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CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY AND IDENTITY

Overcoming the Past

Overcoming the past implies several premises. Firstly, the truth should be sought, either by a society itself or by international circles. The Serbian society as a whole does not search for the truth, for Serbs generally perceive themselves as the biggest victims, while the crimes are interpreted as justified as they were committed in their name. Secondly, there should be a strong political will. Unfortunately, supporters of the current set off by Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić were in the minority, and the current itself was defeated or marginalized after his murder. Vojislav Koštunica upheld the continuity of the old structures not only by reinstating "old" cadres but also by restoring their functioning. Thirdly, political elites should be willing to face the past, in other words, this premise depends on the distribution of power in a society. The actual state of affairs in Serbia is probably best illustrated by the panel held at the Belgrade Law School and initially announced as "The Liberation of Srebrenica." The very title crucially determines the Serbian national strategy as it reflects territorial aspirations that have not been given up. Fourthly, the very character of changes should be defined, in other words, definition of October 5, 2000 must be a starting point for understanding Serbia after Milosević's ouster.

Weighted down by recent past and a profound social crisis, Serbia is grappling with open and salient problems, notably those of its self-definition and in those terms of organization of collective memory. In that process the state and national elites have the monopoly. Inadequate policy of interpretation made room for all

kinds of manipulations, aimed at an alleged protection of identity of the Serbian people. Serbian elite is still burdened by a political option ("liberation and unification of all Serbs"), maintained by variants of ultra nationalism ranging from Yugoslovenism (one of the forms of the Serbian nationalism), to the far right (Fascist and Nazi) forms.

In its processing of the past the Serb elite shuns the recent historic balance. The fact is that the national project is defeated and ended in crime. Instead of making the right balance, Serbian elite focused and prioritized the trial of Slobodan Milosević in The Hague and Bosnian aggression and genocide charges¹ in order to foil incrimination of its whole project and responsibility of the state of Serbia for starting the war. In parallel it has internally focused its energy on keeping Montenegro within the framework of the state union for the sake of preservation of a nucleus from which the new Yugoslavia (United Serbian Lands) could evolve. Dobrica Ćosić, who in early 70's advocated "ethnic states" in the New Year issue of Belgrade Weekly *N/VV*, urged "restoration and a planned organization of the Yugoslav cultural market and rooting out of the pre-dominant ignorance and pervasive ideological animosities"².

Processing of the past is additionally complicated because of different regional perceptions of disintegration of Yugoslavia. Serbian elite endeavours to relativize responsibility of Serbia by insistence on responsibility of the international community for the break-up of Yugoslavia (Vatican, Germany, Austria, the US) and secessionist republics (Slovenia and Croatia). Because of its selective amnesia and obstruction of the final stages of the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia, Serbia is still a main hurdle on the road of a genuine reintegration of the region on a new basis.

Disintegration of Yugoslavia, collapse of communism and anti-Communism of the West and East in equal measure has made

room for the new interpretation of memory. At the same time, at play is glorification of Draža Mihajlović as an anti-Fascist leader, and of other far-right Serbian leaders, notably, Dimitrije Ljotić and Milan Nedić. Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić are portrayed as their successors. Under the guise of anti-Communism, total sidelining of anti-Fascist movement was effected. That obviously led to the revision of the entire perception of victims and executioners. The foregoing logically leads to the conclusion that communist and not Serbian nationalists were responsible for crimes notably those committed in recent past.³

To attain that goal, the state policy in the post-October 5, 2000 period through new school textbooks and especially through activities of the Serbian Orthodox Church tried to create a new model and consequently effect the makeover of the Serb nationalism and its leaders, a Quinsling Nedić and a Fascist Ljotić. Such reappraisal of nationalism helped establish the new set of values in which Željko Ražnatović Arkan and Milorad Ulemek Legija are treated as desirable social models, and Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić as the cult heroic figures. Historian Todor Kuljić says: "this invented past should be challenged in its initial phase", for "as the time elapses and as the invented past is persistently reiterated, its fictitious character is weakening and consequently it is more easily accepted as an authentic one."⁴

Such attempt at the state-orchestrated re-interpretation of the past, however, are countered by part of the elite, in the shape of various NGOs, political alternative (Civic Alliance of Serbia, Liberal Democratic Party and Social Democratic Union), as well as some prominent public figures, historians and media. In addition, The Hague trial of Slobodan Milošević is convincingly revealing the fact that implementation of the project of "liberation and unification of all Serbs" inevitably ended in crime. That fact in turn impacts the conduct of elites in Serbia, for they try, through "damage control",

to rationalize some consequences of that failed project which inevitably reflects the Serbian society.⁵ Through relativization of crimes, the acknowledgment process is reduced to apportionment of the blame to all sides in the conflict or equalization of their responsibility. Such rationalization of committed crimes as well as the position of the most responsible prime movers regarding victims at this early stage indicates that memory of the victims in the culture of memory of Serbian people will be very selective and limited, because this process is accompanied by maintaining and cherishing of the victimhood of the Serbian people.

In a persistent struggle for interpretation of the past since the beginning of the war, particularly since 5 October 2000, the leading elites in Serbia are trying to curb the "more radical interpretation" which recognizes The Hague Tribunal and takes a clear-cut stance on the aggression of Belgrade⁶ and genocide in Bosnia and Hercegovina in particular. In those terms the thesis of the "Third Way" was launched. That middle ground approach tries to strike the balance between those who favour the work of The Hague Tribunal and those who challenge it. This middle ground approach, which is basically focused on relativization of crimes enjoys the state support, is promoted through the Victimological Society of Serbia chaired by Vesna Nikolić Ristanović.

She pleads the thesis that dealing with the past is a process in which all social groups, be they victims or other war participants, should take an active part in this process regardless of their national, political and religious orientation. According to Vesna Ristanović, that project rallies about 20 NGOs and individuals who are studying Serbia's past. They founded the Association which is dealing with the truth and reconciliation through the idea of the "Third Way". Ristanović, inter alia, stated that "in Serbia most visible are stances against and for the ICTY", but that "in between there are less visible tracks which should be embarked upon."

Vesna Ristanović also noted that the Association for the Truth and Reconciliation, through the idea of "The Third Way", narrowing a wide gap between the two extreme positions. The goal of the Association is to facilitate joint, gradual work of social groups, victims of war, refugees, former camp inmates, youngsters and all those who embrace that idea, without inflicting additional wounds to an already traumatized society.⁷

In confrontation between the two, allegedly equally radical approaches (approach of part of NGO sector on the one hand, and that of the Serbian Radical Party and other right wing groups like *Justin Popović*, *Dveri*, *Svetozar Miletić*, *Nacionalni stroj*, and numerous refugee organizations on the other hand) "the Third Way" fits into the state policy, that is in line with Koštunica-led government. After a year-long break, under pressure of the international community, Vojislav Koštunica had to resume his co-operation with the ICTY, which he re-defined as "voluntary surrender"⁸. In line with that formula he handed over to The Hague Tribunal 15 Hague indictees, whilst their departure was presented to the domestic public as a heroic decision and "sacrifice for national interests of Serbia and the Serbian people".⁹ Their "surrender" was conditioned by financial guarantees aimed at providing hefty subsistence allowance to indictees' families out of the republic's budget, and by financial support of tycoons also. That kind of "guarantee" was the result of the formation of the "informal coalition" between Democratic Party of Serbia and Socialist Party, for the minority government of Vojislav Koštunica could not survive without the support of the latter.

