into being to replace polyglot empires. In reality, no matter how borders were drawn, these new states were pluralistic. But the rationalization, the theoretical foundation provided by the Big...
Four at Versailles, pushed hard by Wilson and further underpinned by the German romantic idea of race as nation, was that these new states were an expression of the right of self-determination. U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing, along with others, saw the flaw in the solution. Lansing wrote that self-determination “will raise hopes which can never be realized. It will, I fear, cost thousands of lives.”

In fact these new states laid claim to aspirations or goals that were directly contradictory to the cluster of ideas and emotions associated with self-determination. The new state was a rational expression for desired progress—economic growth, political stability, democratic institutions, increased standard of living, and legal and social justice. Self-determination appealed to primordial attachments, to an ethnicity that established identity, for example, blood, place, language, traditions, history, and religion. In areas with conflicting territorial claims and ethnic diversity, such as Teschen (Cieszyn/Český Těšín), a German city awarded by Versailles to the newly independent Poland and claimed as well by the newly independent Czechoslovakia, the League of Nations conducted plebiscites to resolve the issue, but here too the concept of self-determination contradicted the attempt to solve the problem.

A predictable result of creating new states on a contradictory, theoretical basis was that Ukrainians, White Russians, Germans, and Jews in Poland; Slovaks and Ruthenians in Czechoslovakia; Hungarians in Romania; and Poles, Czechs, and Jews in Teschen argued that they had been denied their rights and were once again political pawns in somebody else’s state. Minorities argued that they either belonged in another state or that they should have their own state. Majorities celebrated their newly won inclusive status and viewed minorities as non-citizens or even as disloyal subversives. Jews throughout Eastern Europe were considered to be stateless. Non-citizenship, exploitation, and repression intensified ethnic rivalries within the new states of Eastern Europe, imperiling their futures. As the sociologist Clifford Geertz points out:

To subordinate these specific and familiar identifications [ethnicity] in favor of a generalized commitment to an overarching and somewhat alien civil order is to risk a loss of definition as an autonomous person, either through absorption into a culturally undifferentiated mass or, what is even worse, through domination by some other rival ethnic, racial, or linguistic community that is able to imbue that order with the temper of its own personality.

Among these new states, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes possessed a better balance between ethnic groups than Poland or Lithuania. To its credit, Yugoslavia attempted a pluralistic state and had its leadership or the Big Four at Paris fostered the concept of pluralism that balance may have resulted in cooperation and integration. To the contrary, President Wilson persistently argued that self-determination was the long-term solution to Europe’s age-old problem of political instability and ethnic conflict. World War I, the President preached, was to be the “war to end all wars.” The passion for self-determination, the emotional
While [President] Wilson proposed many brilliant and progressive solutions to the world’s problems, self-determination based upon ethnicity was not one of them. Justification for ethnic exclusiveness heralded by Wilson in his speeches to tumultuous crowds throughout Europe on his way to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 did not however foster a climate in which tolerance and peace might flourish.39

Self-determination did not translate into support for the new states as the peacemakers in Paris assumed it would. While Wilson proposed many brilliant and progressive solutions to the world’s problems, self-determination based upon ethnicity was not one of them. Unwittingly, Wilson touched the match to an East European powder keg partially of his own making. To paraphrase Andrew Stuttaford in his Wall Street Journal review of Max Egremont’s book Forgotten Land, Wilson and “Versailles turned this mix toxic; Hitler” and Stalin “made it murderous.”40 Within the framework of self-determination, the only other solution at the heart of human conflict and slaughter, the inability of humans to live with those that were outside their group, tribe, or religion, was to force huge populations to relocate and create even more and smaller states.

Many European leaders, some reluctantly and with grave reservations, considered population relocation, and Wilson was obviously aware of the ethnic cleansing that had historically taken place in the Balkans prior to the outbreak of World War I; however, the obvious difficulties associated with such a gargantuan undertaking, the human suffering, and property difficulties pushed the peacemakers to adopt the flawed hybrid option of self-determination.41 A large refugee meeting in Salonica in January 1923 at the end of the Greco-Turkish War characterized the Lausanne agreement, a Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, as “a disgraceful bartering of bodies to the detriment of modern civilization.”42 One and a third million Greek Orthodox Christians were compelled to leave Turkey and 800,000 Muslins were forced from Greece.43

The Herculean tasks of leading the new states created by the Paris peacemakers were to transcend their own ethnicities and balance their conflicting claims with those of competing ethnic identifications. These saison states, as Hitler later called them, were the orphans of Versailles and left to solve their own impossible problems. The Paris peacemakers let the future determine the fate of those living in the Bloodlands. As with the empires that proceeded them, these new, weak, inexperienced states were pulled apart by the centrifugal forces of ethnicity and nationalism, and the populace dissolved into ethnic cleansing, war, and genocide. Great power interventions, such as the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to the Serbs in 1914, the Italian invasion of Greece in the spring of 1940, and the NATO intervention in 1990s,44 forced supposed solutions on the people and were followed by long periods of neglect.

