

ABOUT THE WAR IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

A TRADE UNION CND PAMPHLET



This pamphlet comprises two articles originally printed in Peace and Society. These are "An avoidable tragedy exacerbated by western government interests" written in August 1995 by Jim Barnes and "The question of the third Balkan war" written in early 1994 by Michael Barret-Brown.

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THE WAR IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA - AN AVOIDABLE TRAGEDY EXACERBATED BY WESTERN GOVERNMENT INTERESTS

The picture of the war in the former Yugoslavia given in the media is one of Serb aggression driving events and that somehow Bosnia/Croatia are innocents defending themselves from this aggression. This is a considerable distortion. The little Red Ridding Hoods in this conflict were eaten long ago and what remains are, on the whole, nasty greedy little war lords promoting their own sectional self interests - on every side of the conflict.

It is a tragedy made far worse by the political support given to one side of the conflict by the western media and by some governments and by the covert supply of weapons to both sides in the conflict.

There are possible solutions to this complex which do not involve military intervention but do involve a radical break form the way in which our, and other western governments, react to situations such as this. One of the frightening things about the current situation is the way in which some sections of the left in Britain are campaigning for the supply of weapons to one side of the conflict, when clearly, rather than resolving the conflict, increasing the weapons supply will exacerbate it further.

MAPS AND MILITARY AIMS

The aim of the people in charge in both the Serb held areas and the Croatian/Bosnian federation was largely to grab as much land as possible and then to hold on to it. All the sides knew that if they didn't the other side would. So the military aims for both sides were similar.

The 'safe havens' in Bosnia had some degree of UN military presence to underwrite their security by moral force rather than military. But they were used as launching points for attacks on the surrounding Serb held areas. These intensified during the recent large scale offensive by Croatia/Bosnia federation forces prior to the Croatian offensive on the Krijina.

It was clear also that neither the UN nor the Bosnian forces in the safe havens could withstand a major offensive from the surrounding Serb forces. The Bosnian Moslem military strategy, therefore, was to use the attacks from the safe havens as a way of diverting Serb forces away from the point where they hoped to make territorial gains during the assault. They did so with the full knowledge that the Serbs would respond in the way they have, and over-run the safe havens. The Bosnian government should be seen as responsible for what has happened.

In reality the only innocent victims are the ordinary people in the safe havens but the Bosnian Moslems created the situation and are just as responsible for the misery as the Serb forces who perpetrate it.

The military pact between Croatia and the Bosnian Moslems was almost inevitable. The Bosnian state was never defensible and probably not sustainable economically. That it would be swallowed by one of the more powerful neighbours is probably inevitable. On the 20th July Croatia

and Bosnia signed a pact which consolidated an already close working relationship. Croatia was interested in maintaining the Bihac area as a 'safe haven' because of its implications for military actions it was preparing against the Krajina Serbs rather than any humanitarian motive.

Prior to the Croatian attack on the Krajina Serbs the Serbs overall had as much land as they wish and were now looking to consolidate their position. Discounting the Safe Haven areas the map of the distribution of land is the same as that put forward by the Contact group of governments who have been involved in the peace negotiations since the beginning of the war. The Bosnian Serbs offered an exchange of the safe haven areas in return for land between the Bosnian government held territory and Sarejevo. That would allow Sarejevo to be integrated properly not Bosnian Moslem held areas.

Regardless of the moral dilemmas associated with accepting the seizing of land by military force, if there is to be peace in the region, the borders of the different states have to be secure. The map which will emerge if the Serbs are successful in taking the safe havens and are prepared to concede the land between Bosnia and Sarejevo, will be basically the same as that placed on the table by the contact group almost a year ago. The frothing and sabre rattling witnessed as a result of the Serb push against the safe havens is, therefore, a little disingenuous.

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

Chirac said when the first safe haven fell to the Serbs that the Anglo-French rapid reaction force should be used to retake it by force. That would mean, as Rifkind quietly pointed out, crossing 100 miles or so of hostile country where the nature of the terrain lends itself to being defended. It would mean more men and equipment than the French army can muster and would mean far more casualties than Chirac could sustain politically. Militarily what he proposed was gibberish. Even were it possible, having retaken the safe haven it would not be possible to sustain a community there without constant supply from the air. It is difficult to see what rational purpose such an exercise would achieve.

Chirac also proposed that America should lend heavy lift helicopters to transport troops and equipment to retake the safe havens lost to the Serbs, and to reinforce the existing ones to the point where they could sustain an all out attack from the Serbs. To attempt the former would be madness and the latter extremely expensive and probably not possible. It would also mean American attack helicopters and fighter bombers to protect the transports, thus drawing the United States closer to the type of direct intervention which is a poisonous chalice in American Politics. Having put the troops there, then what? The safe havens were never regarded as defensible if the Serbs decided a serious attack upon them and the Bosnian government gave them good reason to. Supplying them in this way would mean a steady casualty rate amongst the helicopters being used.

Chirac's flamboyant blustering has little to do with resolving the terrible plight of those living in the safe havens. That their plight should be used by Chirac, and by others such as Margaret Thatcher, for political posturing is just unforgivable. That is the reality of what has been happening.

THE DEBT CRISIS

Yugoslavia had the highest per capita debt in Europe. The Tito government had fallen into a trap into which most of the developing nations fell in the mid 70's. They borrowed heavily on the strength of their existing export earning potential when interest rates were low. They were encouraged to do so by the international banking community, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Interest rates increased dramatically, especially when the Reagan, in order to pay for a high arms budget, ran a deficit budget - effectively covering his with high interest rates. The recession which escalated under the Reagan/Thatcher period also meant the bottom fell out of the price for export goods and Yugoslavia ended up in crisis. The strain which this crisis placed on ordinary peoples lives made nationalism, and even racism seem attractive.

Croatia's desire to break from the rest of Yugoslavia was partly motivated by their desire to reduce their debt burden. Spokespeople for Slovenia and Croatia actually said this was why they wanted to break away "they are the richest provinces of Yugoslavia". Croatia and Slovenia had 28.6% of the population but were responsible for 42% of Yugoslavia's GNP. Slovenia earned 30% of Yugoslavia's foreign currency from exports and tourism.

The Slovenia and Croatian governments felt they could cope with a per capita distribution of the debt burden, shifting and exaggerating the crisis to the poorer less industrialised regions and without taking into account the fact that it was in effect their industrial base which the debt had been incurred to develop.

There are aspects of the crisis in Yugoslavia which are reflected in a number of parts of the world. Turkey, for instance, devalued its currency 70% in 1994 and has a small scale war in the south. Pakistan spends 90% of its GDP on either the military or on debt repayment. In this sense the conflict in Yugoslavia is the same as the conflict in a number of countries and it is, therefore, very important a solution to this international problem is sought if the horrors of Yugoslavia are not to be visited on a number of countries around the world.