"The Third Way" is being offered and marketed through both, print and electronic media, as the most rational idea. The negative approach, an absolute denial of The Hague Tribunal is imputed to the Milosević era, though it is currently backed by part of political forces (Socialist Party of Serbia and Serbian Radical Party), and

by part of elite identified as so-called patriotic block. The other, positive stance is attributed to Western governments and their embassies in Belgrade, international organizations, and some domestic protagonists associated with some NGOs. Such a stance is perceived as a radical one, for it espouses the thesis of an absolute guilt of Milosević and the Serbian side for the initiation and waging of the war, aggression against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovian, as well as for planning and carrying-out of genocide in Srebrenica, for planned mass ethnic cleansing and mass crimes in Kosovo...¹⁰

The third position, "The Third Way", qualified by nationalists as a pragmatic, is the response to the two previous extreme positions and represents "the only possible way for the least detrimental settlement of The Hague problem and preservation of internal stability"¹¹. Part of that strategy is Koštunica's policy regarding co-operation with The Hague Tribunal through 'voluntary surrender'. Nationalists, however, think that said strategy was upset by the "Srebrenica anniversary", for that "unfortunate story was terribly manipulated and used as the pretext to pile both external and internal pressure on Serbia and Serbs in general". The *Declaration on Srebrenica*, submitted to the Serbian Parliament by 8 NGOs, demanded the acceptance of the responsibility by Serbia for Srebrenica massacre. Serbian elites, however, interpreted the Declaration as a pressure on Serbia to "accept its responsibility for Srebrenica...to accept the Western strategy of turning Srebrenica into a symbol and by airing the Škorpioni related-film shocking domestic public and making it experience a strong catharsis."¹² Deft manipulation of such a schematic approach to co-operation with The Hague Tribunal (for "The Third Way" is identical to the first one, though under pressure of evidence it tries to implement "damage control"), serves to indicate an alleged threat of the second stance, "a negative one...which paves the way for a political

strengthening of extreme, isolationist."¹³ In order to minimize the importance of NGO sector and notably of "those unfortunate women"¹⁴ which someone is constantly trying to impose as objective and indefatigable fighters for truth", the thesis that "professional searchers for 'truth' should be given space equal to their genuine strength in the society, that is, minimal space" is being launched. For that is the condition for ending the story about The Hague Tribunal, and moving forward."¹⁵

Along with the promotion of "The Third Way" a campaign against NGOs, especially those dealing with the recent past is being undertaken. Those NGOs are vilified as "promoters of a new, genuinely new and vulgar - interpretative politicking, in which they have freely been engaged at the Serbian Public scene during the past decade." Those NGOs are also criticized for their "arrogance and extremism, their strategy of doctoring and their ideology of anti-Serbian nationalism and racism as their ideological base." It is said that those NGOs have "deserved by their actions the reputation of malignant growth on an already devastated social tissue of Serbia". It is thought that activities of those NGOs could be curbed by their outright ban, that is, through "regulation of that delicate area of civic education, which would clearly define all of its more important aspects (sources of funding, the scope of activities, and criminal sanctions for exceeding scope of activities...)"¹⁶. At the same time, it is requested that "cognitive appraisal of recent past of South Slavic peoples should be entrusted to socially fit and authorized bodies only - to the scientific institutions". It is highlighted that this is one of the most important state-national interests of a still territorially unconsolidated country, its totally devastated society and lethally stigmatized people."¹⁷

Resistance to NGOs is placed into an anti-globalisation context, which both the right- and left-wing factions of the Serbian elite tend to present as an "anti-imperialist idea, for it confronts hegemonis-

tic globalisation which rests on a blind lining with the US foreign policy"¹⁸. NGOs are perceived as "punching fist" of the US imperialism in countries that are in transition. All the leading intellectuals and prime advocates of Serbian nationalism share such an approach, for example: Dobrica Ćosić (the greatest living Serbian Writer and Academician), Dr Ljubomir Tadić, (Philosopher and Academician), Dr. Kosta Čavoški (Professor and Academician), Mihajlo Marković (Philosopher and Academician), Smilja Avramov (Professor of International Law), as well as numerous writers and other prominent public figures. Among the younger generation the most active are: Slobodan Antonić (Professor, Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy), Đorđe Vukadinović (Editor-in-Chief of *Nova srpska politička misao*, which aspires to be both, philosophical and theoretical publication), Mirjana Vasović (Professor, Belgrade Political Sciences Faculty), Mirjana Stefanovska (Professor, Belgrade Law Faculty), Slavenko Terzić (Historian), Aleksandar Tijanić (Director, Radio Television of Serbia), Ljiljana Smajlović (Editor-in-Chief, Belgrade daily *Politika*), Nenad Lj. Stefanović (Editor-in-Chief, Informative Program, Radio Television of Serbia), Dragoljub Žarković (Director and Editor-in-Chief, Belgrade weekly *Vreme*), Slobodan Reljić (Editor-in-Chief, Belgrade weekly NIN), Bojana Lekić (Director and Editor-in-Chief of *BK TV*), and a host of others.

Any attempt towards respecting the reality is perceived by Serbian nationalists as "imposition of indifference towards everything that surrounds them", deeming the latter as the greatest danger to Serbs. An attempt to "make Serbs anational, to make them first undergo a kind of catharsis, and then gradually kill their national identity", is perceived by Serbian nationalists as "something that may be characterized as an associated criminal venture".¹⁹

Resistance to accepting responsibility, where the argument that Serbs are being pushed into an anational position is used, obviously indicates that crime is the only firm mainstay of that identity.

In those terms even the EU membership and membership in other Euro-Atlantic organizations is being viewed as the process of denationalization of Serbs. Dobrica Ćosić says that "Serbia has not chosen the road its taking... it was forced to enter into 'transition; and 'Euro-Atlantic integrations', and that 'the Brussels commissars who have bombed us, have then placed us into a state limbo in which the people of Serbia and Montenegro are suffering." Ćosić maintains that "we are being threatened by new 'integrating' associations aiming at breaking up Republika Srpska and compelling Serbs to live in the camp of 'multiethnic Kosovo' alongside their murderers".²⁰

Attitude towards the Crime

Serbian elite, as well as the Serbian state, is aware that war crimes, many of which have already been proven in The Hague Tribunal, cannot be denied. Thus, for them the main concern is how to avoid any implication of involvement of the state of Serbia in those crimes, in other words to avoid the accusation that Serbia was the main generator of those crimes in the pursuit of its goal of "liberation and unification" of Serbs into one state. Svetozar Stojanović says that "many are trying to reduce everything to war crimes in total disregard of the previous history". His thesis is that "no one can responsibly talk about responsibility for the moves made during the break-up of Yugoslavia, not even about war crimes, without previously establishing initial responsibility for the break-up of an internationally recognized state."²¹ Hence the constructions aiming at encompassing a broad historical context in order to prove that all this was continuation of WW2 and those crimes were retaliation for genocide committed against Serbs during WW2. Thus Svetozar Stojanović says that "some interpreters of our tragic developments resolutely reject to take into account our

past, notably the more recent, WW2 related one. They try to limit their scope of research and limitation to the period of Milosević's rule."²²