The newly created Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had seven neighbors and every border save Greece was contested.45 During the monarchy in the 1920s, the Serbs dominated the government. Slovenes had little objection to Serb domination and achieved a high degree of autonomy in the newly created Kingdom; however, the Croats did object. All groups made many attempts at reconciliation after repeated fallings-out.46 History, religion,
and language--such as whether Serbo-Croatian should be written in the Latin alphabet or in Cyrillic script--clouded this relationship, as did differing forms of nationalism, but these animosities received new impetus from unfair taxation from Belgrade and from the clash of strong personalities. Nikola Pašić, a Serb, and Stjepan Radić, a Croat, exemplify this political phenomenon. Their mutual animosity fueled the traditional mistrust felt by Serb for Croat and Croat for Serb, destroying the possibility of creating an inclusive new state—a Yugoslavia. Balkan politics like Balkan social relations are characterized by extreme individualism and the cult of personality on the one hand and extreme ethnic exclusiveness on the other.

Hendrick Smith’s description of the Russians in his book *The New Russians* is applicable as well to the Yugoslavs: “People are more moved by the partisanship of personal loyalties than by belief in individual rights and a sense of fair play. Within the trusted tribal ring, the bonds are strong, but outside it, the frictions are abrasive and the mistrust corrosive.” Dino Tomašić, a Croat sociologist, repeatedly argued that the Dinaric (populations inhabiting the mountainous areas of the western Balkans: Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Slovenia, Austria, part of northwestern Bulgaria, and northwestern Republic of Macedonia) social character would undermine all efforts at South Slav unification. After Versailles, this recipe for a political Molotov cocktail, which had exploded in the past, proved accurate by the ideas associated with ethnic self-determination. In the new Yugoslav parliament, this personal and ethnic hatred, these “habits of the heart,” produced a kind of gridlock...
plague of ethnicity, the Yugoslav nightmare, Alexander abolished the traditional 33 oblasts and declared 9 banovinas—new borders.\(^55\) The National Police moved to stamp out political parties and political activity. In the process many human rights abuses were committed and many citizens fled overseas.

Repression and torture were most severe in Croatia. Ante Pavelić, the future fascist leader of Croatia during World War II fled to Mussolini’s Italy, from where he formed a secret society called the Insurgent Croat Revolutionary Organization (*Ustaška Hrvatska Revolucionera Organizacija*), *Ustaše* (rebels), to fight for a free Croat state.\(^56\) The King decreed a new constitution in 1931, which held the cabinet responsible to the crown not to the prime minister. Voting was public and oral, and as could be expected, this restricted a vocal opposition.\(^57\) The South Slav crisis deepened when the *Ustaše* were implicated in the assassination of King Alexander while on a visit to France.\(^58\) As a response to the ongoing political crisis, the economic depression, and the rise of Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy, Yugoslavia moved to the right.\(^59\)

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thus avoided persecution by the Croatian army. Some Muslims served in the upper ranks of the Ustaše, and others voluntarily and involuntarily fought in the Waffen SS 13th Mountain Division (Hardschar, scimitar) against the Communist partisans, the Russians, and, eventually, the Western Allies in France. The official headgear was a fez bedecked with a tassel and emblazoned with a SS death’s head emblem. Opposed to the Nazi invaders were two guerilla groups or partisans as they were more commonly called in World War II. One group was led by the Serb, Draža Mihailović, and its members were called Chetniks (irregulars or guerrillas). Mihailović had been a Colonel in the prewar Royal Yugoslav Army, and he was promoted to General and Minister of War by the wartime Yugoslav government-in-exile in London. He was not very successful politically and militarily, but he did attempt a national war of liberation against the Nazis and their Yugoslav allies, and he did work out a democratic program that would allow the Yugoslav people to choose a government freely at the end of the war. Mihailović’s forces were also very successful at rescuing downed Allied pilots flying the dangerous bomber missions to attack the Romanian oilfields around Ploesti. To Germany’s consternation, its Italian ally provided the Chetniks with some political and material support and was willing to arrange local truces in areas of Italian occupation.

Mihailović’s resistance efforts were at first quite aggressive, but the Nazis shot 100 or more hostages for each German soldier killed by the Chetniks. For each German soldier wounded, 50 hostages were shot, and for the destruction of equipment such as flatbed trucks, five hostages were executed. Believing that the price for resistance was too high, Mihailović turned to a strategy somewhat like that of Chiang Kai-shek in China. He saved his men and material and other than harassment raids, rarely attacked the Nazis. After failing to work out a united front with the Communist guerrillas, he helped drive them out of Serbia, a military goal that was ardently pushed by the Germans as well. Mihailović saved his strength to support an Allied invasion and defeat the opposition Communist partisan groups in the growing Yugoslav civil war.

The largest and most successful partisan group, the Communists, was led by the charismatic and enigmatic Croat, Josip Broz, who went by the nickname Tito. As Secretary General of the Yugoslav Communist Party he became an ardent believer in a unified South Slav state as a means to capture power. However, like other Communists, he had worked assiduously to destroy the Yugoslav state prior to World War II. The slogan that Tito created to rally Yugoslavs to the Communist cause, bratsvo i jedenstvo, (brotherhood and unity) pushed a pluralist future. Ethnicity was subordinated to politics, and Titoist politics were the criterion for acceptance into the Communist movement.