THE ARMS EMBARGO

The US brokered an agreement between Croatia and Bosnia where they now make war as a federation. In other words there is now little distinction in military terms between Bosnia and Croatia. They can be regarded as one. Lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia means lifting the arms embargo on Croatia - the arms would be passing through Croatia and there would be no way of monitoring their final destination.

Given the amount of weaponry clearly being supplied to Croatia and Bosnia despite the arms embargo, lifting would be largely symbolic. It wouldn't create a supply but would mean giving them access to more sophisticated weaponry. Its real significance, however, would be to open up the possibility of military aid from the United States. That would make the US the dominant force in the Croatian/Bosnian federation rather than Germany.

During their recent offensive the Bosnian government forces used a considerable amount of heavy weaponry which they have only recently acquired. This included artillery, mortars, anti-tank weapons and some tanks. There are two things this suggests. One is that the Bosnians were building for a major military offensive while ostensibly negotiating a peace settlement and the other is the arms embargo isn't working.

If the embargo on the Bosnia/Croatia federation isn't being implemented it is really very unlikely that the Russians will feel bound by an embargo on Serbia. Why should they allow the German, American, French and other interests to be furthered in the region by support for one side at the expense of their interests in Serbia.

Fighting a war is, at one level at least, an exercise in logistics and supply. Once you start using a tank or a howitzer it means a supply of tyres, alternators, oil filters and thousands of other items on top of the need for fuel and ammunition. Making 50 tons of steel perform like a sports car is an engineering problem which is overcome by a rapid turnover of parts. Stop the parts and using the tanks in an offensive ceases to be an option. Stopping, or at least inhibiting the supply of such items makes pursuing military strategies, especially offensive ones, very difficult.

Arms embargoes work if they are applied seriously. A serious arms embargo could have a serious impact on the region.

THE NATURE OF THE WARRING PARTIES AND OF THOSE IN POWER

There are some very ugly people holding power in the statelets of the former Yugoslavia. It isn't necessary here to go into the badness of the Serbs because there is ample in the media, but it is worth looking at the nature of the other two regimes.

Izetbegovic, for instance, the Bosnian Moslem leader spent seven years in prison under Tito for fomenting religious hatred yet is represented as being in favour a multi-ethnic community without religious backing. He receives aid from fundamentalist regimes. To represent his aims as being to build a multi-ethnic non sectarian state is like suggesting Jacky Charlton doesn't like football. Nothing in his behaviour or his speeches suggests that this is the case.

A little while ago Croatia attempted to insist that only troops from 'white' countries should participate in the UN forces there and not from non-white countries such as Bangladesh. They have been as keen on ethnic cleansing as anyone in this war. Their level of respect for the united nations can be seen by the fact the UN has had over 300 vehicles, such as armoured troop carriers etc, nicked from Zagreb. Such is the scale of the theft that it clearly has Croat Government support. Their president - Trudjman - is openly anti-semitic and at one time represented himself as being pro-nazis.

Croatia is an ugly overtly fascist state. Rape has been used by her forces as systematically as it has by the Serbs. When the Croatian forces first attacked the Krajina enclave in Croatia, and were beaten back, they systematically killed everyone in the villages they retreated from.

That people such as Michael Foot and Clair Short should be drawn into what amounts to facilitating military aid to people such as this is quite alarming.

Early in the developing crisis rape was used as a terror weapon against communities to encourage ethnic cleansing. Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian Government forces used this. Rape was also used as an incentive to troops. Mercenaries from Afghanistan fighting for Bosnia admitted to rounding up women against their will and regardless of their origin, Moslem, Croat or Serb, for use in brothels established for Bosnian military personnel.

One factor which is significant in the conflict is that many of those in the leadership on each side have sustained their power base and in some cases established their power base through the conflict. It can be argued that Trudjman, for instance, had to have a military success in the build up to the elections due in Croatia in the autumn of 1995. The war sustains them and they have a vested interest in sustaining it. So long as the possibility of a military solution to the crisis remains, the people who live off the military conflict will remain in power.

WESTERN INFLUENCE AND WESTERN INTERESTS

When Warren Christopher, the US foreign minister, said that the civil war in Yugoslavia was 'Germany's fault' he was primarily referring to the fact that Germany broke with the rest of the EU and recognised Slovenia and Croatia, without guarantees for the safety or well being of the substantial Serb minority in Croatia. Given the openly fascist nature of the government there, this recognition made war inevitable. Warren Christopher could just as easily have been referring to the covert supply of weapons from Germany to Croatia. For instance, in the period prior to and at the beginning of the war the German army lost 1,400 vehicles, including leopard tanks. The German constitution forbids the export of weapons to areas of conflict.

The former Yugoslavia has considerable resources within it. These include Tungsten, Copper, Zinc, Lead, Tin, Mercury, Chromium, Antimony. Germany's interest in the area during World War 2 was fuelled by a desire to control these resources and they would appear to be motivated by the same desires now.

PARALLEL WITH AFGHANISTAN

In trying to work out how the conflict will pan out over time a parallel can be drawn with the situation in Afghanistan. The fall of communism there didn't stop the war, it has continued at slightly less intensity than before. The differing groups are sustained by arms supplies by political backers abroad. The leaderships of these groups retain their power through the war and have a vested interest in maintaining it. Afghanistan will continue as a war without end until Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran cease to supply weapons to the groups they feel represent their interests.

In the former Yugoslavia, if the weapons supply increases to Croatia through the symbolic lifting of the arms embargo to Bosnia, the supply to Serbia from Russia will continue and probably increase. The net result could well be the same as Afghanistan - a war without end.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Those in power in the fragments of Yugoslavia use nationalism and religion to justify their cause, but, given the common language and culture, it is less than credible to argue this conflict is fuelled by differences over how one crosses oneself. The real reasons for the war are political and economic and it is that which has to be addressed if there is to be a solution.

There are three things which a possible long term solution would require. An arms embargo, sustainable borders for the respective statelets and some form of resolution to the debt crisis.

So long as those in control of the armed groups in this conflict feel they can 'win' through military means the war will continue and may continue to escalate.

The equipment Croatia had available at the beginning of their assault on the Krajina is obvious that not only is the embargo not working a number of western governments are involved in the supply of weapons. That is the only way they could have amassed the quantity of heavy equipment they fielded in this assault. The USA have said they have satellite pictures that suggest a mass grave near one of the former safe havens. If they can pick this up with their satellites they could certainly monitor the import of military hardware. That means an effective arms embargo could be imposed, if the political will existed amongst the western governments.