The defense of the project, both in The Hague and at the domestic scene starts with those very arguments which had initially used to mobilize Serbs and prepare them for retaliation. That was relatively easy in view of the campaign mounted on the eve of the war against Croats, Muslims and Albanians. The war propaganda was based on demonization and dehumanization of enemy, and in those terms Serbian elite invested its scientific authority into mobilization of the Serbian people by emphasizing the threat of WW2 enemies. Svetozar Stojanović also maintains that "the suppressed tends to come out violently". He goes on to note that no one should be surprised by the fact that "uncovering of mass graves and burial of human remains came to happen on the eve of the break-up of joint state", for "those mass graves represent a metaphor"²³. In the same context Svetozar Stojanović is questioning the issue of apology which cannot be collective and must be delivered by each individual and for his/her own acts... He totally rejects the idea of collective responsibility, but notes that if it was to be accepted then the time frame would have to be changed: "And why only since 1991 and not since Jasenovac".²⁴ Interestingly enough, the Serbian elite, on one hand, nationalizes past as distancing from Communism (promoting in those terms the Chetnik movement as an anti-Fascist one), while on the other hand, it resists alleged external pressures on Serbs to accept "nationalization of the responsibility for an apology."²⁵

Despite its negative appraisals of former Yugoslavia, the Serbian elite is yet to be emotionally separated from that framework for the settlement of the Serb issue. Hence many schizophrenic interpretations. On one hand, they maintain that Serbs made up the bulk of Partisan Movement, which under the leadership of Communists reconstructed the second Yugoslavia; while on the other hand, they keep stressing a long-standing anticommunist position of

Serbs. Such ambivalence additionally increases frustration and sense of loss, skillfully manipulated by the Serbian elite especially in contacts with representatives of the international community. In his explanation of the Serbian frustration Svetozar Stojanović mentions another element: "Serbs are additionally sensitive to and hurt because of the long-standing demonization of their nation by the world" hence "there is a danger that they might angrily conclude that under the guise of democracy and prevention of the Serbian dominance, attempts are being made to take away from them the remaining parts of their state." Insistence on such viewpoint of Serbs makes room "for an accelerated rise of the Serbian ultranationalists".²⁶ In communication with the world only Radical Party members are considered to be "ultranationalists," although the entire so-called democratic block is in coalition with them on various levels.

Response to the 10th Anniversary of Srebrenica Massacre

The 10th anniversary of Srebrenica massacre which symbolizes the evil and genocide committed against Bosniaks in Bosnia and Hercegovina was marked in 2005. At the same time, 10-year period is a period long enough for historical distance for comprehensive understanding and perception of the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina. After the ICTY handed down several verdicts for Srebrenica and after disclosure of a series of facts, it is no longer disputable that Serbia was the generator of wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In addition to that, no one contests any longer the fact that in engineering of those wars Serbia was fully backed by the Yugoslav People's Army, the Serb Interior Ministry, and secret services which played a key role in organization of war.

Srebrenica was a juncture at which the Western civilization changed the attitude and returned to its original, anti-Fascist val-

ues on which its foundations rests. The process of facing the facts was initiated in the whole world. Even the Republika Srpska government, under pressure, prepared the report on Srebrenica crime. Also, under international pressure it had to acknowledge the 7.800 victims and to apologize at least formally. Only Serbia remained outside of that process. The number of killed and missing is still denied. It is maintained that the victims were not civilians, but rather soldiers in disguise. The incumbent President of Serbia Boris Tadić was inaugurated on the day of the anniversary of Srebrenica crime (in 2004). He mentioned Srebrenica only briefly, saying that he had overlooked that date. Lack of shame and indignation over that crime and genuine acknowledgment thereof by the state authorities and the Serbian elite is much more ruinous fact for Serbia.

The US Congress adopted the resolution on the 10th anniversary of Srebrenica in which it was stated that the massacre in Srebrenica was genocide and that "the Bosnian Serbs in their criminal enterprise and implementation of policy of aggression and ethnic cleansing were backed by the SRY authorities. The last paragraph of resolution re-affirmed the US support to "Bosnia in its entirety". That paragraph is of a paramount importance as it averts the idea of division of Bosnia. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also passed the declaration indicating that "the road to catharsis would free us of collective guilt, but it is necessary to urgently apprehend and consequently convict commanders and perpetrators of crimes."

The 10th anniversary of Srebrenica was preceded by a series of pertinent panel discussions. Attention of public at large was mostly grabbed by the one held on May 17, 2005 at the Belgrade Law Faculty. That panel discussion was of a multifold importance because it revealed the state of institutions in Serbia, that is, their high level of both professional and moral devastation. This panel

discussion originally announced as "The 10th Anniversary of Liberation of Srebrenica", had to be renamed to "The Truth about Srebrenica" due to negative reaction of part of general public. Those in attendance went into a veritable delirium after hearing the following statement of Ljiljana Bulatović: "They arrive in Potočare - a false place; they have conquered part of Republika Srpska to bury the alleged victims of Ratko Mladić. In July, 1995 Srebrenica was liberated."²⁷ Ljiljana Bulatović went on to say: "I suggest that they transfer their graves and monuments to their territory, for it is a fertile soil which should be cultivated by population. They should not allow that their victims, much-revered as fighters, be so humiliated by being transferred from their territory to the one in which they are not welcome."²⁸ Due to negative reaction of several NGOs, this panel discussion attracted attention of international community. That forced officials to publicly respond to the notorious panel discussion, including the President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, who stated that "in every country citizens have the right to freely articulate their stands, even if it is contrary to the official policy of the country."²⁹

Eight NGOs submitted a proposal to Parliament of the Republic of Serbia to adopt *Declaration on Commitment of the State of Serbia to Take All Measures to Protect the Rights of Victims of War Crimes and Particularly of Srebrenica Genocide Victims*. That proposal, unfortunately, was rejected³⁰ with the intention of adopting a resolution or declaration condemning all crimes. Refusal of Democratic Party to vote for that proposal, however, prevented the adoption of such a resolution. Due to great attention of the international community to this matter and its expectations that Serbia shall ultimately be able to come up with a relevant statement, Council of Ministers issued a statement on the 10th anniversary of the war crime in Srebrenica. The statement read: "our condemnation of the Srebrenica crimes is not limited to condemnation of direct perpetrators thereof. We demand criminal responsibility of

all those who committed crimes both in Srebrenica and elsewhere, or organized and ordered them." Furthermore, it pointed out: "No crime should be forgotten, regardless of who are perpetrators and who are victims".³¹

Boris Tadić, President of Serbia, under pressure of both domestic and international public, went to Srebrenica. Before departure he stated that "crime is a demarcation line between civilization and anti-civilization", but also added: "My message is that criminals are individuals, for if we accuse one people of crimes, then all the peoples in the Balkans are criminals, in view of history of the Balkans countries".³²

The *Škorpioni* Case

Video recording of killing of Muslims in Srebrenica was shown at Milošević trial. According to The Hague prosecution team, men in fatigues, *Škorpioni*, were under the command of the Serbian Interior Ministry, with whose tacit consent they were relocated to Republika Srpska to commit the aforementioned crime. That video recording amply indicates ties between the Serbian Interior Ministry and Srebrenica massacre, and confirms presence of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its support to those fighters. The initial scene is the one in which Father Gavriilo, head of the monastery Privina Glava, around 8 o'clock in the morning is blessing the *Škorpioni* group with the following words: "Brothers, we are facing a revival of Turkish belligerence, they want Serbian sacred places. Please help your faithful army to prevail over our enemies."³³ After the airing of the video recording, Monk Gavriilo stated: "I don't repent for blessing members of the paramilitary unit *Škorpioni*, for I did not bless the crime they have committed." He went on to note: "I blessed our people and our flag to make it known that the Orthodox faith is equal to a Christ-loving, justice-

loving and calm-loving practice, and to prevent any confusion or veering towards the evil in their minds." In his mind "the crime was committed probably because they lost control or because they grew very embittered. But even the foregoing does not justify that crime. At the same time we should not forget even worse crimes committed against Serbian children."³⁴