At the end of World War II, Tito diplomatically recognized by the British, was positioned for a takeover of Yugoslavia...
too independent for his taste, but Tito had two things in his favor that other newly-created Communist states did not. He was a genuinely popular leader and the geographical position of Yugoslavia made direct Soviet domination and control difficult. Additionally, he maintained an independent foreign policy toward aid for the Greek Communists, and he supported Enver Hoxha’s Communist regime in Albania. Stalin finally expelled the Yugoslav party from the Cominform in 1948, expecting a coup to topple Tito—none occurred. After a purge of Stalinists in the Yugoslavian Communist Party, the country was on an independent path to socialism.

More importantly, Tito’s Croatian roots, genuine popularity, and commitment to a centralized totalitarian state imposed a superstructure on years of ethnic internecine squabbling and forced a return to order. Under Tito, integration, intermarriage, and inter-living within neighborhoods, villages, and cities became more commonplace. Serbs now lived in Zagreb and in other Croatian cities, and Sarajevo took on a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Many Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and Bosnian Muslims, especially the post-World War II generation, thought of themselves as Yugoslavs first, and perhaps in time Yugoslavia might have achieved a high degree of ethnic integration. Critics early warned, however, that despite the progress, Yugoslavia was a state, not a people. Outside the country people were Yugoslavs, but at home too many were something else. For example, 1.3 percent of the population claimed to be Yugoslav in the 1971 census and that figure rose to 5.4 percent in the 1981 census. How many others preferred to identify themselves ethnically, but supported the Yugoslav state is unknown.

**Things Fall Apart**

Even with the death of Tito on May 5, 1980, Yugoslavia outwardly appeared to be a socialist state, making slow if somewhat erratic progress. Under Tito, Yugoslavs joked that the answer to the question what is Yugoslavia was that it was “a federation of six republics, five nationalities, four languages, three religions, two alphabets, and one leader.” Others say that Tito was the only Yugoslav, and on the day of his death the entire nation shut down to mourn and never reopened. But in spite of criticism that pointed out glaring economic weaknesses and the jerry-rigged religious and ethnically federated political structure of the Yugoslav state, real progress toward a national identity was made under Tito. Ironically, a part of the tragedy is that the dictatorship that so ardently undertook the task of overcoming traditional ethnic strife did so while wedded to a political and economic theory that would fail.

For Yugoslavia the end of the Cold War meant the end of its leadership in the non-aligned world. With Gorbachev’s commitment to *perestroika*, this neutral country lost its status and much economic support from both Moscow and the West. Years of hidden economic decline papered over by massive borrowing from the West, combined with the collapse of the Soviet empire, eroded the federal union. With no strong leader and no rigid superstructure, the erosion of the federal union eroded the ethnic truce. By the mid-1980s some sharp observers picked Yugoslavia as the Lebanon of the future.

To complicate matters, many Serbs resented the political and economic power of Muslim Albanians living in Kosovo and their growing numbers. To Serbs, Kosovo is old Serbia—the ancient homeland—the site of their defeat and subsequent domination by the Turks in 1389, a battle celebrated in a cycle of folk ballads familiar to most Serbs. Albanians were seen as foreign intruders who did well at the expense of the rightful owners—the Serbs. Contrarily, Croats, Slovenes, Albanians, Macedonians, Hungarians, and Muslims resented Serbian domination within the federal republic. Serbs,
in turn, complained of their enormous economic sacrifices for the other republics. North-South splits reappeared as Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia thought of abandoning their poorer and less-developed republics in the south. The South, of course, replied that it was being exploited economically and ignored politically by those in the North.83

By 1989 Yugoslavia was a country that seriously questioned its raison d’etre. Some observers said that Yugoslavia was nothing more than the federal army and the secret police. However, the collapse of Yugoslavia ended the dream of a South Slav Federation. Most of the ethnic groups inhabiting the wreckage sought to express their differences through self-determination—the creation of a number of smaller nation-states. The complicated ethnic geography of the former Yugoslavia rendered drawing borders around people impossible. The alternative solution, implemented by the Greeks and Turks in 1923 and used even more extensively by both the Soviets and the Nazis, was to move people.84 The dilemma of

Photographed here in 1994, the “Symbol of Vukovar,” the water tower in the city of Vukovar, was destroyed by artillery in 1991 in fighting between Croatian and Serb forces. The city is now back inside Croatian borders and its water tower is being maintained as a memorial. Much of the city was completely rubbled in the fighting, causing some to categorize it as the worst damage to any European city since Stalingrad in World War II. photo by Mark H. Wiggins
Versailles had come full circle. The Wilsonian solution, the rush to self-determination became an effort at ethnic self-preservation.

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The outbreak of war in June 1991 in Slovenia may have been at first an attempt by the Yugoslav National Army to maintain the state. The idea quickly collapsed and was followed in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia by a war that was about state building along ethnic lines and about a greater Serbia with an outlet to the sea. In the jargon of contemporary propaganda, Serbs and Montenegrins viewed their circumstances as a once in a millennium opportunity to carve out a greater Serbian state. Many Serbs across frontiers in Croatia and Bosnia, fearful of ending up in somebody else’s state, concurred. Croat nationalists too saw an opening for dreamed-of independence based upon ethnic exclusivity and pursued that dream by continued attempts to conquer the coastal regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, heavily populated by Croatians, whenever low-risk opportunities arose.