The fact the US, Germany, Russia, Britain, France and a few others see the conflict as a way of furthering their interests means the war will continue. As with Afghanistan, the key to a resolution is with the outside interests. Because this war is now about land, the only way the warring parties will cease will be when they feel that they can not gain more by military means than they can by negotiating. Any military solution will leave a scar in peoples hearts which will ensure it is unsustainable in the long term. A negotiated one is the only way out of it.

In real terms the NATO/UN position of depicting Bosnia as the victim perpetuates the war. What has happened to the safe havens was inevitable as long as the Serbs felt they could be used in the way they have been and as long as the Bosnians were encouraged to use them as staging posts for attacks. This situation underlines the fact that the conflict will not be resolved until borders are established which the warring parties feel they can defend.

Any long term solution will have to be on the basis of sustainable borders.

The debt crisis was one of the primary factors which precipitated the war in the first place. The tensions within the society created by the debt crisis will remain as long as the debt remains. The tensions between the statelets will remain as long as the debt crisis remains because it was a conflict over that crisis which precipitated the breakup in the first place. The damage done to the economic infrastructure and the physical fabric of the country by the war will make it very difficult to reduce that tension as long as the economy sweats in the malaise and sickness created by the dead the albatross of debt.

This last point is the big problem. There is an enormous amount invested by the Western/NATO governments in the current international banking and trade system which created that debt. Were the debt wiped out for Yugoslavia there would be a strong case demonstrated for wiping it out for a range of other countries too. When you bear in mind that of the 25 countries in the world today with the highest

per/capita debt 19 are either in or coming out of civil wars and the rest look like they are about to start them, its clear that there is a close correlation between this debt and conflict. If we did it for Yugoslavia we would have to do it for the others. But if we don't do it for the others, the same horrors will be visited upon them as is happening to Yugoslavia.

THE QUESTION OF A THIRD BALKAN WAR

An analysis by Michael Barratt-Brown based on a review of two publications:-

Misha Glenny, "The fall of Yugoslavia: the third Balkan war" Penguin, 1993 pp.258

Noll Scott and Derek Jones (eds), "Bloody Bosnia: a European Tragedy" Guardian/Channel 4 Television, 1993 pp.50

Understanding the Yugoslav tragedy is of enormous importance for the future of Europe, for what was the Soviet Union and indeed for other parts of the world where different nations live within one state. If we fail to understand and to learn lessons from this tragedy, we shall see the experience repeated over and over again with the same bloody results. The article which follows starts from a review of the two most popular studies of the fall of Yugoslavia and the awful conflict in Bosnia. My long connection with Yugoslavia, which reaches back rather more than fifty years, leads me to question the explicit assumptions of both these studies (a) that what has happened is the result of a long history of ethnic difference; and (b) that the "West" has been guilty of not intervening militarily to prevent the bloodshed.

Bloody Bosnia

It is necessary to go back a long way into European History to understand the differences in Bosnia; and the Guardian/Channel 4 booklet tries to do this. But it is quite false to call them Ethnic or even religious divisions; all the people are slavs who speak the same language and regard their religious difference in terms of historic nationality. Their differences have in the past led to bloodshed and massacre, but at no time in history has this been on anything like or even approaching the horrendous nature and scale of the violence of the last three years. Past outbreaks of violence have generally been a response to external invaders - Hungarian, Turkish, Italian, German - inciting one nationality against another, to divide and conquer; never before has the origin been so very largely internal. There is something missing in the so-called "ethnic" explanations.

What is totally missing from both these studies is a single word about the catastrophic economic condition to which the country had been reduced, not by the war, but prior to Yugoslavia's collapse. While both are fairly even-handed in blame they assign respectively to Croat and Serbian leaders for the emergence of a virulent nationalism which led to the dismemberment of Bosnia, the reasons for this nationalistic outbreak are not examined. There is no mention of the growing inequalities of incomes between the northern

For Britain, and Governments like her, it is far easier to encourage attempts to resolve conflicts such as that in the former Yugoslavia militarily, than to challenge our approach to international finance and trade. But, if we do not change this system, conflict such as the one in Yugoslavia, will be a permanent and horrifying part of the times we are living through.

republics - Slovenia and Croatia - and the south including Bosnia, or of the disparity between the conditions of those who had access to deutschmarks and those who had only dinars, which by 1989 were depreciating at hyper-inflationary rates.

If we do not understand the basic facts of the results of debt and inflation, we shall not be prepared for the next internecine horror. Like Yugoslavia in Europe, Somalia had the highest level of debt to national income of any country in Africa, almost in the world. Amongst the 25 countries with the highest foreign debts in the 1980's we find not only Chad, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Iraq, Israel, Turkey, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia where civil wars are still raging or have just ceased, but also Algeria, Mexico, Nigeria where they are just starting, and what should we say of India and one-time Soviet Union?

Martin Woollacott in his contribution to the Guardian booklet chides the governments of the West and their peoples for "their refusal to contemplate real risks and sacrifices by using or credibly threatening the use of force... misusing their troops as grocery boys while opposing any American action that might lead to fighting." He contrasts this failure with the Gulf War where "International institutions seemed to have proved their value, national governments had demonstrated their capacities". On this analogy, Milosovic' would still be Serbia's dictator (Trudjman likewise in Croatia) but there would be 100,000 more Serbian soldiers dead (and Croats too) together with untold numbers of civilian casualties, the whole infrastructure of Serbia and Bosnia (and presumably of Croatia) - roads, railways, bridges, electricity and water supplies, tele-communications and government buildings - would be destroyed and the Albanians, like the Kurds, in the process of decimation. What was left of Bosnia would like Kuwait have been "rescued" to return to a totally undemocratic regime.

What neither Martin Woollacott nor any of the other contributors to Bloody Bosnia mention is the real responsibility of the West first in the demand of the international Banks for debt repayment, which as elsewhere led to rising inflation; and second, in Chancellor Kohl's recognition of the withdrawal from Yugoslavia of two rich republics - Slovenia and then Croatia. Recognition of Croatia was much the more serious because, while Slovenia has a largely homogeneous population of Slovenes with their own language and historic links with Austria, Croatia has large Serbian populations in Slavonia and in Krajina and a large Croat population in Bosnia. Recognition without

guarantees for Serbian minorities and without any limit set to Croat ambitions in Bosnia was bound to result in a Yugoslav army led by Serbs entering Croatian and Bosnian territory; and then there could be no limit to the grab for territory until Bosnia was divided up between Serbia and Croatia.