The above mentioned video recording forced Serbian authorities to make a kind of admission of guilt, though they immediately denied any ties between the state of Serbia and that group. The Interior Secretary tried to explicate in a psychological vein the motives of Škorpioni to make such a video recording ("they were infantile", "they wanted to show off")³⁵. It is interesting to note that President of the *Security Committee*, Milorad Mirčić, after the airing of that video demanded that "a probe should be launched into possible involvement of Nataša Kandić, Sonja Biserko and Sonja Liht in prostitution and human trafficking."³⁶

Responses of the leading Serbian personalities were devastatingly shameful. In view of the fact that it is difficult to deny the Srebrenica massacre, part of the Serbian elite acknowledged the crime, but also noted that "attempts to establish links between Serbia and that crime are - sheer violence." Milorad Vučelić, an official of the Socialist Party of Serbia, stated that "this is an attempt to implicate us and impose guilt on us, because of the 10th anniversary of Srebrenica, start-up of negotiations on the status of Kosovo, and an atmosphere in preparation of possible arrest of Mladić. That is why someone kept hiding that crime until now."³⁷ In order to deny any links between the state of Serbia and the Srebrenica crime, the Serbian media interviewed different members of *Škorpioni*. They all maintained that "*Škorpioni* were under the command of the 11th Corps of Republika Srpska Krajina Army, first commanded by Bogdan Sladojević, and then by General Dušan Lončar".³⁸ Milovan Drecun, Military Commentator, however, asserted that "someone

is intentionally trying to implicate Serbs for the genocide... the goal of that video recording was to exert pressure on the Serbian public to accept the idea that Republika Srpska was a genocidal creation, and as such should disappear."³⁹

Tomislav Nikolić, the Serbian Radical Party, said that "One-sided approach to Srebrenica is unacceptable for my party. It hurts me to see how most people in Serbia are speaking about crimes committed by Serbs, and no one speaks about crimes committed by Muslims. If any Serb in Republika Srpska committed any crime, is that supposed to be the sin of Serbia?"⁴⁰ Dragoljub Mićunović of the Democratic Party stated that "the state of Serbia and its people are not criminals, but that the regime was of a criminal character."⁴¹ After a meeting with Carla del Ponte, Vojislav Koštunica stated: "Several suspects were arrested and detained. It is of utmost importance that our reaction was prompt reaction and that few war crime suspects were detained." He added that "shocking and terrible video recording showed shameless and brutal crime."⁴² Aleksandar Vučić, Secretary General of the Serbian Radical Party, stated that the main goal of the media campaign related to the Škorpioni case was: "media priming for the arrest of Ratko Mladić, and priming of public at large for the formal abolition of Republika Srpska"⁴³.

Dragoljub Kojčić, Democratic Party of Serbia, stressed that some factors in the international community are bent on hurting Serbs and that their goal is "to make the Serbian public feel the collective guilt, and consequently more easily swallow the intended punishment. That punishment shall be most certainly in the shape of destruction of the Dayton-time position of Republika Srpska, or backing of Bosnian charges against Serbia and Montenegro, and possibly preparing of the ground for independence of Kosovo and Metohija. Serbs are likely to face anew major sidelining to an inferior position."⁴⁴ Radoslav Stojanović, Representative of Serbia and

Montenegro before the International Court of Justice stated that "the video recording would not change anything regarding the court proceedings. It is just a short footage showing how only 6 persons were shot, while it is maintained that in Srebrenica 8,000 persons were killed. That short footage only illustrated the situation, but did not increase or lessen the degree of accusations. That recording has no impact on the Bosnian charges against Serbia and Montenegro and does not change the situation. It does not mean anything, or rather has no bearing, since the charges encompass Srebrenica developments in their entirety."⁴⁵ Prvoslav Davinić, the Defence Secretary of Serbia, stated with regret that "showing of that recording about *Skorpion* crimes, once again tainted the international image of Serbia", but added that "the entire case indicates the responsibility of individuals only, and not the responsibility of people and state."⁴⁶

Dragan Čavić, Republika Srpska official who recognized genocide in Srebrenica breathed a sigh of relief: "When I recently went public with acknowledgement of Srebrenica genocide, I met with condemnation of the official Serbia. Many cursed me, called me names, and labeled me as a traitor. But I did not care, for I, as all the other politicians in Serbia, had an opportunity to see that recording."⁴⁷ Zvonimir Trajković, one of the closest aides of S. Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, stated that the recording of the killing of Muslims in Trnovo was doctored. He thus commented the fact that mother recognized her son while he was taken to the shooting scene: "I don't believe those mothers. Had we shown the recording of a donkey, some mother could have also claimed that it was her son."⁴⁸

Airing of the *Skorpion* film in The Hague court room, just a few days after the Belgrade Law Faculty panel discussion, deeply shocked Serbian public, for the recording showed what everyone more or less knew. Responses of the Serbian politicians were

shameless, for as professor Olga Popović said: "Only those without any shame may be shocked today by a cold-blooded execution of innocent people and be suddenly ready to offer a historical admission as a result of a TV Belgrade airing of the video recording."⁴⁹

The Serbian authorities saw the film several months before its "premiere" in The Hague⁵⁰, hence no one should be surprised by swift, within 24 hours, locating of all members of the said group and their immediate arrest. It was in kind a sacrifice of the Serbian authorities in the face of enormous pressure by international community to make official, in one way or another, its responsibility for the Srebrenica massacre. International community, however, accepted "shock and surprise" of the Belgrade authorities, and immediately proclaimed that the Serbian people underwent catharsis. Such a hasty response by some international media (CNN, New York Times, etc.) impairs attempts in Serbia proper to tackle the process of facing with responsibility and seriousness.

Responses of the Serbian elite to take a stand on the Srebrenica crime were out of place. The Serbian Orthodox Church organized on July 12 commemorations in Bratunac for all Serbian victims in Republika Srpska. Belgrade large circulation tabloid *Večernje novosti* ran a *Special Supplement*, allegedly with names of all Serbs (3,287), who perished during the Bosnian war. The Muslim massacre of Serbs (49 victims) in Kravice, a retaliation for the previous killing of 70 Muslim civilians, was much hyped. That event happened in January, 1993 but was used as counterpoint to Srebrenica. Front-page headline of the supplement was: "They were killed by the same hand. Let them sleep their eternal sleep. Their graves are the symbol of a major historical tragedy and a lasting warning to our offsprings. They are sacrifices for the homeland, faith and freedom. Their sacrifices are built into the foundations of Republika Srpska."⁵¹

Separation between co-operation with The Hague Tribunal from establishment of the moral balance in the society, promoted a set of values which are in direct collusion with the consensus on the moral aspect and seriousness of mass crimes, and notably genocide, the consensus which had been attained on the occasion of establishment of The Hague Tribunal. International community is partly to be blamed for such stance on The Hague Tribunal because it was ambivalent regarding the ICTY in some stages of its work. Hence it comes as no surprise that Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić are still at large. In the early stages of the ICTY work the position that all three sides were equally responsible prevailed. Then it was consequently thought that such a position should have a bearing on the number of indictees in The Hague. Because of that Lord Owen, as a mediator in the Bosnian crisis once stated that twenty people from each side should be tried. With the passage of time that stance radically altered. Finally, in 2005 co-operation with The Hague Tribunal became the basic prerequisite for inclusion of the Balkans countries into European integrations.