In 1991, with the break-up of Yugoslavia imminent and supported in the West by Germany and Italy and opposed by France, the U.S., and Great Britain, Croatian President Franjo Tudman and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević met secretly on several occasions and agreed to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina between their two countries. Both leaders also vigorously stirred traditional dislikes and hatred by fostering utopian myths as a means of maintaining themselves in power and ruthlessly worked towards increasing the size of their ethnic states. Amartya Sen would characterize both leaders as “proficient artisans of terror.” Their antipathy toward one another was reminiscent of the rivalry between Pašić and Radić. Much of the blame for ethnic cleansing accompanied by mass rape belonged to Milošević, Radovan Karadžić (leader of the Bosnian Serbs), and Ratko Mladić (Commander of the Bosnian Serb Army), but Tuđman must take a share of the blame as well. Shortly after the Milošević/Tudman talks began, the Serbs in the Krajina (military frontier) region of Croatia took up arms in an effort to attach themselves to the new Serbian state. As might have been expected, the war between Serbia and Croatia widened and intensified, but this conflict was mostly about the realignment of borders not the survival of either state.

Bosnia’s declaration of independence in 1992 vastly complicated the situation, as Bosnian independence was opposed by both Tuđman and Milošević. As in Krajina, Bosnian Serbs organized themselves and undertook a war against the Muslim citizens of the area, captured much territory, and lay siege to Sarajevo. Croatia lay claim to parts of Bosnia and for several years was involved in an on-again-off-again war against Muslims and occasionally the Bosnian Serbs. Bosnian Croats at times were allied as well with the Muslims and the Bosnian Serbs. The Muslims, of course, undertook to defend themselves, organized an army, and were sometimes at war simultaneously with the Serbs and Croats. The world was shaken by the destruction of sections of the beautiful medieval city of Dubrovnik, the destruction of Mostar and Vukovar, and by the bloody battle for Sarajevo, a city that was under siege from April 5, 1992, to February 29, 1996.
The siege of Sarajevo lasted longer than the siege of Leningrad in World War II.93

As the war raged, the U.S., the UN, and Western European nations approached the problem of ending the conflict with great caution, since any military intervention remained fraught with difficulties, and any first step threatened to lead to further involvement, perhaps even a wider war. The war in Yugoslavia produced a crisis in Europe that in most ways was unlike the crisis of the late 1930s, but a similar question was whether the Europeans, with the support of their U.S. ally, would take the responsibility for putting the European house in order. The Europeans repeatedly said that there would never be another Holocaust in Europe.94 Many Europeans also loudly voiced that there would never be another war in Europe. But there was a war in Europe, and despite repeated protestations, ethnic cleansing continued unabated.95 Whatever the responsibility of those nations that had the power to stop the atrocities occurring on a daily basis throughout much of the former Yugoslavia, it became clear that Western intervention was most unlikely. Milošević and Tuđman were encouraged by this timidity, but unsure if the West would countenance the conquest of all of Bosnia.

While the U.S. officially supported the Bosnian cause, public opinion in Western Europe and the U.S. did not favor military intervention.96 The lesson that aggression must be nipped in the bud, so painfully learned in the 1930s, seemed a principle abandoned or ignored—perhaps a lesson countered by American experience in Vietnam and not forcefully reestablished by Desert Storm. Desert Storm momentarily banished the ghost of past foreign policy failures, but the inconclusiveness and the tragedy of a Blackhawk down in Somalia brought back old fears and uncertainties. The U.S. dithered, while the slaughter continued unimpeded.

Like the European crisis of the 1930s when the League of Nation’s credibility was severely undermined by its lack of resolve in the face of aggression, the UN made only limited attempts to end the war: sanctions against the Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, and Bosnian Serbs; safe-havens or enclaves for the besieged Muslims; continued diplomatic pressure; attempts at containment by stationing UN-sponsored peace-keeping troops in Macedonia; and finally when all else failed, no-fly zones and the use of limited air strikes.97 The well-intentioned, but unworkable Vance-Owen Peace Plan that attempted to draw borders around people and create ethnically defined territories that looked like a map of Germany after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was unacceptable to the Croats and the Serbs.98 The continued refusal by the West to undertake more drastic military solutions rewarded ethnic cleansing and further encouraged the already emboldened Serbs.

Ethnic cleansing has a kind of terrible logic; it is not simply uncontrolled hatred and revenge, although it is an emotional fire storm of self indulgence and self justification coupled to torture, rape, and murder, it is also about expanding territory and influence.