NATIONAL HATRED

Misha Glenny's book is much more ambitious than the Guardian/Channel 4 booklet. It shares the same brilliance of the eye-witness accounts of the war, which Maggie O'Kane and Ed Vulliamy contribute to Bloody Bosnia. But Misha Glenny has tried to probe more deeply - to understand a country, whose fate Bosnia's most famous modern writer foretold in the following awful words of premonition seventy years ago:

"And just as the mineral riches under the earth in Bosnia, so undoubtedly are Bosnians rich in hidden moral values, which are more rarely found in their compatriots in other Yugoslav lands. But....there's one thing that the people of Bosniamust realise and never lose sight of - Bosnia is a country of Hatred and Fear...that fatal characteristic of this hatred is that the Bosnian man is unaware of the hatred that lives with him, shrinks from analyzing it and hates everyone who tries to do so. And yet it's a fact that in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are more people ready in fits of this subconscious hatred to kill and be killed, for different reasons, and under different pretexts, than in other much bigger Slav and non-Slav lands...

...It can also be said that there are few countries with such firm belief, elevated strength of character, as much tenderness and loving passion, such depth of feeling, of loyalty and unshakable devotion or with such a thirst for justice. But in secret depths underneath all this hide burning hatreds, entire hurricanes of tethered and compressed hatreds maturing and awaiting their hour...Those who oppress and exploit the economically weaker do it with hatred into the bargain, which makes the exploitation a hundred times harder and uglier; while those who bear these injustices dream of justice and reprisals, but as some explosion of vengeance which, if it were realised according to their ideas, would perforce be so complete that it would blow to pieces the oppressed along with the hated oppressors."

Ivo Andric, 'A letter from 1920' in Celia Hawkesworth's edition of Andric's short stories, published by Forrest books, London and Dereta, Belgrade, 1992

A new edition of Misha Glenny's fall of Yugoslavia brings his story of the war in Yugoslavia up to June of 1993, when the carve up of Bosnia between Serb and Croat armed forces was virtually complete. It was then largely in the hands of the UN negotiators what would be left for the remaining Moslem population to live in. But, Misha Glenny's book is subtitled "The third Balkan War", and, if that is not a journalistic flourish, and it should not be, then his belief is that there is more trouble to come. We are all influenced by where we live. Glenny lives in Thessalonika in northern Greece, when he is not travelling as the BBC's central European Correspondence based in Vienna. So he will have a lively awareness of warlike alarms in the Balkan peninsular, and of the Greek peoples' fears of what is happening on their northern border. I believe that Glenny's warnings are well taken; the book is a brilliant and courageous story from a war correspondent, but his analysis of the Yugoslav

problem is deeply flawed. We have to understand the problem in a much wider setting.

THE BALKAN WARS AND THE GREAT POWERS

The first two Balkan wars were fought in 1912 and 1913. They were about the partition not of Yugoslavia but of Macedonia and Albania. In the first war, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece united to end Turkish rule in what remained of the Ottoman empire. In this they succeeded far beyond their expectations, driving the Turks back to Constantinople. The second war followed, when Bulgaria sought to take more of Macedonia than the Greeks and Serbs would permit and Rumania entered the fray to seize Bulgarian lands where Rumanians lived south of the Danube. The Bulgarian armies besieged from all sides were heavily defeated. Greece and Serbia divided up Macedonia between them, and Turkey regained lost ground around Adrianople. Albania which had been occupied by Greece and Serbia was declared by the Great Powers to be an independent state, and the Greeks and Serbs had to leave.

Behind all this fighting lay rivalries of the Great European Powers, which one year later were to break out into open warfare, when the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was murdered in Sarajevo. What were then the interests of the Great Powers in the Balkans and what are they today? We need to know because much of the thinking about national interests which determines policy in the chancellories of Europe has a long history.

It had always been a traditional British policy to maintain control of the Mediterranean and particularly to keep Russia away from sea routes to India. It probably still is. It dates back to the carve up of Europe at the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Britain, having decisively defeated France and Spain in a war for the succession to the Holy Roman Empire, turned away from Europe to build an empire overseas. The defeat had to be repeated a century later, but significantly it had to be at sea. By the Treaty of Utrecht, the Netherlands, Italy and the Mediterranean islands passed from Spanish to Austrian rule, and above all the monopoly of the slave trade passed from Spain to Britain. Austria was not a maritime or commercial power, so could be trusted with possessions along the great trade routes. She could even be encouraged to look south-east for an empire; and in 1718 had occupied Hungary, Croatia and parts of Serbia across the Danube.

At the same time, the British wished to set a limit to this expansion as well as to Russian expansion southwards. The Turks provided this. Their Ottoman Empire spread right across the Balkans. But, throughout the Nineteenth Century, Turkey was an ailing power and it became necessary for the Ottoman Empire to be bolstered up. Although popular opinion in Britain supported the independence movements against Turkish rule, first in Serbia and then in the Greek war of independence in 1820, Turkish power was supported by Western governments. The disastrous Crimean war of 1854-5 was fought to try to stop Russia's southward expansion and her exercise of battleships through the Black Sea.

At that time, France and Austria supported the British, but within a dozen years a new power had arrived on the scene, when in 1866 Prussian arms defeated Austria at Sadowa in Bohemia and in 1871 a newly united Germany destroyed the armies of France. Bismark had neutralised

Russia by promising to support the opening of the Black Sea to the Russian Navy. Britain and France moved inexorably into alliance with each other and then, very uneasily, with Russia against the greater danger of a German drive to the East. Germany entered into alliance with Austria in 1879, and, in the meantime, Austria had extended her hold on the Balkans by the occupation of Bosnia Hercegovina. Alliance with Turkey was necessary for Germany for the next stage of the Berlin-Baghdad railway to advance Germany's eastern ambitions.

Thus by 1913, the line up of the Great Powers in the Balkan was already clear. Britain had failed to keep the Russian navy locked upon the Black Sea but was determined to keep a firm hold on the Mediterranean. This meant an independent Albania and Greece and agreement with a newly liberated and unified Italy to maintain the status quo. Russia supported her southern Slav brothers particularly the Serbs but also Bulgaria as a weapon against the Turks, who were driven into the arms of Germany. In close alliance with Russia stood France. Austria and Hungary, united by their fear of Russia, controlled the Danube, maintaining an alliance with Rumania, despite her rule over Hungarians in Trans-Sylvania, and sought at all costs to keep Serbia as small as possible. The murder of the Austrian Emperor's son and heir in Sarajevo provided the German army with the excuse, probably planned in advance, for mobilisation in support of Austria's attack on Belgrade.