International community missed an opportunity to work more seriously with the Serbian society in the post-October 5, 2000 period. That failure has serious consequences for the future of Serbia. Serbia is a country with a very small human potential capable of carrying out the serious process of facing the facts and especially putting in place moral positions regarding the recent past. The foregoing must be preceded by building of structures tasked with "moralization of memory"⁵². Serbia, unfortunately, lacks the political will to do that. Due to a flexible position of the international community and especially some EU members, the Serbian public made wrong deductions which helped extol cynicism and arrogance as the dominant judgement value. The foregoing was indicated by the survey conducted by the UNDP in 53 countries in the

world (sample of 17,000 people). According to that poll Serbs ranked the highest with respect to their self-respect at the time when The Hague Tribunal was laying bare crimes committed in the last decade of the 20th century. Dr. Jovan Marić, Psychiatrist, thus commented that international survey: "Self-respect may be a misnomer for the spite" and "my impression is that the most impressive result which the Serbs scored in the international self-respect competition may be politically tinted." He deems that "spite is the *middle name* for Serbia and Montenegro, and just a cursory browsing of the national historical textbook unveils that we have said three times no in the last 100 years - first to Austro-Hungary, then to Hitler and finally to - NATO. Such conduct is typical only of a very spiteful, crazy or extremely self-confident person or people."⁵³ Dr Marić goes on to note that "the Serbian unrealistic narcissism and deceitful self-confidence are one of the principal causes of our defeats." In his mind that practically means that "every time they said no to the big powers, Serbs were beaten up."⁵⁴

Such interpretation of the survey also indicates that the defeat of Serbia is exclusively seen as a sign of indomitable character of the Serbian people. Unfortunately such conviction is propped by other, prominent part of elite, notably by leading public figures and intellectuals Svetozar Stojanović and Dobrica Ćosić. Both of them are not only incapable of making a good balance of the last 20 years of Serbian history, but also tend to defend their participation in the project and the project itself.

In late 2005 Dobrica Ćosić summed up his views on the results of recent wars. His interview in the Belgrade weekly *NIN* was presented to the domestic public as the only truth despite irrefutable facts which were unearthed almost every day. Having in mind Dobrica Ćosić's impact on public opinion, current affairs policy and all national institutions relevant for the process of construction of memory, that interview is highly indicative. He maintained that "all

three warring sides committed war crimes, plunder and torching", while "the current quantitative assessments of war crimes are chauvinistic and false". Furthermore, he declined to take a stance on Milošević, because "now, when Milošević is behind the Schengen bars and is being tried by The Hague Tribunal, the political tribunal and not the one of truth and justice, I don't want to speak about policy of Slobodan Milošević". Such a stance not only constitutes an amnesty of Milosević, but also leaves open the issue of his responsibility for wars in the territory of former Yugoslavia. Čosić also floated his conviction that "Ustashi-masterminded expulsion of Serbs from Croatia and the Albanian ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, are Serbian defeats. But as we all know well, not all war defeats are victories for the other side. Outcomes of those wars are not final." Čosić qualified war in former Yugoslavia as "a civil war with the statehood-making goals and underlying strong, religious motives." Thus, according to Čosić, "Slovenians fought for an independent Slovenia, Croats for an ethnically clean Croatia, Serbs waged a war for Yugoslavia and their national and civil rights, Muslims fought for the Islamic Bosnia and Albanians for a Greater Albania..." Of course Čosić believes that foreign factors are largely to be blamed for the war, and accordingly asserts that "all late 20th century wars in the Balkans were the final stages of WW2 and beginning of the new war against Europe, in which, unfortunately, Europe also took part by its involvement in the 1999 NATO aggression against Serbia."⁵⁵

Defense of Milosević in Defense of the Project

Milošević's defense is also defined as defense of policy and project of "liberation and unification of all Serbs". In his first appearance at the court, Milošević espoused his stand that the ICTY was not a legitimate tribunal. Added to that, the starting points of the

defense are that Serbia is the victim of the New World Order and globalization, and that Serbia fought against the Islamic terrorism and fundamentalism (in the wake of 11th September that thesis was considerably strengthened). Starting from the aforementioned premises Milošević totally disregards the contents of the indictment, and rarely resorts to legal arguments in order to rebuff indictment counts. He concentrated on arguments used to start the war in the first place. That is best attested to by the selection of his witnesses - mostly academicians, and military and police officials. Through their testimonies it becomes obvious that the masterminds of the project - both individuals and institutions - are still adhering to it. It is becoming increasingly clear that Milošević was selected to execute or implement the project. His political capability commended him for being in charge of implementation of that project.

Milošević's defense explicitly demonstrates that the policy pursued during his regime resulted from consensus of all the relevant factors in the society. Thus, for example, Professor Smilja Avramov stated in The Hague Tribunal court room that "in such a difficult situation in the country it is obvious that Milošević was not the only decision-maker". She expressly maintained that the thesis of a sole decision-maker, notably Slobodan Milosević, was utterly wrong. "That is not the way things went. Half of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, university professors, we all rallied".⁵⁶ Hence it is only logical that witnesses in the court room reiterate the very same arguments they had advocated as members of the influential intellectual elite during the most brutal propaganda stage, that is, during the war-mongering and priming stage.

The first thesis espoused by witnesses in The Hague is that Yugoslavia was forcibly broken up by secession-minded republics of Croatia and Slovenia, with assistance of the international community, especially the US, Vatican, Germany and Austria. To put it

briefly, it was both "an uprising and war against Yugoslavia, the only internationally legally protected subject".⁵⁷

Decision of Slovenia and Croatia to claim independence raised the issue of borders, for according to Smilja Avramov, those borders were "the Communist borders, that is AVNOJ borders" hence unacceptable as such for Serbs. She stressed in the court that "abolition of revolutionary achievements is necessary". According to Avramov, those borders "lack legal legitimacy", for "they are not recognized by any international treaty". Principal argument of Smilja Avramov against AVNOJ borders was so-called draft of the 1915 London Agreement, which in preparation for the war 70 years later, was considered the basis for challenging the AVNOJ borders. That agreement was drafted with representatives of Italy, which were promised parts of Dalmatia, in exchange for their staying away from the war with Austro-Hungary. According to Čedomir Popov, "the second part of that agreement was a map offered to Serbia, as a compensation for the Croat losses in Dalmatia and the Serb losses in Macedonia"⁵⁸. According to that Agreement, borders of Serbia are more or less identical with the ones tailored by a Chetnik ideologue Moljević. That Agreement, however, has no legal validity, for it has never been made official or signed. The issue of internal borders of Yugoslavia, was raised in Serbia as early as 1971, during the Belgrade Law Faculty discussion on amendments to the then existing federal constitution. Even then the stand that in that case Serbs would demand unification of all Serbian ethnic territories was crystallized. That thesis is still expounded and adhered to.