Ethnic cleansing has a kind of terrible logic; it is not simply uncontrolled hatred and revenge, although it is an emotional fire storm of self indulgence and self justification coupled to torture, rape, and murder, it is also about expanding territory and influence. The Serbs and the Croats were able to force from their own territories and from hoped for future territories in Bosnia hundreds of thousands of
Muslims. By capturing Bosnian territory and breaking up areas of Muslim concentration, the Serbs and the Croats increased the size of their territories and diminished the size of any future Muslim state.99 The Muslims too expelled Serbs and Croats from the territory they controlled. UN-supported Muslim enclaves, in fact, became peoples and territory held hostage by the Bosnian Serbs to diminish the offensive capability of the Bosnian army. Eventually many Croats left Serb-controlled areas, and finally large numbers of Serbs fled the Krajina and Eastern Slavonia.

In April of 1993, the Clinton administration, sensing a last opportunity, came out forcefully in support of Bosnia and proposed a “lift and strike” policy. Lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslim government would strengthen the Bosnian army (“level the playing field” in White House parlance), whose troops would be supported in the field by NATO air power and probably more importantly, avoid the U.S. committing “boots on the ground.”102 A rearmed and retrained Bosnian army would, in theory, stave off defeat and enable the Muslims to increase their leverage at the bargaining table by conquering lost territory. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher’s “shuttle diplomacy” failed—the Europeans refused the Clinton initiative and clung to a position of neutrality toward contending parties.103 A month later in May 1993, the Clinton administration reversed its position on “lift and strike” and agreed with its allies to enforce the arms embargo on the Bosnian government. Regardless, the Bosnian army was militarily replenished with small arms and ammunition illegally by outside arms shipments, sometimes from Iran and sometimes paid for by Malaysia, but transshipped through Croatia.104 The Clinton administration turned a blind eye to these embargo violations knowing arms shipments came from Iran. The Croats and Bosnian Serbs recognizing an opportunity “taxed” each arms shipment so that the Bosnian Muslims only received twenty-five percent of what they ordered.

It has been argued that the Bosnians, the region, and the world would have been safer if the West had not recognized the Bosnian state and had accepted the early Milošević and Tudman proposal to divide Bosnia.105 However, international diplomatic recognition of Bosnia and

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**War in the former Yugoslavia is explainable: the war was about territory and about self-determination.**

War in the former Yugoslavia is explainable: the war was about territory and about self-determination.100 Woodrow Wilson’s ghost floated over the carnage and sadly so, as Yugoslavia was the one creation of Versailles based on pluralism. Yugoslavia held out the possibility of solving the intractable historical problems of Bosnia and Macedonia. The question of a settlement in the fall of 1993 revolved around how big a slice of Bosnia would be turned over to the Bosnian Serbs (at the time they controlled 70 percent of Bosnia territory and appeared the victors) and what would be the configuration of the reduced Bosnian state? Reducing the size of the Muslim state or creating some kind of hybrid confederation seemed the only solution, other than allowing the Bosnian Serbs and Croats to divide all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the West, in an about face, intervening massively for a long period of time.101 But maintaining the Bosnian republic also posed difficulties since a truncated Bosnia, economically devastated and in many parts physically destroyed, would be an economic ward of the West for many years, if not permanently.
and Herzegovina, U.S. support for the Bosnian cause, and the question of where Muslims would go if there was no Bosnian state mitigated against that solution. The ethnic-nationalist exclusive goals of the Serbs and Croats left little room for any minority within their borders, and if the minorities remained they would have either no citizenship or second-class status reminiscent of Ukrainians, Germans, and Jews in inter-war Poland or Slovaks and Germans in inter-war Czechoslovakia.

Negotiated settlement also carried the risk of accelerating ethnic cleansing, since the Bosnian Serbs and the Croats might have dumped all remaining Muslims in former UN safe-havens turned ghettos or into a “new truncated Bosnia.” Such a forced population transfer (ethnic cleansing) would replicate what occurred after the Germans defeated Poland early in World War II, annexed much Polish territory, and forced the Polish population into an administrative reservation called the Government-General. The large UN protected enclave in the Bihać area of Northwestern Bosnia and a number of remaining small enclaves that survived might well have ended up under Croatian and Serbian control. These populations were imperiled.

The West continued to procrastinate, trapped on the horns of a dilemma. To abandon Bosnia was unacceptable for a host of moral and pragmatic reasons, but intervention was unacceptable for a host of moral and pragmatic reasons. Without an agreed upon course of action, the prudent solution for the U.S., the UN, and NATO was to duck the question of justice and moral responsibility, stop their incessant hand-wringing, and encourage all parties to make further concessions and avoid a pointless, wider war. In reality this meant pressuring the Bosnian Muslims into accepting a deal that gave most of Bosnia to the Serbs and Croats. To prevent the tragedy from becoming a farce, the West had to concede what the Serbs had known all along: U.S., UN, and NATO military threats were just that—threats. No intervention, other than air strikes, would occur for a long list of reasons.