When Germany was defeated after four years of murderous trench warfare in France and Belgium, but also heavy fighting in Northern Italy and Turkey (Gallipoli), the Treaty of Versailles opened up that "prison house of nations", the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But a south-Slav state - Yugoslavia - was created under a Serbian king for the Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Montenegrins and the peoples of Bosnia Hercegovina and Vardar Macedonia. How far were they in fact separate nations? The Southern Slavs had settled peacefully in the region in the Seventh Century; but they had been cut off from the Northern Slavs by the irruption of Magyars into what is now Hungary, by the presence of the Vlachs, called Rumanians because of their origins in the Roman province of Dacia, from which they retained their Latin tongue, and by the Bulgars, a Mongol people like the Magyars, but who, unlike the Magyars, abandoned their language for a Slavic tongue.

The Southern Slavs

All the South Slavs have a similar language, but they had very dissimilar histories. The Slovenes had never formed a political state, but, while they were the most westernised, had a long history of a struggle against both Italy and Austria. The Croats had a kingdom from 900 to 1100, which was rival to Venice on the Dalmatian coast, until they were conquered by the King of Hungary. Croatia remained a province of Hungary, with a certain autonomy, until 1918, even providing the General who helped to put down the revolution of 1848. But the Hungarians relied on Serbian garrisons in what is called the *voina krajina* (military frontier) against Bosnia to the south. An independent kingdom had been established in Bosnia too during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but it then fell under Ottoman ascendancy. Serbia had the most long lasting empire, continuing from 1168 to 1496. After the defeat of a combined Serbian army by the Turks at Kosovo in 1389, the Serbs were brought increasingly under Hungarian rule in the north and Turkish rule in the south. Large numbers of Serbs especially the landowning class

embraced the faith of their conquerors to retain possession of their property. Their serfs and peasants followed suit.

The field of Kosovo, despite Serbia's defeat, remains the most sacred site in Serbian folk memory and the fact it is today largely occupied by Albanians makes it the flash-point for new wars. Miloshevic has already used the appeal to Kosovo as the rallying cry of Serbian nationalism. Yet for over five hundred years mixed south Slav populations of Christians and Moslems, including Albanians, have lived together in relative peace until today. This is the more remarkable because the Christians themselves are divided between Catholic and Orthodox.

Even before the lands which now form Bosnia and Hercegovina were divided between Hungarian and Turkish rule, the great schism of the eastern and western empires of Rome ran down through the middle of Bosnia from the Danube and River Drava in the north to what is now Dubrovnic (Ragusa) in the south. This then became the line that divided Catholic from Orthodox Christendom and later set the northern limit to the empire that the Turks could hold against Hungarians and Austrians.

What Kept Bosnia Together in the Past?

Bosnia has thus been a battleground over the centuries between separate Christian faiths, between Moslem and Christian and between separate empires, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman, not to mention the influence of Venice on the west and Russia on the east. By their geographical position the Croats embraced Catholicism and the Serbs Orthodoxy. How did Bosnia survive? The answer that Misha Glenny gives is central to his explanation of what is happening today, and is worth quoting in full:

"Bosnia has always survived by dint of a protective shield provided either by a Yugoslav state or the Austrian or Ottoman empires. Of all the entities making up former Yugoslavia, Bosnia boasts the longest history as a definable state, kingdom or republic. Nonetheless its internal stability was invariably guaranteed by an external power which mediated between the three communities (the Sublime Porte, Vienna, the inter-war royal dictatorship or Titoism). On the one occasion that this broke down between 1941 and 1945, the results were horrifying: a nationalist, religious war whose violence surpassed that of all other wartime conflicts in the region."

(Glenny P. 144) (note: the "sublime Porte" was the name given to the Ottoman capital of Constantinople.)

I believe this explanation of Glenny's to be profoundly wrong on two counts. The first is that all the so-called "mediating external powers" sedulously practised the arts of divide and conquer. This did not always work. After 1918 Serbs and Croats sought a united state and in 1938 came together in protest at the royal dictatorship. The second count is that the Yugoslav national liberation struggle between 1941 and 1945 against German and Italian occupation cannot by any stretching of the meaning of words be described as "a nationalist, religious war". It is true that appalling crimes were committed by the Croat fascist Ustashe at Kozara and Jasenovac in 1942, with German connivance. The numbers murdered amounted at a conservative estimate to some 200,000 Serbs, Jews and Gypsies; some say a million. It is also true that atrocities were committed by Serbs against those they believed to be traitors. But Croats and Serbs fought side by side against the Germans and Italians.

The National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia, 1941-45

The war 1941 and 1945 in Yugoslavia was, in very truth, a war in which Yugoslavs of all national origins and religious faiths fought against German, Austrian and Italian armies. The number of Croat Ustashe and other local forces fighting on the side of the Axis powers were largely responsible for their own liberation. Yet he refers throughout the book to the "Serb-dominated Partisans". This is a phrase that gives a totally false impression to anyone who is ignorant the nature of the Yugoslav national liberation struggle during those years, which united the people against a common enemy and provided credibility to what Glenny calls the "protective shield of 'Titoism'".

To start with, Tito was himself a Croat. The majority of his generals certainly were Serbs or Montenegrins, but of the first rank, those who fought in the Spanish Civil War, Peko Dabcevic was a Montenegrin, Koca Popovic was a Serb, Kosta Nadj and Ivo Rukavina were Croats and Rozman was a Slovene; Apostolski was a Macedonian. Of Tito's closer associates in 1943, Zujovic and Rankovic were Serbs, Djilas and Dabcevic were Montenegrins, Kardelj was a Slovene, Dr. Ribar, the President of AVNOJ, was a Croat (his two sons held important posts before they were killed in battle) and Mosha Pijade was a Jew. It was a broad mix of the nationalities in command. Glenny insists that it was mainly Serbs including Montenegrins who died in Tito's armies. If that is true, it is not surprising. There were more of them in the total population and on account of the mountainous location of guerilla warfare, it was mostly Montenegrins and south Serbs who were caught in the German offensives against the Partisan strongholds.

But the crucial question for Glenny relates to the condition of Bosnia immediately after the Germans and Italians had been driven out. It was my job to travel throughout Bosnia and Hercegovina, following up the German withdrawal. There was much destruction, especially of bridges and houses near to important communications of road and rail, but most of the towns and larger villages were standing and in them the usual mix of catholic church, orthodox church and mosque, generally more than one of each. There are two points to notice: first, they are not standing now; second, there were mixed national/religious communities in most of Bosnia's towns and larger villages.