Along with the denial of internal borders, the second important thesis in the defense of Milošević, is denial of the idea of Greater Serbia, that is, unification of all Serbs. Academicians, however, in their testimonies still insist on the right of the Serbian people to unite into a single state, and disregard the Badinter Commission

principles which had made that body opt for the qualification of "disintegration of Yugoslavia" and recognition and respect of the republican borders as the state ones. "Liberation and unification" was the only political concept on which Serbian elites built their policy during the two centuries of modern history of Serbia. That strategy was blindly adhered to even when it became clear that Milošević war venture ended in defeat. For example, Milorad Ekmečić, one of the masterminds of that strategy, at the Second Congress of Intellectuals in Belgrade in 1994, stated: "First, we must stress that unification of Serbs in an independent and democratic state remains our fixed goal."⁵⁹ After the Dayton Agreement, disputed by the Serbian elite, the main strategic guideline remained unification, but, by other, diplomatic means. After October 5, 2000 and ascension of Vojislav Koštunica as President of SRY, that tactic gained momentum. Namely, it quickly became clear that Vojislav Koštunica was only a personnel change in the top SRY leadership. Mihajlo Marković in *Srpska politička misao* (2000) says that "Serbian intellectuals and politicians need not wait for the failure of process of globalization or weakening thereof in order to start working on unification of the Serbian people". In The Hague court room Mihajlo Marković thus replied to Mr. Nice's question about the map ran by magazine *Epoha* of October 22, 1991: "That is not the plan of demarcation between Serbia and Croatia. It is in fact Yugoslavia which has seceded from Croatia. So the question is if Croatia had seceded where the border should have been then?"⁶⁰

Smilja Avramov, in her testimony, also tackled the issue of unification of all Serbs, notably as regarded to Croatian Serbs. She quoted a series of variants for Croatian Serbs in case of secession of Croatia, which, "were tabled in broad-based consultations with intellectuals and experts of all profiles". Her whole thesis may be reduced to the fact that "Croatia cannot take Serbs with itself to an

independent Croatia". She also maintained that "Serbian people spontaneously rose up against violence" and thus "paramilitary forces were formed. Part of people did not want to flee and surrender. So they set up first groups against violence which irritated population everywhere. Volunteers then started emerging in Serbia ...and they decided to place themselves under the command of Yugoslav Army".⁶¹

Testimonies of academicians help reconstruct Belgrade's strategy: adherence to an alleged defense of Yugoslavia, and instrumentalization of the UN forces in rounding off Serbian territories. In his testimony, Mihajlo Marković said that the plan to invite the UN peace-keepers aimed at "providng Serbian people with an opportunity to declare where they want to live". Marković then underscored that "according to that plan one part of territory would remain in Croatia, and the other in Yugoslavia". At the 1991 press conference, Mihajlo Marković thus commented The Hague conference: "Serbs claim a minimum ensuring their participation in negotiations, that is, creation of the Serbian krajinas in Croatia; that the people who want to remain in Yugoslavia should be given an opportunity to do so (a reference to Serbs in Croatia); and the Serbian Socialist Party could not accept that national minorities, notably Albanians and Hungarians be granted in the future community the same rights already exercised by the Serbian people in Croatia."⁶²

The third thesis on which Milošević built his defense was denial of *Memorandum* as a program document. His principal argument was that it was an incomplete paper, allegedly stolen and then leaked into the public; it is an analysis of economic, political and social situation in Yugoslavia. Marković maintained that this was the demand for "national equality of Yugoslav peoples", which, as it later emerged, presupposed amendments to the 1974 Constitution. According to the Academician's testimony the myth about

Greater Serbia was invented by big powers, for condemnation of Greater Serbia hegemonism allegedly practised by Serbs, would pave the way to advent of the New World Order and globalization in this part of Europe.⁶³ In those terms they see Serbia sa a nation-victim, that is state-victim, the hallmark which Serbia bore throughout its history. According to academicians witnesses the creation of one, unified Serbian state, that is, rallying of the entire Serbian people or its biggest part in a single state, is not a great-state idea, but a legitimate right of the Serbian people. It should, however, be stressed out that none of testimonies mentioned millions of people whose lives and belongings were sacrificed for the implementation of that idea, that is, that right of theirs.

The fourth thesis is that the 1974 Constitution was a time bomb for disintegration of Yugoslavia. In the ICTY Marković backed the *Memorandum* stance indicating that "nationalism and separatism rife in the social scene, were orientations ideologically put in place by the 1974 Constitution". According to Markovic, "because of that Constitution Yugoslavia was becoming an increasingly chaotic country." Academicians witnesses urged amendments to the constitution of Serbia aimed at equalization of Serbian state with other states/republics, for "under the 1974 Constitutions Serbia was stripped of its attributes of statehood". Even today, on the eve of Kosovo negotiations, that very group insists on settlement of Kosovo issue along the following lines: "more than autonomy, less than independence," just as it had been resolved under the 1974 Constitution.

The fifth thesis is related to the role of the Yugoslav People's Army in disintegration of Yugoslavia. Namely the defense tries to protect the YPA from responsibility for the crimes and its involvement in organization of "rebellion of Serbs". Arguments to that end are reduced to the following: there were crimes, but they were committed by paramilitary groups outside the state institutions control.

Such defense arguments in the court room, their presentation and domestic media interpretation thereof, indicate that such views are deeply ingrained in consciousness of broader public. The latter then by extension strengthens the conviction that Yugoslavia broke up because big powers wanted such an outcome. State institutions are actively involved in defense of the project and also in a bid to shun responsibility of the state of Serbia for crimes and genocide in former Yugoslavia. In view of the fact that such a perception is widely accepted by public at large, the process of facing the facts is made more difficult and pro-EU orientations are blocked.

Textbooks-related Polemics

As most significant for shaping young people's minds, textbooks are used as major instruments for interpreting historical events and developments, particularly those related to the recent past. After the ouster of the Milosević regime in 2000, some progress has been made in this domain, as textbooks have been adjusted to European trends. A tangible outcome of the Council of Europe and the Stability Pact's initiative was the attempt to have regional history interpreted objectively.

The project was launched during Đinđić government. The education reform was then successfully implemented in the face of very difficult political issues. One of the first moves of government of Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica was to reverse the course of public opinion and international organizations, Koštunica government was forced to re-embark upon the original reform course. In those terms the aforementioned textbooks were recommended by the Serbian Ministry of Education.

On the pages of the Belgrade weekly *NIN*, there was an interesting polemic related to recent publishing of four historical textbooks (the Ottoman Empire, Nations and States in South East Europe, the Balkans Wars, WW2), by Prosvetni Pregled and Thessaloniki-based Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation. Namely, that project was supported and funded by Council of Europe, Stability Pact and other international institutions, while those textbooks were backed and approved for use by the Serbian Ministry of Education and Sports. Those textbooks resulted from many years of work of 60 historians from 11 countries in South East Europe. Textbooks are based on historical documents believed to most accurately present the Balkans history. Editors of those textbooks also published collections of their historical sources. That publishing venture and notably free use of those textbooks was harshly criticized by Kosta Nikolić and Suzana Rajić, authors of the new history textbook for the 8th grade.