The role of NATO and the UN in the post-cold war era was confused. Not one Western leader would undertake the difficult job of organizing a coalition for intervention because the political risks seemingly outweighed the benefits. The U.S. doubted that the war in the former Yugoslavia threatened U.S. interests. Public support in the U.S. and in Western Europe was opposed to intervention. President Clinton, plagued with difficulties at home, would not likely commit the country to an unpopular intervention with an election less than two years away. The leaders of other NATO countries also feared political retaliation at the polls. The fear of casualties was a compelling reason—no one in Washington or in the country would soon forget the picture taken by Paul Watson of the Toronto Star of a dead, half naked, American ranger, dragged through the streets of Mogadishu by a jubilant mob. The enormous cost projections of any intervention were frightening, and the perception that the U.S. and Western economies were fragile but healing was also a strong, inhibiting factor. Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović’s dream of a Muslim homeland crumbled as the West avoided further intervention by forcing an agreement on a confederation of three “unified” republics. A jubilant Bosnian Serb delegate...
attending the negotiations aboard the HMS *Invincible*, a British aircraft carrier, commented: “The Turks (the word used by Serbs to describe Bosnian Muslims and thus twist history in their favor) are going to be like walnuts in a Serbo-Croat nutcracker.”

In January 1994 the Serbs, now confident that the West was a paper tiger, moved to exploit their seeming military advantage. Milošević and Tuđman agreed to normalize relations, and Tuđman pledged to come to the aid of Bosnian Croats. On February 5, a busy Saturday in Sarajevo’s central market, Serb mortar men brazenly and accurately lobbed one shell. As a result, 69 people were killed, and once again a desensitized world was shocked. The U.S. and France, in an effort to break the Bosnian Serb grip on Sarajevo, pushed NATO to promise airstrikes if Bosnian Serb heavy artillery and tanks were not withdrawn from within 20 kilometers of the city—Sarajevo gained a respite. Of even greater future importance, although little recognized at the time, was the U.S. brokered federation between the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Croats.

The Serbs, however, continued to increase their land holdings, and in April attacked the UN safe haven of Goražde. NATO airstrikes failed to deter the Bosnian Serbs, but the siege of Goražde marked a turning point in the long war. The international community remained in disarray; U.S.-British relations were strained as the Bosnian Serbs were unilaterally targeted. Karadžić’s Pyrrhic victory cost the Bosnian Serbs the support of the Russians and, more importantly, permanently altered relations with Milošević and the Serbs.

By July 1994 Sarajevo had seen four months of peace and a plentiful supply of cheap food under the cease-fire agreement. The so called Contact Group, comprised of the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, and Russia put forth a new peace plan that offered a territorial division of 51 percent to the Muslim-Croat federation and 49 percent to the Bosnian Serbs—a Republic of Srpska. Muslim safe havens would be administered by the UN. The Bosnian government agreed, as did the Croats, but the offer was refused by the Bosnian Serbs—all parties assumed that fighting would likely erupt in the fall in an effort to reshape borders and obtain leverage in negotiations. Limited fighting did flare up in and around Sarajevo and Bihać; however, no major military operations occurred, and unsuccessful negotiations continued throughout the winter of 1994-1995 as the contenders used the lull in fighting to build up their forces. The Bosnian government and the Serbs began the New Year with greatly strengthened armies.

Bosnia Serb and Croatian Serb forces were, in fact, over extended and drastically short of supplies. Leaders of these two armies met in February and attempted to formulate a defensive strategy if, as expected, the Croats launched a spring offensive. Though Milošević resupplied and reinforced the Croatian Serbs in Eastern Slavonia, it was now most unlikely that Serbia would go to war for Serbs across its borders in Croatia or Bosnia. Years of sanctions and diplomatic isolation coupled with the threat of war with NATO dampened Milošević’s commitment to a greater Serbia. In May 1995, the reinvigorated Croatian army, backed by the West, recaptured 200 square miles of Eastern Slavonia. Retired U.S. generals contributed mightily to Croat military strategy.

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Slavonia. Retired U.S. generals contributed mightily to Croat military strategy. The Bosnia Serbs now broke the ceasefire agreement and began to shell Sarajevo. The UN demanded the Bosnian Serbs adhere to the agreement not to use heavy weapons or face airstrikes. The Bosnian Serbs refused, but this time NATO warplanes went beyond “pinpricks” and struck a wide variety of targets—Operation Deliberate Force. In an act of sheer bravado, the over-extended Bosnian Serbs escalated the conflict by attacking five of the six UN protected safe havens. In July, Bosnian Serb aggressiveness seemingly paid dividends as Žepa and Srebrenica were overrun. Days after these safe havens fell, reports began to surface that atrocities were being routinely committed—especially in Srebrenica. Witnesses claimed that Mladić himself encouraged and directed the slaughter. Ethnic cleansing and rape again dominated the pages of Western newspapers and magazines. If the Bosnian Serbs were successful in winning the battle for Bihać in Northwestern Bosnia, they would have achieved their goal of creating a greater Serbia. Karadžić, acutely aware of how over-extended the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs were, appealed to Milošević to fulfill his earlier pledge to defend the Republic Srpska Krajina. Milošević talked about rescuing his Serbian allies, but the threat of a full-scale war with a rearmed Croatia, continued sanctions, and the fear of losing power were powerful checks on his previous commitments. Bosnian Serb atrocities in Žepa and Srebrenica, where as many as eight thousand Muslim men were murdered, hardened the U.S.’s resolve to bring about a negotiated settlement that allowed Milošević to step forward as a man of peace.