The drawing up of maps to reveal the so-called "ethnic distribution" in Bosnia, begun in the Vance-Owen plan and perpetuated by others (e.g Branka Magash, The Destruction of Yugoslavia, 'Table of Ethnic Composition', p.18 and map of 'National and Ethnic Distribution' on p.178 and the map of so-called "Ethnic Yugoslavia" in Bloody Bosnia, p.11), gives a quite misleading impression. Firstly, there are no ethnic divisions among Slavs and secondly, the areas marked 'Serb' or 'Croat' or 'Muslim' on these maps of Bosnia-Hercegovina are only areas where there was a majority of one or the other of the three national/religious communities. There were virtually no enclaves of any one group. One has to say 'was' and 'were' because 'ethnic cleansing' has made the maps on paper into a terrible reality on the ground today.

If the mutual antagonism of the separate peoples of Bosnia has boiled up into something far worse than any earlier period of history, leading to mass murder, 'ethnic cleansing' and the destruction of houses, churches and mosques on a scale for greater than even the German 'scorched earth' policy, then there must be another explanation than of

settling past scores. Glenny sees the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina as "a continuation of the struggle between 1941 and 1945 ... a revival of unresolved conflicts, prejudices and vendettas on a local level." (pp 147-8) He goes on:

"The conflict inside Yugoslavia between 1941 and 1945 assumed such bloody proportions that, were it ever to revive, it was always likely to be merciless.the wars of the Yugoslav succession have been nationalist in character. They are not ethnic conflicts...what is striking about Bosnia-Hercegovina, in particular, is just how closely related are the Serbs, the Croats and the Moslems. Religion is the crucial factor dividing these people, although this is not a confessional conflict. For centuries, these people have been asked to choose between competing empires and ideologies, which have been invariably defined by religion." (pp.171-2)

There is obviously some truth in this distinction between so-called "ethnic" divisions and those derived from historical and religious associations. But it is simply not possible to describe in this way the war of national liberation from 1941 to 1945. And since then religion has not prevented on quarter of all Yugoslav marriages from crossing the religious divide, whether between Catholic and Orthodox or Christian and Moslem. Glenny never mentions this most significant fact, nor the fact that in the 1981 census more than one in ten of the population of Bosnia and also of Croatia recorded their nationality as Yugoslav, and not as Serb or Croatian. Since Glenny sees the war in Yugoslavia primarily as a religious war, the Moslems in Bosnia have to be seen by him primarily as a religious grouping, but that is not the reality.

THE BOSNIAN MOSLEMS

It is of crucial importance to understand the meaning of the statement that some one-time Yugoslavs are Moslems. Under the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution, Moslems had gained the right to use a capital 'M' in official documents, as recognised Yugoslav nationality, but it did not make them particularly religious. Islamic fundamentalism has never taken root in Bosnia or elsewhere in ex-Yugoslavia, although President Izetbegovic was jailed for publishing theses on an Islamic state. When war broke out, Bosnians became either Serbs or Croats or Moslems, but fundamentalist volunteers from the Middle East who came to fight were not welcomed. Glenny seeks to emphasise the rise of Moslem consciousness before 1989 because he sees the Moslems as another nationalistic force. He recognises the historic importance of Izetbegovic being the first of the Bosnian leaders to organise a political party, the SDA (Moslem), on nationalist lines in 1990. But, it is doubtful whether this then reflected a rising Moslem consciousness; most Moslems probably desire no such development.

Glenny traces Moslem fear of the Serbs back to the struggle for liberation. In talking of the impact of the second world war as "a genocidal struggle between Serbs and Croats...felt most keenly in Bosnia" he writes that "the majority of Moslems co-operated with the Croat fascists, the Ustashes, against the Serb-dominated Partisans." He admits that "in some areas, like the north-western enclave of Casin-Bihac, support for the Partisans was much stronger among the Moslems"(p.140). But, this was not an enclave in any sense of an area of foreign territory; and the general statement that "the majority of Moslems cooperated with Croat fascists" cannot be supported.

Certainly, the majority of Moslem leaders threw their lot in 1942 with the puppet regime of Pavelic, but many later deserted to the Partisans. Most of the rich merchants and landowners undoubtedly collaborated, but from their sons who had gone to university, especially those who went to Paris, was drawn a high proportion of the political commissars with the Partisans.

The fact is that the attitude of the majority of Moslems in Bosnia-Hercegovina throughout the national liberation struggle was one not of collaboration, but withdrawal to avoid trouble. Most of the Moslem population, of course were not richer landowners or merchants, but peasants and craftsmen. The Partisans were successful in the fighting against the German armies in Bosnia, where most of the major battles took place, primarily because they were disciplined and never looted and followed the rule that "those who are not against us are for us". It was well known that there were many Moslem women who helped the Partisans, while their men were in hiding or had been enrolled to fight alongside the axis forces.

Glenny's characterisation of the Moslems' role in the war leads him to make what is, I believe, a further error to the position of the Moslems under Tito's industrialisation of Bosnia for war purposes. He writes:

"The poorly educated Moslem artisan classes were rapidly transformed into a literate working class, while the ambitious educational programme of the Communist Party unwittingly encouraged the development of a Moslem intelligentsia, as it did an Albanian and Macedonian intelligentsia...The student unrest which swept Europe in 1968 found a powerful resonance in Sarajevo. As latent nationalist tension between Serbs and Croats within the Yugoslav League of Communists emerged into the open for the first time since the war between 1966 and 1972, Moslem functionaries in the Bosnian League of Communists successfully applied pressure on the leadership in Belgrade to elevate the Moslem's status from national minority to constituent nation." (p.141)

Again there is some truth in this, although why communist party education should be "unwitting" is not explained. But the main point is that, while there was a small number of craftsmen who could be recruited for industrialisation, most of the Moslems who entered the new factories in Bosnia were peasants whose farms were uneconomic. Sociological studies in the 1970s revealed that many became alienated, took to drinking and became an "under-class", which suffered badly when the economy went into decline in 1980s after the years of boom. Moslem resentment in Bosnia in the 1970s can better be understood in class terms in nationalist or religious terms. It was, of course, convenient for the Communist League to divert struggles into other channels. We need only to remember the warning from Ivo Andric to recognise how easily that could be done.

The Real Explanation: "the economy, stupid!"

This brings us, at length, to the real explanation for the fratricidal killings in Bosnia. If people who had lived together in relative peace for so long, in spite of national and religious differences, and had mainly fought side by side in the struggle for liberation from Axis occupation in 1941-45, could descend to mass murder, there must be something that happened in the 1980s to open up Pandora's box of hatred. There was something; it was the state of the economy. The extraordinary thing about Misha Glenny's book is that this

something finds not a word of mention. Yet, what happened was nothing less than the total and catastrophic collapse of the Yugoslav economy.