Dubravka Stojanović, who collaborated on the project, thus qualified the aforementioned criticism "the big problem is the fact that the aforementioned authors failed to follow development of international history after the 30's of the 20th century, and consequently ignored the existence of the key debate, the one on the historical truth." She added: "The idea of the one and only truth is the basis of every authoritarian opinion and totalitarian order, and hence the only scientific solution to that problem are multi-outlooks, that is the way in which, without any comments, views of interested parties are equally represented. Such an multi-outlook solution paves the way for a dialogue." Dubravka Stojanović also pointed out that objections to the project are reduced to counting of Serbs, Serbian sources, Serbian data, and comparisons between the space given to Serb and other sources. According to historian Stojanovic the foregoing is "a typical ethno-centric response to a comparative scientific task, for the basic goal of that task is comparison, which

by definition, limits the work of all those who see all the complex past and present realities only through their own lenses."⁶⁴

60th Anniversary of Anti-fascism

Rituals of memory represent a position on the past and on the basic values which help commemorate them. Anti-fascism is a basic value of civilization on which the present-day Europe rests. Serbia has excluded itself from the coalition of anti-fascist countries. It is not only sidelining of the Partisan Movement, the only prime mover of anti-fascism in the territory of former Yugoslavia, but also a historical doctoring of the role of Chetniks in WW2. Partisans themselves, that is, the minders of the Partisan tradition, or those who perceived themselves or presented themselves as such (largely rallied around Slobodan Milošević and his socialists) identified themselves with the goal of Ravna Gora movement in the 90's. The foregoing is best proven by the fact that Serbia failed to send an official delegation to the May commemoration of victims of Holocaust on the occasion of the 60 anniversary of victory over fascism in Auschwitz. That attitude of Serbia towards anti-fascism was noticed by the international community, for Serbia and Montenegro delegation was not invited to the main celebration of victory over fascism in Moscow. Marking of the 60th anniversary of the victory over fascism in Moscow was particularly important because of nationalization of anti-fascism in nearly all post-communist countries. The fact that all of the world leaders gathered in Moscow was purported to symbolize the end of equalization between nazism and stalinism. That gesture did not aim at lessening the importance of victims of stalinism, that is, communism, but in fact prevented the confusion over the policy of memory which underwent a total makeover after the collapse of communism.

Political elite in various ways marked the Victory Day, May 9, 2005 in Serbia. Vojislav Koštunica laid the wreath on the monu-

ment to Air Force defenders of Belgrade in the 1941 April war. He avoided to pay tribute to Partisans and Chetniks, and chose the Royal pilots instead. The state-backed celebrations were held for the first time on May 13 at Ravna Gora. Foreign Secretary, Vuk Drašković, commemorated there the WW2 events and thus sided the government and parliament with the side defeated in WW2. Only several months earlier (December, 2004) Serbian Parliament, with an overwhelming majority, adopted the law which equalized the WW2 role of Partisans and Chetniks. On that occasion MPs of the Socialist Party of Serbia, Social-democratic Union and the Civic Alliance of Serbia abstained from voting.

Additional confusion was made by the decision of the US government to award medals to the nazi collaborators. Namely, the US delegation of war veterans posthumously awarded the Order of Merit to the Serbian General Dragoljub Draža Mihailović, the leader of the Chetnic movement. That medal was first awarded to Mihailović in 1948, two years after his execution. That US move was met with animosity in the region, notably in Bosnia, Croatia, and in Kosovo. In fact, through that gesture pragmatic Americans sought to back the Foreign Secretary Vuk Drašković in his genuine efforts to improve relations with the West. However, the fact to which all neighbours responded, namely that Draža Mihailović, just like Vuk Drašković, represented symbols of a genocide-minded Greater Serbia project which caused great suffering both in 1941 and in 1991, should not be overlooked.

According to Dubravka Stojanovic, the need to re-define the whole past: the 90's wars, Socialist Yugoslavia, WW2, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, emergence of Yugoslavia, WW1, "golden age of the Serbian democracy in 1903-1914 period, the 19th century, the Turkish domination, the state of Nemanjici, indicates that "playing with history" and "non-resolution of any salient issue" poses a great threat to society, which was stripped of all directions. Such

a stance "leaves room for imposition of ideology which is at the same time both the far right- and the far left-wing one, and which is in all respects contrary to things and values on which the successful part of contemporary world rests."⁶⁵

War Crimes Trials before National Courts

Trials for war crimes before national courts also vividly reflect the stance of the state on recent past. What characterizes those trials are the prosecution attempts to neutralize or obliterate any involvement of the state of Serbia, Yugoslav People's Army and police in crimes that had been committed. Prosecution is trying to downsize those crimes to "incidents" committed by "isolated groups" that is, paramilitary formations. In that way the state is trying to defend the state of Serbia from genocide and aggression related charges and accusations and payment of compensatory war damage to Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. In those terms co-operation with The Hague Tribunal, especially with regard to military documentation, was conditioned by the state strategy to avoid aggression and genocide qualification by the International Courts of Justice in The Hague. Attempt to reach an out-of-court settlement with Bosnia failed, despite brokerage of some EU countries.⁶⁶ Defense before that court is one of the priorities of foreign policy of Serbia and Montenegro.

Serbia's elite is of the opinion that by dint of filing the application before the International Court of Justice, Serbia is additionally punished and that the foregoing "results from a well-known propensity of immoral people to punish and humiliate those who are cooperative." They say that the Bosnian claims against the FRY are a failure from the moral standpoint, for "the then political leaderships of Croatia, the FRY and the Muslim one spearheaded by Alija Izetbegović are responsible for the Bosnian tragedy." It comes

to the interpretation that "Serbia is not guilty for that tragedy, for she, like other protagonists was simply thrown into the machine from hell." Most of them maintain that "Serbia is the most constructive country in the Balkans" and that the time is up "for sobering, for drawing a line under the Balkans rows, for penitence and pardon, but also for patriotism."⁶⁷ Đorđe Vukadinović, Editor of the *New Serbian Thought*, is of the following opinion: "If NGOs, that is Kandic and Biserko, are so openly concerned about the truth and reconciliation, then they should point out that the genocide-related claims cannot contribute to that end or goal...", for this process "shall only deepen misunderstandings and may even provoke new conflicts."⁶⁸

The right processing of the past for the future of Serbia, and its inclusion into European integrations, and notably its relations with its neighbours, will very much depend on whether society will be capable in dealing with the objective problems and obstructions. Some of them are: absence of political will of political and cultural elites to responsibly tackle the processing of the past to a large extent obstructs the opening of European prospects for Serbia; orientation to relativize responsibility for recent wars is also a hurdle on the road of normalization of regional relations; the aforementioned stand constitutes an additional element in closing up of the Serbian society and its total acceptance of autistic and retrograde set of values; issue of punishability is one of the key issues on which hinges establishment of the legal framework and legal system in Serbia; "Commercialization" of relations with The Hague Tribunal (as form of co-operation) is lethal for public opinion, for it is tantamount to missing out an opportunity to establish a morally vertical system through explanation of background, contest and responsibility of Milošević regime; such a position on the ICTY is in its gist tantamount to the policy of continuity with the previous regime, while through "commercialization" and "damage control"

attempts are made to relieve the state of Serbia and its institutions from the war crimes and genocide in Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Considering the small capacities of the Serbian society, the role of the international community could be extremely helpful in helping Serbia to handle its past. It should keep pressuring the Serbian authorities to make them tackle in the right way the processing of the past; assist in the right way to the resolution of the Bosnian aggression and genocide charges against Serbia in the International Court of Justice, for without the right interpretation of 1991-1999 wars in the territory of Yugoslavia, the right prerequisites for the regional normalization shall not be created; help in an adequate way parts of the civilian society which deals with the facing of the facts process, in view of the ongoing and virulent vilification campaign mounted against them; exert influence on the media (notably Radio Television Serbia, as an allegedly public service) to more adequately and extensively cover the ICTY work; assist the professional researchers of the past, for contemporary values may be upheld only through the right interpretation of recent history; exert influence on the more liberal part of elite to formulate such a policy of memory which would enable Serbian society, notably the young ones to embrace a critical approach to the responsibility of the state of Serbia for recent wars.

Notes

1 In 1995, the Archbishopric Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church reiterated its denial of the so-called AVNOJ borders under the pretext that "this would stand for an official recognition that the Serbian people's status is inferior to those of other South Slavic nations, including those that are newly created on ideological basis, while the Serbian people - Serbia and Montenegro in the first place - will have to take the entire burden of responsibility for the outbreak of wars and their fatal consequences; the Serbian people's just and defensive war would thus be logically interpreted as aggression," Svetigora, No. 38-39, 1995.