In early August, the Croatian army surged forward into occupied areas of the Krajina, and in three days sent the Croatian Serb army reeling. Belgrade did nothing. Croat soldiers raped, looted, and burned. Thousands of Serbs joined the thousands who had fled on foot and in long columns of tractors for the borders of Serbian or Bosnian Serb held territory. Many of the new refugees cursed Milošević’s betrayal of the Serbian cause, aware that power had shifted away from the Serbs to the Croats and the Muslims. Karadžić immediately recognized that without Serbian help the Croats would be militarily successfully against his forces as well. At this juncture NATO airstrikes coupled with ongoing Croatian and Bosnian Muslim military victories created an opportunity to begin the peace process in the former Yugoslavia. The U.S. and its European allies needed to reach a fundamental agreement on policy and move rapidly to take advantage of the strategic shift in order to avoid a wider war. On August 28, 1995, the Bosnian Serbs once again fired a mortar shell near the market in Sarajevo—this time the lone shell killed 37 people. NATO responded massively on August 30, and bombed many targets throughout Bosnia. The Bosnian Serbs at a meeting in Belgrade asked Milošević to represent them in any negotiations. The central question in the war was always territory, and any eventual settlement necessitated recognition of the age-old concept uti possidetis, that is, the war map as it is.
features

rearranged at the expense of the Bosnian Serbs and now much more resembling the Contact Group map of 1994, would be the basis of the coming peace.

The peace talks in Geneva that had hammered out basic principles blossomed into a broader framework of agreement in New York in late September. By October 5, 1995, President Clinton was able to announce a cease-fire that would commence in five days and was to last for sixty days. During those sixty days, on December 14, 1995—the five-year bloody war was at least temporarily at an end.

One of the most significant questions concerning the probable outcome of the peace accords was whether ethnic cleansing had stirred up hatreds that would not subside. Would local groups and village militias simply take matters into their own hands? Peacemakers and the ethnic groups in Bosnia moved forward in this confederated state not knowing if they would resolve ethnic difficulties or simply function as separate states—a fragile peace imposed by UN peacekeepers. The post World War II experience suggests that slaughter followed by accommodation is possible. Western Europe, the United States, and Japan have with difficulty and great effort put the bitter and tragic experiences of World War II behind them and agreed to strive for global cooperation; although, the Yugoslav crisis is evidence that cooperation between allies is not always forthcoming when complicated issues arise.

Did the West’s initial timidity toward aggression set in motion patterns to be followed in other conflicts in the region, or was the West simply struggling to cope with a new kind of warfare? Mary Kaldor, in an article in The Progressive, entitled “Sarajevo’s Reproach,” concluded that the conflict was a “bizarre war, quite unlike earlier wars, definitely a twenty-first century phenomenon. It is characterized by a strange mixture of parochialism and cosmopolitanism, nationalism and transnationalism, exclusiveness and humanitarianism.” Was the Yugoslav war fin de siècle madness or a case study in territorial aggrandizement? While the conflict had many bizarre and surreal elements, past conflicts, Yugoslavia during World War II, the siege of Leningrad, and the horrific Battle of Stalingrad also contained these elements.

A hoped-for scenario was that an independent Bosnia would obtain diplomatic

leaders of the three warring factions negotiated peace—proximity talks—while sequestered in the solitude of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. On the table in Dayton were the perennial questions: “Who gets what, why, when, and where?” Isolated and under intense U.S. pressure, each party recognized that compromise and a tentative peace agreement was the only alternative to the inherent risks of a wider war. The three Balkan leaders (Milošević, Tuđman, and Izetbegović) agreed to a coalition government in Bosnia and to a series of complicated procedures designed to make the power-sharing arrangement work. As difficult as those questions were, Clinton’s task of selling the American public on committing 20,000 U.S. troops to support a jerry-built fragile peace was of equal challenge. Nevertheless, Clinton obtained congressional approval to deploy U.S. troops, and peace accords were signed in Paris on December 14, 1995—the five-year bloody war was at least temporarily at an end.
recognition, legal arms shipments, international loans, and large amounts of foreign aid. If Bosnia survived it was thought that Turkey, Iran, Malaysia, and perhaps a recovering Iraq would openly, if only partially, come to aid Bosnia economically since these countries saw Bosnia as a victim of deep-seated disdain on the part of the West to all things Muslim. Many in Sarajevo voiced the opinion that if they were Christians instead of Muslims the West would not have tolerated for so long the Serbian siege of Sarajevo. Initiatives from the more fundamentalist Muslims to the East, however, have been mitigated by the confederated nature of the Bosnian state and by events throughout the Middle East since 9/11. Russia and Greece continue to back Serbia, and the Russians support Serbia’s position on Kosovo.

The Legacy of Yugoslavia

The Dayton Accords did not end conflict in the region. The former Yugoslavia’s problems moved further east and south. Historically, the creation of the Yugoslav state reined in two of the central ethnic problems in the Balkans: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Greece of late has tremendous problems of its own, but at the time some 94 percent of Greek citizens objected strongly to the NATO bombing missions. Greece is the number one foreign investor in Serbia. Italy and Germany supply Croatia—arms, money, and tourists have poured into the country. Like Israel in the Middle East, the Bosnian state poses the threat of regional difficulty, perhaps a regional flash point, for years to come.