Years of rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s were succeeded by years of decline in the 1980s. In eight out of ten years real incomes actually fell, leaving the average income 30% lower in 1989 than 1979. Worse than this was the widening gap between rich and poor. Average income in the richest republic, Slovenia, rose to be more than double the Yugoslav average, while that of Kosovo, the poorest, fell to one quarter of the average. That is a 7 to 1 difference; in the 1950s the gap had been only half as wide. To make a comparison, even in Britain at the end of the 1980s the difference between average incomes in Surrey

and in Ulster is between 30% above and 15% below the UK average, a gap of only 1.5 to 1. Unemployment in Yugoslavia rose to 17% in 1989, but the rate in Kosovo was over 50%. In Bosnia-Hercegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro it was between 20% and 30%, having quadrupled since the 1960s, while the rate in Slovenia had doubled to a mere 3.5%. UK rates today range from 4% in the South East to 15% in Ulster.

At the same time, the annual rate of inflation in Yugoslavia rose vertiginously - from 15% in the 1970s to 40% in 1981-3, thence to an average 200% in 1985-8 and finally to 1300% in 1989. An average price rise of 100% a month made the Yugoslav currency worthless. As usual those with lower incomes suffered worst, but in Yugoslavia there was a particular discriminating cause. Those who had deutschmarks, earned individually by working in Germany (there were a million such) or by their company's earnings, were immune. They lived mainly in the north - in Slovenia and Croatia. As so often in the Third World, those who felt aggrieved were driven into crime and violence and in the end to civil war.

The reason for the Yugoslav economic collapse was a combination of factors: first, a massive burden of foreign debt, second, the uneven growth of the republics' economies and, finally, the over-decentralisation of economic management. The debt throughout the 1980s was of the order of \$20 billions, equivalent to over a quarter of the national income; foreign payments to service the debt were taking up 20% of all Yugoslavia's earnings from exports of goods and services. The debt had been incurred by borrowing to pay first for machinery for industrialisation and then for imports of oil when the oil price soared. (The authors of Bloody Bosnia write of Tito "winning billions of Western dollars to prop up his own brand of communism..."; in fact, the dollars were borrowed and had to be repaid with interest). At the same time, world interest rates rose, the world price of Yugoslav raw material exports fell and the country had to export more and more manufactured goods to fill the gap.

This is where the uneven development of the north and south of Yugoslavia became so important. The more developed north - Slovenia and Croatia - produced the manufactured goods; the south, including Bosnia and Macedonia, mainly primary products. And after the decentralising measures in the 1974 constitution, the central government had less and less control over debt management.

To offset the unequal development of the north and south in Yugoslavia, redistributive measures had always been built into the federal budget under Tito's rule. These funds flowing from

the north to the south had often been resented by the northern republics, but while the economy was growing they seemed supportable. When growth ceased they became intolerable, and were made to seem worse because the north saw all its manufactured goods being exported and nothing to buy in the shops, while the south, the prices of whose products had collapsed, appeared to be contributing less and less to paying off the debt. To the south it seemed the other way round, that they were getting less and less for their output of primary products while the north was overcharging for its manufactures.

Serbia stands in the middle between the north and the south, not only geographically but in terms of wealth. Serbs dominated the central government, the Communist Party apparatus and the Army. As the northern republics became increasingly restive about their contribution to paying off the foreign debt, the funds for redistribution - the so-called "Fund for the Accelerated Development of the Less Developed Republics" - were reduced to 2% of the social product of the more developed republics, and the central budget for the support of social services to less than one per cent of national income. And this at a time of falling incomes and rising unemployment, concentrated in the less developed southern republics.

What was most serious, Yugoslavia had ceased to be a national market. Each republic insisted on having its own steel works, oil refineries, sugar factories etc. Only one third of output and a fifth of capital flows had come to circulate between the republics; the rest moved inside each separate republic.

With some republics mainly of the north the closest connections were with the outside world. Yet the centre was responsible for issuing currency and for fixing basic prices. The lack of central control over the republics' imports and export earning and capital movements meant that the economy became unmanageable. The Serbs at the centre were blamed - and not only the Serbs, but any who had foreign currency, or had access to it through self-managed enterprises owned jointly with foreign capital, and could thus immunise themselves from the collapse of the Dinar. Inequalities had already been growing rapidly not only between the north and the south but inside each part of the country. With rising inflation they became explosive.

The explosion was ignited by that special factor already referred to that has occurred in several other countries with very high rates of inflation. This is that, as the local currency became worthless, one of the international hard currencies, the Dollar or the Deutschmark, takes over, if enough of the local population has access to such currencies in large enough quantities. This has been the case with the coca dollar economy in Peru and with the dollar economy in Russia. In the case of Yugoslavia, it was the deutschmark which took over because enough people had earned deutschmarks as migrant workers or worked for joint Yugoslav-foreign companies which sold products to Germany or other European Union members and received payment in hard currencies. The deutschmark became in effect the local currency and the income gap between those who had deutschmarks and those who had not became unbridgeable, except by theft generally involving violence or by working as virtual slaves. Since most of the deutschmarks were earned by Slovenes or by Croats, whether as gastarbeiter or from tourism and other joint ventures, the gap between the rich and the poor republics widened further.

Decentralisation of government power to the republics left only the Party and the Army to hold the country together. When the separate Communist Parties fell apart, that left only the Army, which was predominantly officered by Serbs. To strengthen the political centre appeared to mean strengthening Serbia. Markovich, the last Prime Minister of one-time Yugoslavia did succeed in 1990 in bringing the economy under control and ending inflation, but it was too late. He received no support over Yugoslavia's debt from the outside world, preoccupied as it was with the Gulf War, and no support from the dissident republics, since he could not contemplate a loosening of the federal ties. Many outside Yugoslavia shared this view; I shared it myself from conviction of the value of the old federal constitution, but the European chancelleries had their eyes on the break-up of the Soviet Union. What we all underestimated, because Yugoslavia had after all a free press and free speech and a free market economy, was the effect of the Communists' monopoly of political power ever since the war. For, this effectively foreclosed, especially for the women and for minority groups, the sort of pluralist democracy in which these matters could be discussed and settled peacefully.

When the League of Communists dissolved itself and elections were held in each of the republics, the candidates played the nationalist card for all it was worth. In most cases communists were returned to power wearing new hats and committed to nationalist policies. In Croatia and Slovenia they immediately declared their independence. The Federal Army moved in, as little more than a gesture in Slovenia, from which it quickly withdrew, but with more serious intent in Croatia - to protect the large Serb minorities in Slavonia and Krajina. After that war in Yugoslavia could hardly have been avoided, but it was made certain by the intervention of the European powers.