2 Dobrica Ćosić. It is high time for the peoples of the former SFRJ to become inward-looking, *AVN*, 29 November 2005.

3 The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will discuss the Draft Resolution on suppressing neonacist ideology end of January 2006. There was no mention of that Resolution in Serbia. It also illustrates the gap between European tendencies and those in Serbia.

4 Todor Kuljić, Myth and History "on the Market", *Helsinki Charter*, issue 85-86, July-August 2005.

5 Professor of the Belgrade Law Faculty, Oliver Antić stated the following at the Radical Party meeting in Belgrade's Save Centre: "Doctoring and forging of historical circumstances in which the ICTY engages, notably as regards the indictment against Dr. Vojislav Šešelj is wrong, for history does not accept either counterfeits of justice or truth... The Hague trials are nothing but restoration of the old invention of this civilization in which the criminal compels the victim to bow and repent", *Politika*, the Serb Virtual Past, 20 November 2005.

6 Coalition of the "Eight NGOs", prominent individuals, and olitical alternative, notably the Civic Alliance of Serbia, Social Democratic Union, Liberal Democratic party, and other parties, notably Vojvodina League.

7 CNPS, Review of Work of NGOs since December 2005.

8 Editoralist Ljubodrag Stojadinović, Hajduk Myth, *Politika*, 21 November 2005 says: "This government tends to treat more tenderly The Hague indictees. If they surrender they fly to the North on special flights and are guarantees some benefits and amenities".

9 Zoran Lončar, Minister for State Administration and Local Self-Rule, and member of the National Council for Co-operation with the ICTY, thus spoke about his impressions at the departure: "While bidding them farewell at the airport, as the custom implies, I gave to each of them assurances that this country called Serbia and this government, shall assist them maximally because of their heroic decision and consequently their support for this country and government". *Danas*, 31 December 2005 - 3 January 2006.

10 Miša Đurković, Resolution of Vital Issues, *Politika*, 28 July 2005

11 Ibid

12 Ibid

13 Ibid

14 Relating to Biljana Kovačević, Nataša Kandić and Sonja Biserko

15 idem

16 Authorities have much delayed the passing of Act on NGOs (in the face of outside pressures) and despite the general perception that NGOs are like "profitable companies."

17 Mirjana Radojičić, NGOs and policy of interpreting more recent South Slavic past, *Nova srpska politička misao*, 9 September 2005.

18 Mila Alečković-Nikolić, Conflict between Pro-and Anti-Globalization Forces, *Politika*, 17 January 2006.

19 Brana Crnčević, 'German Europe' is being made in the US world, *Nacional*, 31 May 2005.

20 Dobrica Ćosić, We shall be condemned by the time and our offspring, *Politika*, 2 October 1995.

21 Svetozar Stojanović, Crime against Peace, *Politika*, 29 December 2005.

22 Svetozar Stojanović, About Crime and Punishment, *Politika*, 30 December 2005.

23 Idem

24 Idem, Stjepan Mesić, President of Croatia, during the anniversary of Jasenovac delivered a speech which was not covered by a single Serb medium, barring the Helsinki Charter.

25 Idem

26 Svetozar Stojanović, Feeling of Togetherness, *Politika*, 24 December 2005.

27 *Danas*, Terrible stench of the Serb shame, 19 May 2005.

28 *Vreme*, Price of insults and vilification, 26 May 2005.

29 www.b92.net/info/vesti, 21 May 2005.

30 Tha proposal was submitted by Žarko Korać (Social Democratic Union) and Nataša Mičić (the Civic Alliance of Serbia)

31 www.beta.co.yu , documents

32 *Večernje novosti*, Denial of the state involvement, 9 June 2005.

33 *Večernje novosti*, I have five in the package, 4 June 2005.

34 *Danas*, Monk Gavriilo shows no sign of repentance for blessing Škorpione, 9 June 2005.

35 Velimir Curguz Kazimir, "Jews, human trafficking and Skorpions", *Helsinki Charter*, No. 83-84, May-June 2005

36 *Danas*, 18 June 2005

37 *Večernje novosti*, Violence against Serbia, 9 June 2005.

38 Statement of Milan Milanović Mrgud, former Deputy Defence Secretary of Republika Srpska Krajina, *Večernje novosti*, I deem it sheer vengeance, 9 June 2005.

39 *Nacional*, There was no genocide, 10 June 2005.

40 Witnesses of crime, *Danas*, 8 June 2005.

41 *Večernje novosti*, Only the former regime is to be blamed, 4 June 2005.

42 "Beginning of break up of brotherhood in crime", *Danas*, 4-5 June 2005.

43 Preparation of the ground for abolition of Republika Srpska, *Nacional*, 6 June 2005.

44 Does the bestiality of individuals suffices for condemnation of the whole people?!, *Nacional*, 6 June 2005.

45 Shall the airing of footage on execution of Muslims have impact on the Bosnian charges against Serbia and Montenegro before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, *Danas*, 6 June 2005.

46 "Crimes in Srebrenica taint Serbia's international image", *Danas*, 7 June 2005.

47 Dragan Čavić: I admitted, they all knew, *Nacional*, 4 June 2005.

48 *Večernje novosti*, 19 August 2005.

49 Olga Popović, Shameless play-acting, *Helsinki Charter*, no. 83-84, May-June 2005.

50 In an interview to Belgrade weekly NIN, 22. December 2005 , war crimes prosecutor Vukčević said: " We saw the tape on *Scorpion* earlier and we started to follow executors but we have not expected that Geoffrey Nice would show the tape in The Hague Tribunal. Because of that we immediately started the action of arresting. MUP and BIA have accomplished it brilliantly ".

51 *Večernje novosti*, 30 June 2005.

52 Gabrijel Mockim, Memory of Crime and Forging of Identity, *Lesser Evil*, moral tacks to the practices of genocide, Belgrade Circle, Beograd 2005

53 Conceited Serbs, *Politika*, 19 October 2005, page 10

54 idem

55 Interview of Dobrica Ćosić, "It is high time that the peoples of former SFRJ become inward-looking", *NIN*, 29 December 2005, pages 30-37

56 www.icty.un.org

57 Prof. Smilja Avramov, www.icty.un.org

58 Prof. Čedmomir Popov, www.icty.un.org

59 Milorad Ekmečić, The Second Congress of the Serb Intellectuals, Beograd, 22-23 April 1994

60 Prof. Mihajlo Marković, www.icty.un.org

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63 Idem

64 Dubravka Stojanović, To Disarm History, *NIN*, 22 December, pages 44-45

65 Dubravka Stojanović, Defeated Future, *Helsinki Charter*, issue 83-84, May-June 2005.

66 Daily *Politika* of 18 January 2006 carries in text in which the international law professor Francis Boyle (legal representative of Bosnia and Hercegovina before the International Court of Justice) maintains that "much pressure is brought to bear on the Bosnian authorities to drop their charges against Serbia before that court". He goes on to note "not a single big power wants that trial, (though the first hearing is scheduled for 27 February). The US, UN, EU, and even Holbrooke himself over a year ago piled enormous pressure on the Bosnian authorities to renounce evidence presentation".

67 Aleksandar Fatić, Director of Institute for International Politics and Economy, *Politika*, 18 January 2006.

68 *Press*, 1 March 2006.