But what was the price for over five years of warfare? Massacres, tens of thousands of rapes, a huge number of deaths, and nearly three million refugees are only parts of the cost. The damaged infrastructure and economic interruption in the region runs in the hundreds of millions and will take decades to right. This destruction and cost was compounded by the continuing war in Kosovo, but it did not spread north in a Serbian effort to push out the Hungarian minority in the Vojvodina. Since the Dayton Accords in 1995, elections have been open and fair, displaced persons have returned to their homes and property has been restored. A single, integrated armed forces has sent small contingents to Iraq and Afghanistan, and sports and the arts are again flourishing. Bosnia and Herzegovina has applied for European Union membership. However, UN peacekeeping troops now in much smaller numbers still monitor the peace. When they might leave is anybody’s guess. An analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency stated, “The flames had been damped down and covered over, but beneath the surface seismic faults and tensions remained.” Though still-born, the idea of a pluralistic South Slav state that transcended ethnicity and promised to fulfill the political
and economic aspirations of the people of the region was a good one.

Those seismic faults exist in many other parts of Central and Eastern Europe as well as many other parts of the world. While the Yugoslav experience contains many features unique to a particular time, similar conflicts have occurred in many other parts of Europe rift by nationalist ambitions. Inhabitants often found themselves in a midst of conflict where neighbor murdered neighbor. If those who fled the spreading terror failed to reach ethnic safe areas, they risked being beaten, robbed, raped, and more often brutally killed. Each group dehumanizes the other and blames the other for causing the chaos and murder. Each group imagines the world would be better without “those people.” Ethnic cleansing is often looked at by the participants as a form of progress and sometimes as the only course open to save them. Within this framework, leaders, such as Hitler, Stalin, Milošević, and Tuđman, articulate that “problems could be finally solved by utopian revolutions.”

They fan the flames of hatred in the name of a progressive abstract ideology. Great powers often exacerbate ethnic conflict and further complicate the problem through less than well-thought-out policies that are often self-serving. Woodrow Wilson and his commitment to self-determination based on ethnicity is the prime example of a poorly conceived policy. But, more importantly, the ideas underlying European ethnic cleansing are found inside European history, politics, philosophy, and literature.  

Notes


4 Snyder, p. xv.

5 In this article Bloodlands refers to all of Central and Eastern Europe as well as Western Turkey.


7 See Benjamin Lieberman, Terrible Fate and review of same by Hal Elliott Wert in The Journal of

8 See Snyder, Bloodlands.

9 Mazower, Dark Continent, pp. ix-x.


14 Kohn, p. 457.


22 May, p. 211.

23 Palmer, pp. 80-81


28 Dragnich, p. 34, and Pfaff, “Invitation to War,” p. 103.

29 Palmer, p. 173.


31 Ibid., p. 171.


35 Palmer, p. 171.


37 Geertz, p. 30.


39 Ibid., p. 195.


42 Ibid., p. 322.


44 Ibid., p. 661.

45 Palmer, p. 165.

46 Ibid., pp. 190-191.


50 Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (eds.), translated from the French, Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000. Habits of the heart is a phrase coined by Alexis de Tocqueville to describe “notions, opinions and ideas” that “shape mental habits” and the “sum of moral and intellectual dispositions” of people in society.

52 For a detailed list of Serb wartime losses and of the June events in the *Skupština*, see Rothschild, p. 206. The slur shouted by the Croatian deputy was kindly furnished by Professor Svetozar Stojanović formerly of the University of Belgrade and the University of Kansas. Stojanović was the special advisor to Dobrica Ćosić, winner of the Noble prize for literature, who was removed from power by Slobodan Milošević. For a slightly different version of these events see Glenny, *The Balkans*, pp. 409-412.


55 Ibid., pp. 69-70 and p. 193.

56 Palmer, p. 193.

57 For suppression of the secret ballot, see Rothschild, pp. 240-241 and Dragnich, p. 72.


59 Palmer, pp 207-227.


61 Dragnich claims that between 500,000 and 700,000 Serbs were killed as were 50,000 Jews and 20,000 Gypsies. See Dragnich, p. 103.


65 Dragnich, pp. 113-114.


69 Milazzo, p. 12.


72 Events are well covered in Dedijer, pp. 325-395. The Stalinist purge is well captured in a Yugoslav film entitled *When Father was Away on Business* directed by Emir Kusturica.

73 See Djilas and Dedijer.


92 Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 147-180


99 Bell-Fialkoff, pp. 110-111.


101 Additional proof that Tuđman and Milošević wished to split Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia turned up on a map drawn by Tuđman on a menu card while in London to participate in V-E celebrations in May 1995. See *USA Today*, August 8, 1995, p. 6A.


108 Silber and Little, p. 303.

109 See Clark, p. 105; Silber and Little, p. 309; and Glenny, The Balkans, p. 647.

110 See Silber and Little, pp. 319-323.


113 Silber and Little, p. 352.


117 Silber and Little, p. 356.

118 Ibid., p. 356.

119 Ibid., p. 345.


130 Dyson, pp. 26-27.