THE ROLE OF THE GREAT POWERS TODAY

This, then, is the economic background to Miloshevic's "Great Serb" ambitions, to Trudjman's Croat nationalism and to all the fascists and thugs, football hooligan leaders and gangsters who come out of the woodwork as the whole structure of society has fallen apart. It cannot be by chance that the country in Europe with the highest proportion of foreign debt to national income was Yugoslavia and in Africa was Somalia. In both countries, the young men toting their AK47s may come from disturbed childhoods and backgrounds of tribal hatred, but the occasion for their emergence must be the breakdown of their societies. When all hope of escape from declining living standards disappears, when the harder you work, the more you export and the less you earn with a continuously deteriorating currency, or when you are unemployed and others doing well, then it must be your neighbour's fault. He has deutschmarks of better land or friends in power, and if his name is a Moslem one or a Croat one and yours is Serbian, it does not need Radovan Karadjic to tell you what to do.

But the real criminals are not in Yugoslavia at all. They are, as before, in the chancelleries of the European Powers, where they refuse to write off debts of the poor countries but only those of their own banker and where they plot the future of the Balkan peoples to suit their own long term interests. One point that saves Misha Glenny's book, apart from the quite extraordinary courage he showed in travelling through war torn ex-Yugoslavia to report what he saw, is his condemnation of Chancellor Kohl for forcing upon the European Community the recognition of Croatia. This was despite the report of Judge Robert Badinter, President of

the French Constitutional Court, in which it was made clear that the rights of minorities in Croatia were not guaranteed.

Once Croatia's independence was recognised, with no guarantees for the large Serbian minorities within Croatia's borders, war between Serbs and Croats was assured inside Croatia; but even worse, this war would be bound to spread to Bosnia which each would seek to divide between them at the expense of the Moslems. It need not have happened, and it would not have happened, but for the collapse of Yugoslavia's economy and for the special interests of a German Chancellor. When Croatia's independence was recognised, I recalled a conversation I had with a Catholic Bishop in Bosnia in 1945. What, I asked him, would happen to Bosnia now that the Germans were withdrawing? He led me to a map on the wall of his study which showed the famous line drawn in AD395 down the middle of Bosnia which divided the eastern and western empires of Rome, and he said: "We have to dig a broad deep ditch along that line and collect all the pro-Slavs (orthodox Serbs) on the east and establish the Catholics on the west." Knowing full well what the answer would be, I nevertheless asked "What about the Moslems?" I did not perhaps quite expect the distaste in the voice as the answer came: "In the ditch!"

"Yes!", Misha Glenny might reply, "There you are; it IS a religious war!" But I do not take the view of a Catholic Bishop as an adequate explanation of what is happening in Bosnia. It is part of the explantation, but not the whole. It is necessary to ask what are the links between a Catholic Bishop and a German Chancellor, then and now. Chancellor Kohl depends for his majority in the German Parliament on the Catholic voters for the Christian party in Bavaria. This is a party with historic ties to the Catholics in Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. The Pope himself blessed these ties just before the day of Croat recognition.

One might take a still longer historical view of the question and ask whether a once more united Germany, moving towards union with Austria in an expanded European Community, might not be wondering about control over the oil supplies of the Near East by way of direct access to the Adriatic. It is said that Chancellor Kohl only obtained the support of Prime Minister Major for Croat recognition, by twisting his arm on the defence of the Pound and the social chapter opt out. The British foreign office was opposed. Perhaps it recalled its traditional fear of Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean. Mr Hurd's defence of Serbia, in defiance of all the anti-Serb bias in the British media, can only be from fear that she should full back into the arms of her old ally, Russia.

These speculations become important when we turn our eyes southwards, to Macedonians and Albanians. The Macedonians are still divided between Bulgaria, Greece and the Macedonian republic of old Yugoslavia. The latter is slowly gathering recognition from the international community, but lacks European Community support because of the opposition of Greece. It is the 400,000 Albanians in Macedonia that pose the main problem; for, Albanians too are divided between several countries - Greece as well as Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia - where in total there are as many living outside Albania as there are in Albania itself. A united Albania is unacceptable to each of the three neighbouring states and has been vetoed by the United States. The same obstacle stands in the way of a united Macedonia, where an American peace-keeping force is deployed.

Misha Glenny is right to warn that an outbreak of fighting between Serbs and Moslems in the Sandjak enclave in Serbia or in Kosova itself would be hard to stop from spreading throughout the region, and for once he recognises the danger resulting from collapsing economies - in this case those of Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria. What he sees from his home in Thessaloniki is a reviving "sick man of the Porte", presented with what he quotes Turgut Ozal describing as "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Turkey to restore its economic, diplomatic and cultural influence among Moslem vestiges of the Ottoman Empire". (pp.240-1). Glenny suggests that the United States would like to see a strong ally in the region, which could be relied upon to defend US interests in the neighbouring oil fields, without involving American soldiers; and Turkey perfectly fits the bill.

If the United States policy in the Balkans is really to promote a role for Turkey, it would explain two recent positions taken up by the US. The first was to withdraw support from Kurdish claims against Saddam Hussein, since any independent Kurdish state would inevitably raise the question of the several million Kurds in Turkey. The second, and of much more significance for the Balkans, was the support at first given by Clinton to the demand of Bosnia's Moslems for arms and even armed intervention. There must be a suspicion that the pressure came from Turkey. Such an opening up of the Bosnian conflict could have provided Turkey with the credit for intervening on behalf of fellow Moslems. It must, however, be doubted whether Turkey would want to get deeply embroiled in the Balkans when it has even more pressing interests amongst the Turkish speaking peoples in the disintegrating Russian empire further east. Intervention in Bosnia was, in any case, strongly resisted by the Europeans; it would have only increased the fighting in Bosnia and spread it into the other Moslem communities - in Sandjuak, Kosovo and Macedonia.

European governments may well have been less concerned with the spread of fighting than with the reentry of Russia behind the Serbian Nationalists and the recovery of Turkey as a major power in the most sensitive area of European interest - where the oil is - and a power which could no longer be relied upon, as in the Nineteenth Century, to do their bidding. In all this, Glenny may only be reflecting Greek paranoia, particularly in Thessaloniki, a further evidence of the Turkish revival.

The message for Western European Chancelleries, however, should not be to find new ways to divide and conquer among the different interests in the region - British, German, Russian, Turkish, American - but rather to tackle seriously the task of achieving recovery in their own economies and with them the economic recovery of Eastern and Southern Europe. Debt remission should be a first step. It would be a small sacrifice for a larger gain, but payment would need to come from the investors and not from the tax payers. In such steps towards income redistribution lie the only hopes for economic recovery and for peace. There is no way out of hatred except by some measure of commitment. "For, what can war but endless war still breed?"